Literacies Across the Lifespan
Volume 2, Issue 2
2023

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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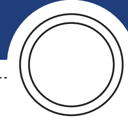


EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fourth issue of Literacies Across the Lifespan (LAL), a peer-reviewed, graduate student-run journal published by the Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

We are happy to announce Evelyn Pollins as LAL's new co-editor. A doctoral student in Language, Literacy, and Culture who studies literacy in elementary classrooms and children's literature, Evelyn also contributed an article for this issue. (Evelyn submitted her manuscript and manuscripts were sent out for review before she began her new role as editor. We maintained anonymity and ethical practices throughout the submission, review, and publication processes.)
She writes about reading Newbery Award winner The Last Cuentista by Donna Barbara Higuera through the lens of Paulo Freire's pedagogies to explore how one highly regarded text by a minoritized author might be used to support liberation in classrooms.

Independent scholar and fiction writer, Joyce Goldenstern, writes an analysis of Alice Munro's beautiful short story, "Carried Away." She uncovers the "shifting literacies" within the story, and reminds readers of the deep pleasures and insights that come from reading literature carefully and with attention to craft. This is the first time LAL has published literary criticism, and we look forward to publishing more literary analysis and criticism.

UIC College of Education doctoral candidate, Massiel Zaragoza, writes LAL's second Spanish-language article. In it, she explores how teachers collaborate in teaching secondary dual-language programs. (Norma Monsivais Diers' piece, Cuestionando Mitos Comunes Acerca del Bilingüismo and accompanying audio was published in the last issue.) LAL welcomes manuscripts in all languages – and we are looking for multilingual reviewers to help us continue to grow the languages in which we publish.

As part of our nation's ongoing conversation about what and how to read, teacher Jennifer Gallman offers an article on critical and authentic reading in secondary classrooms and urges teachers to consider a student-centered, inclusive approach to curriculum. Jodi Aguilar, a UIC College of Education graduate student, uses Gloria Anzaldúa's work to provide a frame where Cuir (Queer) Chicanx youth can envision and practice queer ways of knowing in K-5 Classrooms. Each of these articles pushes against the political forces trying to control how teachers embrace the interests and identities of the students who enter their classrooms in search of joy, acceptance, and exploration.

While our journal continues to grow and change, LAL's mission remains the same. It is designed as a resource for graduate students at UIC and beyond, as well as a venue for contributing to ongoing discussions in our field about literacy teaching, learning, and practice across contexts, geographies, and lifetimes. The name of the publication reflects our view of literacies as multiple, hybrid, and ever-changing, situated in specific sociocultural contexts, and reflective of readers' unique identities. 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 various kinds of texts.

Thank you for reading.

Kristine Wilber
Evelyn Pollins
Center for Literacy

An Anzaldúan Approach to Curriculum: Envisioning Chicanx Cuir (Queer)/Trans Futurity in K-5 Classrooms

Jodi Aguilar

In this submission I am invested in understanding the ways in which Gloria Anzaldúa's work provides a framework where Cuir (Queer) Chicanx youth can envision and practice queer ways of knowing in K-5 Classrooms. To help guide the entirety of this paper I will focus on unpacking two research questions. Before that however, I would like to take an unconventional approach to this submission by offering a quick three-minute writing pensamiento (thought) activity to whoever is on in the other end of this paper. During this time, I would like you to consider the following question: How would you (as a parent, as an educator, as a student, as a researcher, as you) envision a Cuir (Queer)/ Trans centered elementary school? Some aspects of schooling you might take into consideration while responding to this question include teachers, children's literature, physical structure of a school, movement, art, food, language and more. While you continue leyendo (reading) the rest of this document keep this list close and come back to it as many times as you need. Perhaps, by the time you reach the final page of this document you will find que tienes mas que decir (that you have more to say). As promised, the two research questions I am centering in this body of work are first, how can Chicanx youth and educators hold space for queer futurism in their classrooms? Second, how can Gloria Anzaldúa's scholarship, specifically, support us in collectively creating curricula that is responsive to the needs of Cuir (Queer)/Trans youth?

To better-equip readers who might not be familiar with this kind of research I would like to dedicate the following paragraph to explain relevant terms I will frequent in this body of writing. In particular, I will be providing context on the following frameworks and terminology: futurity vs futurism, schooling vs education, Chicana feminist epistemology, teaching Gloria Anzaldúa, and cuir (Queer) identity.

Schooling vs Education

First, I would like to make a distinction between the concepts of schooling and education in research. In order to discuss these topics I will turn to the scholarship of authors such as Robert Runte and Angela Valenzuela whose research is dedicated to understanding how schooling and education intersect but also exist as separate entities. Dr. Runte defines schooling practices as a preconceived set of curricula that compartmentalizes the ways that schooling takes place such as the teacher talks and students listen (Runte, 1995). However, when it comes to education they are firm in the belief that because children are individual learners with their own set of knowledge(s), education then becomes a set of collective organic interactions between adult/child and teacher/student (Runte, 1995). Furthermore, Angela Valenzuela's work speaks more to how schooling and education exists in the lives of multilingual students of color. Dr. Valenzuela's book *Subtractive Schooling* takes an intersectional (Crenshaw, 1990) approach to understanding the political dynamics of schooling as a space where educators and students are encouraged to critique how schools are organized to detach students from their cultures and languages (Valenzula, 1999). While advocating for dual language programs in schools, Dr. Valenzuela's research sparked a movement in teacher education and bilingual education studies that resists static schooling practices. These practices are only interested in training students to successfully complete state sanctioned standardized tests rather than holding space for youth to utilize all their cultural experiences, lives, and identities in the classroom. In this paper, I make the case that schooling practices need to be (re)considered and (re)imagined in order for classrooms to be a space of collective learning for and by Queer/Trans youth.

Jodi Aguilar *(They/Them/Esa) is a Queer, Non-Binary Chicanx doctoral student in the department of Curriculum & Instruction whose research theorizes about transdisciplinary connections that exist among Chicanx Studies, Curriculum Studies and Gender & Women Studies.*

Futurity vs Futurism

Second, I would like to write to the ways in which I will be using concepts of Futurism in this body of work. Specifically I would like to revisit my initial research question that asks; how can Chicanx youth and educators hold space for queer futurism in their classrooms? Before I can speak to my findings on this, I'd like to take a moment and give context to the terms Futurity and Futurism as they are interchangeably used in academic research. I learn from two Cuban queer identified authors Jose Esteban Munoz and Juana Maria Rodriguez to understand the lens, in which they both complicate and affirm queer futurity in communities of color. On first page of Dr. Munoz book they define queerness as a vessel of desire and longing that not only solidifies social relations and creates a utopic space to envision a new world but, to do so it also actively rejects the present which allows for the constant creation of queer futurity (Munoz, 2009). Their work is constant reminder that queerness in its wholesomeness is nothing really but the rejection of here and now. In a way, my work argues the same thing that weaving queerness into elementary school curriculum serves as a constant rejection of heteronormative teaching instruction. Next, I learn from Dr. Rodriguez that in part, their definition of queer futurism is to envision queerness as tender gestures of the social and sexual but also, understanding that futurity is something that is not yet acquitted to queers and children of color (Rodriguez, 2014). With these understandings of futurity, I plan to interrogate the possibilities of the presence and preservation of queer futurity in K-5 classrooms.

Chicana Feminist Epistemology

To provide some brief background on Chicana Feminist Epistemologies I will be citing the collective work of Alejandra Elenes, Francisca Gonzalez, Dolores Delgado Bernal, and Sofia Villenas, specifically their writing in the article, "Introduction: Chicana/Mexicana feminist pedagogies: Consejos, respeto, y educacion in everyday life." This article provides insight on the ways that people can begin to rethink traditional notions of critical pedagogy in education through cultural knowledges, pedagogies of the home and Chicana/o scholarship. This piece also reminds scholars to focus on the spaces and places where feminist pedagogies of teaching and learning occurs which is inclusive of the kitchen table, local stores, under shaded trees etc. (Elenes, et.al, 2001). She invites researchers to consider pedagogies of the home as critically important to understanding cultural knowledges at play within and among the home space and community (Bernal, 2001). But also, to understand that pedagogies of the home are not only essential to understanding the lived experiences of Chicana/o students in education but also to essentailize pedagogies of the home as an interruption of dominant ideologies and a generational tool of everyday survival. The core of this article speaks to the various ways that Chicana feminist thought takes place in the day-to-day lives of Chicanx communities and that through Chicana feminist epistemologies there is a need to re-envision educational research.

Teaching Gloria Anzaldua

Lastly, this paper borrows from the intellectual work and writings of Margaret Cantú-Sánchez, Candace de León-Zepeda, and Norma E. Cantú, collective editors of the book *Teaching Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Pedagogy and Practice for Our Classrooms and Communities*. Specifically, I will be focusing on one chapter from this book which is chapter six by Veronica Solis titled *Writing Autohistoria through Conocimiento.* This chapter offers insight and personal narratives to how they have organized and facilitated Anzaldúan curriculum, but also how they were first introduced to Gloria Anzaldúa's literary offerings. Although this book is central to aiding a Anzaldúan approach to curriculum in high school and undergraduate courses in this paper I argue that these two contributors speak of curriculum that I envision can be adapted to serve Cuir Chicanx youth of color in K-5 classrooms. For example, in the introduction authors state that by reading Gloria Anzaldúas book *Borderlands* alone aids students' concociemiento amongst the following intersectional happenings of gender, language, sexuality, class and space (Solis, 2020).

Cuir (Queer) identity

The usage of the word Cuir alongside Queer is intentional in this paper as a way for folks to visually recognize and inform themselves on the way(s) in which Queer is spelled in Spanish. Specifically, I was informed about this term through a Trans activist academic colega who spent their summer conducting an extensive literature review on the violence against Cuir/Trans bodies in Guatemala. Similarly, when speaking of sexuality and gender other scholars like (Rivas, 2011) situate Cuir as an alternative term to the anglo *queer* that demands recognition for the ways the linguistic of *Cuir* takes up cultural, public and organized political space in Chile and across Latino America. I bring this up because there is an extensive responsibility that comes with utilizing and conducting research with the term Cuir in that its roots come from queer theory in Latin America. Also, most writing that is inclusive of this term speaks

directly to the political impact on the lives of Cuir and Trans people in places like Argentina, Chile, Guatemala and elsewhere. Because my work isn't doing this specific work per se I am still including this term not as a way to monopolize it, but rather call attention to the ways violence and critique of Cuir folks operates and destructs beyond the central narrative of the United States. More so, I do this so that other researchers who are using queer theory and maybe intersect their work with Latinx / Chicanx studies do the work of acknowledging the community and resistance work that Cuir gente are foregrounding on their respective, lands many of which are indigenous and under constant militant and state scrutiny.

Having already outlined my research questions and provided background information on the relevant terms, the remainder of the paper will provide a statement on the ways in which this paper makes an original contribution to both the field of Chicanx studies and teacher education. After this, readers are provided with a review of relevant literature that speaks to both research questions. I will then address queer Chicana feminisms in education and provide suggestions for implementing these theories in cuir-centered classroom. The final sections of the paper are the gaps and next steps and lastly, the conclusion.

In part, my argument in this work is to create a queer/trans centered approach to schooling through a queer Chicanx epistemological framework. This work-in-progress research adds to the narrative that affirms, scaffolds and collectively builds from and for queer/trans liberation in education studies. In addition to centering queer ways of knowing, I am also intentional about creating space in my research for folks to consider the possibility that in order to envision a queer/trans future for youth in elementary schools we must first envision a queer/trans centered approach to curriculum studies in the academy. This contribution, in return holds the field of education responsible for not only the lack of urgency in creating space necessary for preservice/pre-credential educators to learn, question, theorize and implement queer/trans knowledges but also, for its stagnant ideologies that prevent queer ways of teaching and learning to exist in teacher education. While I am not omitting the possibility of queer/trans learning spaces without the academy, I offer this example because in most cases almost all educators are after all, housed in the academy before they are housed in their selective classrooms. Ultimately, this research will attempt to further the conversation regarding collectively envisioning schooling for queer/trans youth as a space where youth are loved, where they thrive, and learn from each other.

Review of Relevant Literature

Chicanx Youth Home Pedagogies

Carmona and Bernal (2012) details the process of conducting an oral history project with immigrant Latina/o students and families to help affirm home and community knowledges. This project took place at Jackson Elementary school where members of *Adelante* (a college awareness and Participatory Partnership) seek to empower second grade dual immersion students to become cultural theorists, historians and storytellers. In partnership with Adelante folks—teachers, parents, and students—the second graders were tasked with collecting family members' oral histories through short interviews as well as documenting family members via photography and photo stories. According to the teachers, this project allowed for students to share and access ancestral and cultural wisdom that promoted each student's individual self-esteem and awareness. Another key aspect of this project was a collective effort to debunk the narrative that Latina/o parents are non-existent in the educational lives of their children. In fact, one of the findings asserts that cultural familial knowledge like oral histories affirm the education of the home while holding intellectual and familial space for students to view their elders as maestras/os (Carmona and Bernal, 2012).

In a similar study, Dr. Bernal was able to situate the ways in which students of color have been devalued, misinterpreted, and omitted from educational settings as holders and creators of knowledge by gathering counter-stories from Chicana/o college students (Bernal, 2001). In addition, Dr. Bernal details the ways in which race gendered epistemologies such as critical race theory (CRT) and Latina / Latino critical theory (LatCrit) affirms students of color as creators of knowledge. The article also gives keen examples of the types of experimental knowledges (counterstories, narratives, testimonio, and oral histories) that students of color contribute to the classroom that can be used as foundational credence that they are holders and creators of knowledge.

Another piece of literature that speaks to Chicanx student home pedagogies and provides insight on the ways that people can begin to rethink traditional notions of critical pedagogy in education through cultural knowledges, pedagogies of the home, and Chicana/o scholarship is that of Dr.Elenes research in *Introduction: Chicana/Mexicana feminist pedagogies: Consejos, respeto, y educación in everyday life*. This piece also reminds scholars to focus on the spaces and places where feminist pedagogies of teaching and learning occur which is inclusive of the kitchen table, local stores, under shaded trees etc. (Elenes, 2001). Dr. Bernal invites

researchers to consider pedagogies of the home as critically important to understanding cultural knowledges at play within and among the home space and community (Bernal, 2001). But also to essentialize pedagogies of the home as an interruption of dominant ideologies and a generational tool of everyday survival. The core of this article is to respond to the need of Chicana/o scholars to re-envision educational research.

> I don't think that schools do enough work that places the student—especially the queer, non binary student—at the center where they can affirm their scholarly community while affirming themselves.

K-12 Queer Responsive Education

The book *Teaching Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Pedagogy and Practice for Our Classrooms and Communities* serves as a host to collective work y testimonio around the usage of Gloria Anzaldúas work in the pedagogies of educators, researchers, community members, K-12 learning spaces, and undergraduate courses. Several Chicanx Profesorxs who have centered an Anzaldúan approach in their course curriculum author chapters included in this book such as Veronica Solis, author of chapter six, *Writing Autohistoria through Conocimiento.* The premise of this book is to continue Gloria Anzaldúa's legacy of "doing work that matters" or, in Spanish, " que vale la pena". I use this quote in my work as a reminder that creating and advocating for Queer Chicanx centered curriculum for K-5 youth is integral to the narrative of que vale la pena.

Dyer's (2016) research is responsive to the need of merging the field of childhood studies and queer theory in conversation with notions of futurity. They attempt to merge both studies by questioning the common downfall of queer theory in childhood studies and to an extent the field of education, which is the innocence of a child. In particular, they bring into conversation the ways in which children are constantly negotiating their development, which in turn aids in queer curiosity. They do this by first acknowledging the presence of heteronormativity in early childhood education, because it is important to understand that the void of queerness in an early childhood educational space is operational in that education's only purpose is to reproduce students who soak up stagnant forms of knowledges that ultimately assist in acquiring professional jobs. Lastly, they mention notions of futurity in that Queer theories of childhood that do not account for histories of nation-states, slavery, or genocide cannot help effectively reimagine pedagogy of and for children (Dyer, 2016).

Queer Chicana Futurisms in Education: An Anzaldúan Approach to Queer K-5 Curriculum

The center argument of this paper is to provide insight that will respond to the following question: *How can Gloria Anzaldúa's Scholarship support us in collectively creating curricula that is responsive to the needs of Cuir (Queer)/Trans youth?* To do this I turn to the scholarship of Gloria E. Anzaldúa, Dolores Delgado Bernal, Juana Maria Rodriguez, Angela Valenzuela, and Veronica Solis. In this section I am interested in understanding how an Anzaldúan approach to curriculum serves as a foundation for the following outcomes: schools to honor and normalize students culture and languages (Valenzula,1999), schools to introduce queer Chicana futurisms (Rodriguez, 2014) and schools to welcome pedagogies of the home (Bernal, 2001). While I am theorizing about these outcomes in this section my priority is to utilize the following chapter from the book : *Teaching Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Pedagogy and Practice for Our Classrooms and Communities* edited by Margaret Cantú-Sánchez, Candace de León-Zepeda, and Norma E. Cantú. What I am looking for in these readings is an understanding of the ways that author Veronica Solis is theorizing and implementing a curriculum that affirms queer latinx futurity in educational spaces. While this author writes about the ways she approached their curriculum through an Anzaldúan lens in higher education, I argue that their framework can become a blueprint for educators to create a queer Anzaldúan approach in K-5 curriculum.

In Veronica Solis's chapter, *Writing Autohistoria through Conocimiento,* they walk us through their first encounter with Gloria E. Anzaldúa's work, "The Journey: The Path of Conocimiento," and how Anzaldúa's writing held space for them to write their own autohistoria testimonio using poetry. This encounter was so impactful for them because it was the first time she wrote something where she didn't feel like they had to completely exclude their queer identity (Solis, 2020). This makes me think about the educational careers/trajectories of queer Chicanx scholars and the reality that for some of us, we don't get to learn from a queer curriculum until we take a university course, usually a course housed in Chicana(o) studies. Keeping this in mind, I question whether I would have ever come to terms with my queerness as wholesomely as I did In my CHS 500-Las Chicanas course in undergrad. This is alarming because not all of our youth will make it to a university campus let alone find urgency or meaning in taking a Chicano studies course—a field notorious for being thought of as an empty career post-graduation. These happenings are in part, my reasoning for creating a queer chicanx approach to K-5 curriculum, not only to validate the

testimonio and lived experiences for Queer/Trans youth but also to inform youth as much and as early as possible that their life is worthy of respect, honor and love.

Furthermore, Dr.Solis offers more insight into just how impactful it is to utilize an Anzaldúan approach to their writing—in particular Anzaldúa's path of conocimiento that begins with el *arrebato*— because this beginning was something familiar to her. That as queer gender non-conforming people, we are constantly living in a state of arrebato: of conflict, violence, and suffering of the physical, ideological, and spiritual (p. 94). Using this arrebato framework, Solis created a writing workshop that helps guide her collegiate students through a conocimiento writing activity. This autohistoria testimonio-centered writing activity is meant to provide students with ideological and spiritual space to consider the ways they navigate their collective and individual queer rights of passage (Solis, 2020). Their workshop uses the 5 E lesson plan model, which broken down looks like this: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate. Engaging students in this workshops means that they gather in a circle and take turns writing affirmations on a sheet of paper that corresponds to the student sitting to the left of them. Students are encouraged to avoid shallow or superficial affirmations. After this, students are instructed to use coatlicue as a character in a poem, then students do a read aloud of Ana Castillos coatlicue legacy (Solis, 2020). After this activity, the instructor takes time to explain Anzaldúa's connections about writing as healing to students. Lastly, students are encouraged to think about the collective activity as an outline for writing a personal narrative or, more specifically, an autohistoria testimonio.

This activity, I think, can be adapted to meet the needs of creative writing requirements in K-5 schools. I don't think that schools do enough work that places the student—especially the queer, non binary student—at the center where they can affirm their scholarly community while affirming themselves. Instead of doing this activity to lead youth in all of Gloria Anzaldúas steps to conocimiento, I would host multiple micro writing workshops throughout the semester that lead up to a collective autohistoria testimonio writing assignment. Each week we would participate in a writing workshop that is dedicated to the following topics (one per week): El Arrebato, Nepantla, Coatlicue State, El Compromiso, Reuniting Coyoloxuahqui, Mindfulness, and Spiritual Activism. Specifically, an example of how I would adapt this to fit a K-5 writing audience is to follow the same 5 E Lesson plan that begins with a collective affirmation activity followed by debrief and culminating with a queer Chicanx-written children's book. The first week of writing, which would be El Arrebato, week we would read Gloria Anzaldúa's children's book *Prietita and the Ghost Woman: Prietita y la Llorona* as a class. This book depicts la llorona in a completely different way than traditional Mexican folktales where la llorona is seen as a demonic carefree mother who murdered her children and haunts the living kids in the waters of Mexico. In this book, Anzaldua offers a new perspective to view la llorona as a compassionate guide to a young Mexican girl's self discovery. This fits well in el arrebato week becuase it is through this book that students begin to unlearn normative, often machista tales of who Chicanx women are.

Theory to Practice – Cuir Curriculum Activities for Teachers

Joteria – Queering Loteria for K-5 Youth

Many Chicanx families are familiar with the family game of Loteria, but for those of you who aren't lets take a few sentences to break it down. Loteria is a game of chance that consists of various individual player sheets filled with sixteen Mexican iconographies at random and a card deck that matches such icons. While there are various ways to play this game, the most basic way to play is to shuffle the card deck that contains all the images that are included in each players sheet then, choosing a card at random shout each icon out loud and proud until one of the players is the first to fill four icons horizontally, vertically or diagonally. This can be done by placing uncooked beans on each square of your sheet to keep track of the icons that the card deck holder has called.

Loteria has been around since the late eighteen hundreds and since then has been adapted to showcase various forms of Mexican, Chicanx, and Latinx iconography. For example, Mexican Loteria includes images or icons that are just as recognizable to the common Mexican child as their mother's daily bowl of frijoles like La Luna, La Chalupa y La Sirena (Figure 1). Next, what I consider to be Chicanx Loteria is a fairly new loteria game based on the legendary tejana singer Selena Quintanilla created by Josue Morin in 2017 (Figure 2). These images reflect iconography that celebrates the life of Selena Quintanilla such as images of el bustier, el chico del apartmaento 512, and el washing machine. Lastly, I include images from the next and probably most recent loteria adaptation which is commonly referred to as the Latinx loteria is the Millennial Loteria. This loteria set takes a completely different approach to loteria iconography in that it draws from social media trends in symbolic latinx youth culture like el gender reveal, la student debt, even el hipster.

Figure 1 Mexican Loteria

Figure 2 Chicanx Loteria (Selena by Josue Morin)

Figure 3 Latinx Loteria (Millenial Loteria by Mike Alfaro)

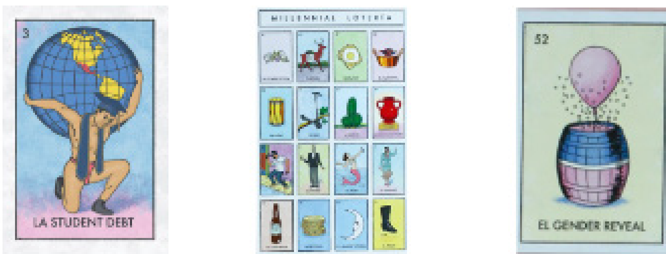
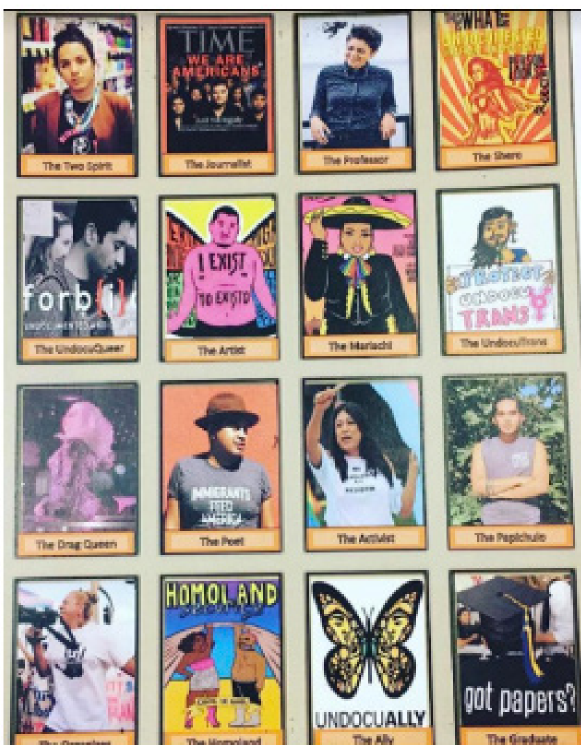


Figure 4



Now that we've talked about loteria at length the purpose of this section is to present to educators the ways in which they can adapt loteria activities in their classroom to create a queer loteria for K-5 youth. Specifically, this section is meant to provide a response to the research question in this paper: how can Chicanx youth and educators hold space for queer futurism in their classrooms? Clearly, it is evident that loteria can be considered a shape shifting family game, but to what extent can we adapt it so that it functions as a classroom game that is both educational and queer? I offer some examples here. To do so, we must first talk about Jotería Studies, a field of study which branches from Chicana(o) studies that was created by Dr. Anita Tijerina Revilla, Dr. Joanna Nuñez, Dr. José Manuel Santillana Blanco, & Dr. Sergio A. Gonzalez. I learn from them that Jotería studies is a political gesture grounded in queerness that is invested in creating spaces of learning that fosters liberatory pedagogies (hooks, 2010), disrupts violence's of K-12 school systems, and places at the center las maneras that Radical Jotería-Muxerista educators navigate their queerness as aligned to their classroom and teaching pedagogies (Revilla et al., 2021). With this vision of Jotería Studies I contribute and theorize here, another interpretation of this term that combines that of Loteria and Jota that together reference Jotería and signals towards the Jotería-Muxerista pedagogies to offer a new, creative and culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995) way of queering classroom curriculum.

I was introduced to queer loteria through a game night hosted by Karama Blackhorn, 2-spirit director of the out the California State University Dominguez Hills Queer Culture and Resource Center. During this game night, I'll admit I wasn't expecting anything but to participate in a large group loteria game. However, to my surprise the entire game had been adapted.. again! But, in the most beautiful, intentional and meaningful of ways. The loteria, or as I am referring to in this context, ***Joteria,*** was created using actual students, professors, faculty, and even community members to reflect the queer joy, organizing, and activism that is known in Los Angeles. Figure. 4 shows a copy of this Joteria game that showcases a wide array of gente who at that time made up the queer culture at CSUDH. Some of these include students like the two-spiritcommunity organizers Jennicet Gutierrez and Bamby Salcedo as well as artists like Julio Salgado. What I found incredible about this game is that it included so many people I know. It included my professors, my communidad, some of my dearest amistades which I think is the point of Joteria Studies, to combine the personal alongside the political. I offer this example to current K-5 educators to consider adapting a loteria of their own by centering the images and icons of the Queer/Trans/Jotx in their community.

Gaps and Next Steps

Some of the gaps in the literature is that most educational research literature on LGBTQIA 2+ curriculum centers the historical contributions of LGBT folks such as Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Stonewall Riots, Harvey Milk.Although these historical notions of queerness are important to introduce and inform youth, I wonder if the queer inclusion stops there? Having literature in research that only reflects a historical inclusion of queer curriculum is great but not enough. Because a lot of this literature takes a historical approach this leads researchers to center more theoretical approaches to queer research rather than practical approaches to queerness in education. Being that the researcher completed their Bachelors degree at a teaching institution, this concept of shifting from theory to practice is crucial to aiding teachers. Specifically, on the practical ways they can include and hopefully center queer curriculums in the classroom. The same can be said about graduate coursework where professors coin "queer week," the one week in the academic semester usually toward the mid end of the semester, that holds one class session to briefly and theoretically speak about queerness rather than centering queer readings throughout the entire semester. Believe it or not there are queer engineers, educators, linguists and lawyers in academia who have an extensive research agenda that can be used to queer and decolonize your syllabus.

One of my next steps is to develop and continue to facilitate pensamieinto activities at the beginning of every paper I write and let me tell you why. As a scholar who centers the work of queer and trans folks in academia, it is my purpose to always put our collective pain, critique and joy on the table of every conversation. I think that doing so requires a lot of emotional and mental resilience, but also these activities mark queer/trans presencia (presence) before I even begin writing. These activities can also be considered utopic in that when people enter my spaces of conversations—whether it be a guest lecture, a conference presentation or a workshop for teachers—they enter a space that is void of white supremist rhetoric, white cis-gendered theories, and surface level research on queerness. When I ask my audience to stop, ingest the question/topic at hand, then pass down their thoughts, they become *semillas* (seeds). Planted. Steady and ready for growth. One of the ways that this seed of knowledge is alimentado (sustained) is through the process of unlearning. The question I asked of everyone at the top of this paper is to consider, (re)imagine, and most importantly unlearn what they know to be familiar about elementary school. It is utopic in that it requires everyone—not just queer/trans, gender non conforming, 2 spirit folks—to revisit their inner child and ask "what is it that I needed in my elementary schooling that would've supported my developing identitie(s)?" This includes the sexual, the gendered, the lack of gender, the pronouns, the dead names—everything. It asks queer/trans folks specifically to center their past, present, and future selves. It asks non queer/trans folks to consider the ways in which they have been complicit in suppression, silence, and subduing of the education of the queer/trans child. All of this is part of my personal pedagogy where I situate inescapable sitios of pensamientos that are necessary to the alimentacion of queerness in education.

Conclusion

In closing, I'd like to revisit the two questions that were posed at the start of this term paper : How can Chicanx youth and educators hold space for queer futurism in their classrooms? Second, how can Gloria Anzaldúa's Scholarship support us in collectively creating curricula that is responsive to the needs of Cuir (Queer)/ Trans youth? Up until now I've highlighted prominent authors who speak to the work of futurism, queerness, literature and curriculum through an Anzalduan lens. Additionally, I center *Joteria Studies* which is a field of study that branches from Chicana(o) studies that was created to validate the ways in which queer folks or Jotxs are lived legacies of colonialism, homophobia, and heterosexism but most importantly this field exists to bind the personal with the political (Hames-Garcia, 2014). Then, we visit the work of Veronica Solis *Writing Autohistoria through Conocimiento* that I later offer steps and resources that can be adapted to meet the needs of creative writing requirements in K-5 schools.

This paper responds to question one by allowing educators, teachers in training, theorists, education professors, chicano studies professors to understand how both of our work necessitates possibilities of learning. But most importantly, hold capacities for envisioning over and over again how we might bridge the gap between the field of education and the field of chicano studies while utilizing with carino the field of Joteria as vessel that positions us closer to queer chicanx futurity in classrooms.

Similarly, question two asks us to consider how Gloria Anzaldua's scholarship supports us in creating, developing, dreaming up curriculum that is responsive to the needs of Cuir (Queer)/ Trans youth. We learn together, through a micro review on a chapter in *Teaching Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Pedagogy and Practice for Our Classrooms and Communities* that her scholarship has held paths for Chicanx educators to envision what our classrooms, curriculum and care might look like given her legacy and contribution to Chicana Feminisms. Through cultural practices like playing Loteria we learn a template,

for queering Loteria which I name and reference here as Joteria. These conversations about the ways we can shift, transform and embody queer chicanx pedagogies can also support us in advocating for queer chicanx futurity in classrooms.

Ultimately, this research paper is meant to further the conversation across literacy studies, Chicanx Studies, and Curriculum studies to show that by centering culturally responsive and queer ways of knowing/teaching we can regard collectively the act of envisioning schooling for Queer/Trans youth as a space where youth are loved, where they thrive, and learn from each other.

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Fomentando la colaboración en dos idiomas entre maestros en programas de lenguaje dual a nivel secundario

Massiel Zargoza

A medida que los programas de inmersión en dos idiomas (DLI, por sus siglas en inglés) se expanden más allá de las escuelas primarias en los Estados Unidos hacia las escuelas intermedias y secundarias de todo el país, los educadores a menudo enfrentan desafíos que son menos hábiles para abordar (Carzoli, 2018). Los conflictos de programación, los programas que compiten dentro de una escuela, el aumento del rigor académico y los niveles elevados de deserción estudiantil se encuentran entre algunos de los obstáculos que hacen que la sostenibilidad de los programas bilingües a nivel secundario sea más difícil que en los años primarios (De Jong & Bearse, 2011). Otro reto, que se puede aplicar a los programas de lenguaje dual de todos los niveles, es la carencia de materiales en español u otras lenguas minoritarias. Los materiales en español que se utilizan en los programas bilingües y/o para enseñar español a los estudiantes de lengua materna no son comparables con la calidad de los materiales en inglés. Las escuelas de los Estados Unidos ponen un gran énfasis en la enseñanza de las artes del lenguaje inglés (ELA) y no reconocen la importancia de desarrollar la alfabetización en el primer idioma (Cooley, 2014). Este problema, aunque presente en todos los niveles escolares, se vuelve más severo a nivel de secundaria y preparatoria. Junto con la dificultad de encontrar maestros de secundaria certificados bilingües calificados que puedan encontrar un equilibrio entre la enseñanza del contenido y el dominio del idioma (Collier & Thomas, 2014), existen muchos desafíos únicos que enfrentan los programas de dos idiomas secundarios que hacen que su sostenibilidad sea cada vez más difícil.

Las ideologías lingüísticas hegemónicas: una amenaza invisible para la enseñanza bilingüe

Aunque los desafíos ya mencionados son omnipresentes, es importante señalar otro desafío "invisible" que existe en los programas de dos idiomas a nivel secundario. La presencia de prácticas e ideologías hegemónicas se han propagado a través de cada pilar de los programas bilingües puede ser igualmente perjudicial para la sostenibilidad de estos programas (Kelley, 2018). Para poder superar este desafío en particular, los programas universitarios de preparación para maestros aspirantes y los entrenamientos de capacitación profesional para maestros en servicio deben centrarse en ayudar a los maestros a reemplazar prácticas hegemónicas e insidiosas con ideologías que refuercen todos los idiomas y culturas de la comunidad estudiantil (Alfaro, 2014).

Raciolinguistics examina cómo se usa el lenguaje para construir la noción de la raza y cómo las ideas de raza influyen en el uso del lenguaje (Alim et. al, 2016). Flores y Rosa (2015) usan este término para discutir lo que es "apropiado" en el lenguaje y argumentan que la estandarización del lenguaje "apropiado" en la educación estadounidense crea diferentes experiencias

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para los estudiantes de grupos minoritarios. El lenguaje "apropiado" que se define por el lenguaje de la cultura dominante, es una construcción de ideologías raciolingüísticas que sostienen ciertas prácticas lingüísticas como normativas y otras como deficientes.

Este artículo abordará cómo las ideologías raciolingüsticas de los maestros de lenguaje dual en programas de nivel secundaria pueden influir en la colaboración entre colegas en el idioma asociado. A través del análisis de estas ideologías se propondrá el uso de un marco que facilitará una colaboración más profunda entre los profesores de idiomas asociados en los programas bilingües de secundaria. Se espera que la implementación de este modelo colaborativo contribuirá a la interrupción de las desigualdades lingüísticas y culturales que obstaculizan la expansión a largo plazo de los programas bilingües de EE. UU. el nivel medio y superior.

El desarrollo de equipos educativos cohesivos de dos idiomas puede ser un desafío en cualquier escuela. Además, desentrañar las ideologías raciolingüísticas de los docentes en los programas bilingües puede generar muchas complicaciones también. En 2021, Laura Chavez Moreno exploró estos problemas cuando las ideologías raciolingüísticas de los docentes contribuyen a las suposiciones acerca de que los programas bilingües son "inherentemente culturalmente relevantes." En un estudio etnográfico de un programa bilingüe de nivel secundario, Chavez-Moreno descubrió que aunque los maestros creían que ser bilingüe mejoraría el rendimiento académico de sus estudiantes Latinxs, la percepción del rendimiento de los estudiantes Latinx no estaba a la par con los resultados de los alumnos bilingües blancos. Además, los maestros relacionaron el bajo rendimiento de los jóvenes Latinx en el programa bilingüe a través de explicaciones racistas y no cuestionaron la relevancia cultural del programa. En su trabajo, Chávez Moreno pide un mayor cultivo de la conciencia crítica racial de los maestros de dos idiomas, su cuestionamiento de las ideologías raciolingüísticas y la definición de un programa equitativo de dos idiomas centrado en la conciencia crítica racial.

Seltzer y De los Ríos (2018) realizaron un estudio que exploró las alfabetizaciones raciolingüísticas de docentes, pero solo en el contexto de las aulas donde la instrucción se llevaba a cabo en inglés. En su estudio, los autores ilustran cómo las posturas y prácticas de los docentes pueden verse influenciadas por sus identidades, señalando cómo los docentes deben abordar sus pedagogías de translenguaje con una comprensión de las ideologías raciolingüísticas. Los autores proponen un llamado a los programas de formación de docentes para ayudar a los docentes a involucrarse en los elementos transgresores del translenguaje en las aulas de inglés y perfeccionar sus alfabetizaciones raciolingüísticas para diseñar el aprendizaje en el aula de manera más humanizadora.

Aunque ambos estudios ofrecieron una perspectiva vital sobre el valor de explorar las ideologías raciolingüísticas de los profesores, cada estudio se centró en las ideologías raciolingüísticas de los profesores de español o en las ideologías raciolingüísticas de los profesores de inglés. Hasta la fecha, no se ha realizado ningún estudio sobre el análisis de las ideologías raciolingüísticas de los profesores de secundaria de ambas lenguas ni sobre las implicaciones que tienen las ideologías raciolingüísticas de los profesores en la colaboración interlingüística. Las aulas de artes del lenguaje en inglés y español tienen el potencial de posicionarse como espacios de indagación sobre la interseccionalidad del idioma, la raza y la cultura. Sin embargo, las aulas de ELA y SLA en los Estados Unidos suelen defender ideologías opresivas en torno al idioma de instrucción, las variedades del idioma que se deben enseñar en las escuelas y los hablantes de esos idiomas. Debe haber una exploración más profunda de la colonialidad que está profundamente arraigada en las prácticas pedagógicas de las aulas de inglés y español dentro de una escuela.

LatCrit: Un marco teórico para resaltar las desigualdades que impiden la colaboración

La Teoría Crítica de la Raza, conocida como Critical Race Theory (CRT) en inglés, tiene sus fundamentos en los escritos filosóficos de Derrick Bell en la década de los 70 y 80. Originó por parte de abogados y activistas legales que propusieron que muchos de los avances de la era de los derechos civiles se habían detenido y, en algunas circunstancias, se estaban revirtiendo. Desde

entonces, CRT se ha expandido a varios campos, como la educación, donde ha brindado a los investigadores críticos una herramienta para examinar cómo múltiples formas de opresión pueden infiltrarse en los sistemas educativos e impactar negativamente a personas de color (POC). La Teoría Crítica de la Raza Latina (LatCrit) es una rama teórica que se ha extendido desde CRT y examina experiencias únicas de la comunidad latina/o, como el estatus migratorio, el idioma, el origen étnico y la cultura (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

En la investigación educativa, LatCrit se puede utilizar como un vehículo para desafiar las ideologías dominantes, como la meritocracia y el daltonismo racial (color blindedness), que sugieren que las instituciones educativas son sistemas neutrales que sirven a todos los estudiantes de manera equitativa. De la misma manera, LatCrit se puede utilizar para descubrir y desafiar estructuras integradas en las prácticas escolares que colocan a los maestros Latinxs en desventaja sobre sus contrapartes anglosajones. La utilización de este marco teórico, en este artículo específicamente, pretende resaltar y elevar las experiencias de los maestros Latinx que históricamente han sido marginados y subrepresentados en los contextos de educación bilingüe de los EE. UU.

El uso de LatCrit en la educación abarca cinco principios (a) la centralidad y la interseccionalidad de la raza y el racismo, (b) el desafío a la ideología dominante, (c) el compromiso con la justicia social y la equidad, (d) la centralidad del conocimiento experiencial a través de testimonios orales y (e) la perspectiva interdisciplinaria (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). El marco colaborativo que se presenta y describe en el resto de este artículo demuestra un ejemplo de cómo los estos principios fundamentales de LatCrit se pueden utilizar para fomentar la colaboración equitativa entre docentes que enseñan cursos en español y docentes que enseñan los mismos cursos en inglés. Cada principio se entrelaza en la aplicación del marco de colaboración para que co-profesores y colegas puedan crear un espacio de trabajo humanizador basado en el respeto, la confianza y el empoderamiento mutuo.

Un marco para fomentar la colaboración entre docentes

Los programas de formación para docentes en programas duales deben comenzar a fomentar en la docencia de todas las disciplinas nuevas imágenes de colaboración, participación e indagación. Existe una presión cada vez mayor para mejorar la colaboración docente en el sector educativo. Un entorno de trabajo colaborativo se está convirtiendo rápidamente en la norma para todas las organizaciones, no sólo para la educación (Decuyper, Dochy y Van den Bossche, 2010; Edmondson, 2013). Sin embargo, dentro del contexto de la educación, para que los estudiantes se conviertan en colaboradores calificados antes de ingresar al mercado laboral, los maestros deben modelar estrategias de aprendizaje cooperativo para los estudiantes trabajando juntos como un equipo unificado. (Coca-Cola, 2005; Vangrieken et. al, 2015).

Desarrollar sistemas de colaboración robustos en escuelas con programas bilingües es complejo pero necesario. Los maestros de dos idiomas de ambos idiomas de instrucción deben trabajar juntos de manera constante para garantizar que sus estudiantes desarrollen habilidades de alfabetización en ambos idiomas de manera uniforme. Además, los maestros de ambos idiomas de instrucción deben trabajar juntos para ayudar a elevar y mantener el estatus de los dos idiomas asociados. Esto transmite el mensaje de que todos los miembros de la comunidad escolar valoran por igual ambos idiomas y sus respectivos hablantes. Por lo tanto, un componente esencial para el éxito de cualquier programa bilingüe es implementar una pedagogía que guíe a los maestros de idiomas asociados en el compromiso de una colaboración útil entre idiomas y niveles de grado.

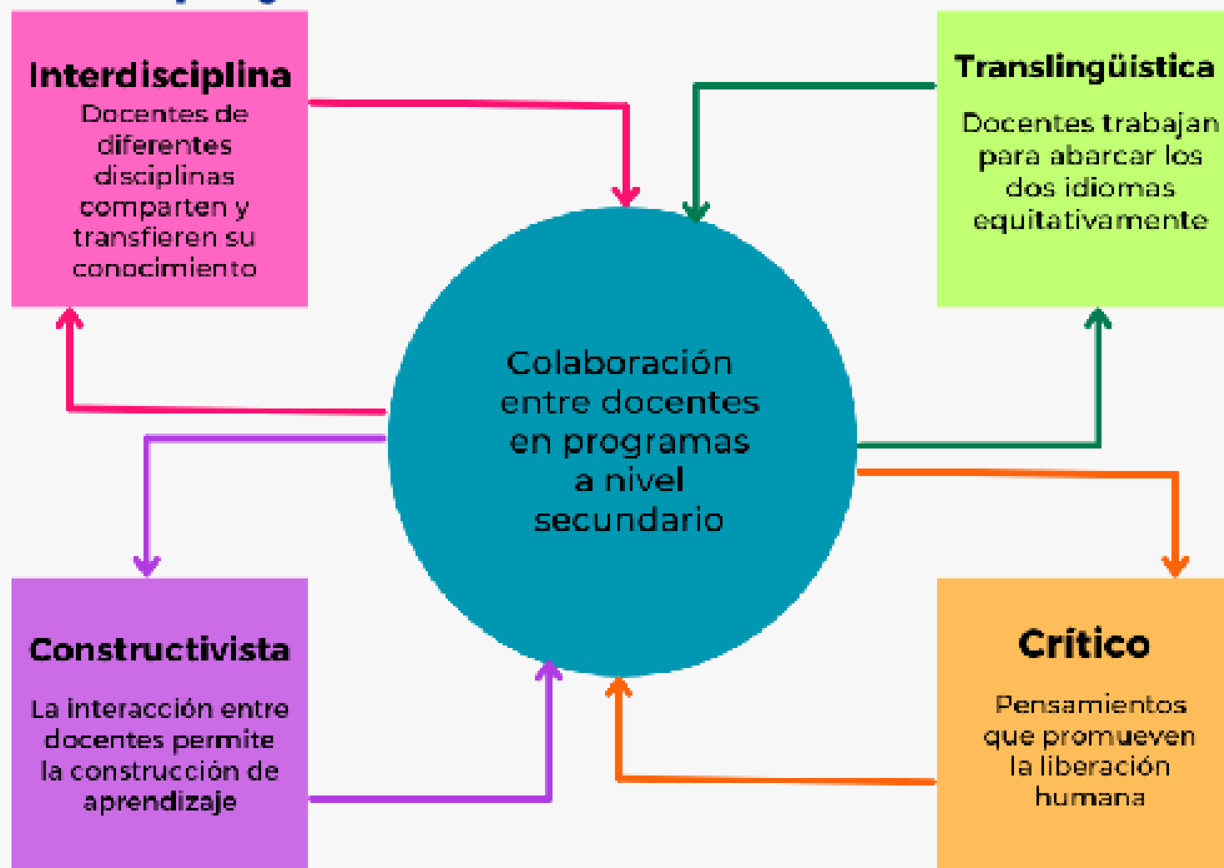
Este artículo propone un marco que consta de cuatro componentes. El marco, ilustrado en la Figura 1.1, destaca el valor de la colaboración entre docentes que es interdisciplinaria, interlingüística, constructivista y pone la conciencia crítica al frente. Cada elemento es complementario, no secuencial. Cuando se toman en cuenta los cuatro pilares durante las sesiones de colaboración de maestros o los ciclos de capacitación, se fortalecen los dos idiomas asociados en un programa y el

desarrollo de la alfabetización bilingüe puede ocurrir de una manera que eleva tanto el inglés como el español.

Elemento #1: "Rompiendo el molde monolítico" con la colaboración interdisciplinaria

Con la complejidad de los problemas sociales modernos, se requerirá resocialización, capacitación y nuevas habilidades de educadores, profesionales y administradores. Por lo tanto, la colaboración interdisciplinaria y el trabajo en equipo cobrarán cada vez más importancia en la educación de los próximos años (Mariano, 1989). Los programas bilingües secundarios menudo se limitan a una rama dentro de una escuela. Las investigaciones han demostrado que existe un conflicto entre la implementación efectiva de los programas duales y la estructura de las escuelas secundarias, y que se necesitan enfoques interdisciplinarios para apoyar mejor los objetivos del programa y los discursos pluralistas (De Jong & Bearse, 2014).

En el nivel secundario, los maestros son expertos en su campo, pero a menudo trabajan de forma aislada o dentro de sus propios departamentos. Además, durante generaciones, el contenido curricular en las escuelas secundarias de los EE. UU. se ha impartido de naturaleza monolítica, centrándose principalmente en temas y cuestiones que se centran en el privilegio de los anglosajones blancos. La colaboración interdisciplinaria entre departamentos permitiría a los maestros no solo desarrollar experiencia en otros campos, sino también desarrollar una apreciación más sólida de las alineaciones de las diferentes áreas de contenido con las suyas. Los programas de formación docente deben preparar a los candidatos a docentes de todas las disciplinas para una educación interdisciplinaria coordinada para todos los estudiantes. Se basa en la premisa de que si los docentes deben colaborar en las escuelas y crear entornos de aula interdisciplinarios mejorados que fomenten mejor el crecimiento lingüístico y académico de los estudiantes, deben experimentar dicha pedagogía en los programas de formación docente en la universidad (Kaufman & Brooks, 1996).



Elemento #2: "Borrando barreras" con la colaboración translingùistica

Existen pocas investigaciones para guiar la implementación de programas duales a nivel secundario. Los estudios longitudinales que han considerado el rendimiento académicos de alumnos en programas de doble inmersión sugieren un patrón de resultados mixtos (De Jong & Bearse, 2011), Pocos estudios informan sobre el rendimiento en español en el nivel secundario (Cazabon et al., 1998; Lindholm- Leary, 2001). Además, la investigación sobre un program secundario bilingüe de inmersión bidireccional encontró que la equidad lingüística se vio socavada por las opciones programáticas de asignación de los dos idiomas. En un estudio de una escuela con un programa bilingüe de secundaria como una rama dentro de la escuela, solo dos clases de siete clases se impartían en español y el estatus de la clase de lectoescritura en español se redujo por la oferta del curso como uno de lengua extranjera. Aparte, la clase de español no se consideraba parte de las clases académicas principales. El estudio también encontró que la separación del español y el inglés afectó negativamente la capacidad de los maestros para brindar instrucción bilingüe y bialfabetización equitativa (De Jong & Bearse, 2014).

Los problemas que surgieron de los estudios mencionados apuntan a la importancia de elevar el idioma asociado en los programas duales a nivel secundario. Las complejidades de la organización de las escuelas secundarias y la ausencia de una articulación vertical entre las escuelas primarias y secundarias hace que la equidad lingüística en los programas de inmersión bidireccional de secundaria sea difícil de lograr. Sin embargo, es importante considerar replantear las estructuras monolíticas existentes de las escuelas secundarias para dar espacio a la colaboración interlingüística entre profesores de inglés y español. Se ha demostrado que las estructuras existentes no brindan los mismos resultados para todos los estudiantes. Por lo tanto, fomentar la colaboración interlingüística en las escuelas secundarias puede ser un curso de acción radical, pero muy necesario.

Elemento #3: "Abriendo las líneas de comunicación" con la colaboración constructivista

Los salones de hoy están pasando del modelo tradicional donde los estudiantes se sientan en filas verticales para aprender pasivamente de un experto en la materia. Las experiencias de aprendizaje ahora ocurren en todas partes y en cualquier momento a través de la colaboración, el intercambio y la reflexión entre pares. Estos cambios han conectado a los estudiantes educadores, recursos de aprendizaje y actividades en un entorno de aprendizaje colaborativo que permite a los estudiantes personalizar el proceso de aprendizaje y cambiar el papel determinante único de los educadores. De acuerdo con la teoría constructivista social, que se originó en el psicólogo soviético Lev Vygotsky, todo conocimiento se desarrolla como resultado de la interacción social y el uso del lenguaje y, por lo tanto, es una experiencia compartida, más que individual. (Vygotsky, 1978).

Aunque la mayoría de los estudios sobre constructivismo social abordan la forma en que los niños aprenden sobre la interacción social, se han escrito pocos estudios sobre cómo los adultos obtienen los beneficios del constructivismo en entornos de colaboración con otros adultos. Un estudio sobre estudiantes de posgrado en un programa de formación docente arrojó resultados favorables cuando se pidió a los participantes que colaboraran constructivamente en un proyecto de clase (Nyikos & Hashimoto 1997). En un estudio que analizó el impacto de un modelo integrado de co-enseñanza (TIC) entre maestros bilingües y de educación especial, se determinó que la colaboración entre maestros era un componente necesario para la implementación exitosa del modelo (Hatheway et. al, 2015). Los idiomas asociados en los idiomas duales secundarios deben participar en una colaboración constante que sea constructiva. Los profesores de idiomas asociados deben participar en experiencias colaborativas que conduzcan a una reflexión continua y al intercambio de ideas.

Elemento #4: "Creando una conciencia crítica" que favorece la equidad y justicia social

Las investigaciones actuales en dos idiomas aluden al valor de la conciencia crítica en la preparación de maestros de dos idiomas. El concepto fue acuñado por Paulo Freire (2005) y se llama conscientização, o concientización en portugués. Se refiere al aprendizaje como un medio para "percibir las contradicciones sociales, políticas y económicas y actuar contra los elemento opresores de la realidad". Según este concepto de conciencia crítica, es esencial tomar medidas definitivas para identificar creencias y prácticas generalizadas y perniciosas que prevalecen en todos los sectores de la sociedad. En el campo de la educación bilingüe, una manera de realizar esto es garantizar que los maestros bilingües reciban la preparación de calidad necesaria para Conclusión

Si se espera que los programas bilingües se expandan más allá del nivel de la escuela primaria, las partes interesadas del programa deben desafiar las prácticas hegemónicas ubicuas que dominan la implementación de muchos de estos programas. Aunque las estrategias de instrucción monolingüe juegan un papel esencial en el desarrollo de las habilidades de alfabetización en inglés, los profesores de inglés y los profesores de lenguas minoritarias deben participar en conversaciones colaborativas y en la planificación que se centre en la transferencia entre idiomas. También deben trabajar activamente para interrumpir los patrones persistentes de fuga de inglés y elevar el estatus de la lengua minoritaria.

Si no se abordan deliberadamente los problemas del estado del idioma en los programas secundarios de inmersión bidireccional en dos idiomas, puede resultar en un mayor privilegio del idioma inglés, así como en un plan de estudios reducido. Es una tarea cada vez más difícil para secundarios TWI programas negociar estas realidades y mantener el estatus de nivelación y aprendizaje oportunidades necesarias para apoyar las tres metas tradicionales de TWI para ambos idiomas y ambos grupos de estudiantes. Los programas de preparación para maestros de dos idiomas deben preparar a los maestros para que asuman el papel de agentes que actúan con determinación para tomar decisiones vitales sobre la orientación de sus programas, dictar su crecimiento profesional y reforzar el crecimiento de sus colegas. Los programas de preparación de maestros de dos idiomas deben equipar a los maestros con estrategias de colaboración marcos de instrucción basados en la equidad lingüística y cultural. La presentación de varios modelos de co-enseñanza y el modelado de la pedagogía translingüística, por ejemplo, pueden utilizarse como vehículos que pueden ayudar a la convergencia lingüística en los programas secundarios de dos idiomas. Si los programas secundarios de inmersión bidireccional tienen la intención de mantener sus tres objetivos, el desarrollo bilingüe y de alfabetización bilingüe, así como los problemas de cultura e identidad. hay que darles el mismo espacio.

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"We Learned to Read, to Speak, to Write, and to Make Our Voices Heard": Paulo Freire's Literacies in *The Last Cuentista*

Evelyn M. Pollins

Introduction

Many things are necessary for critical educators to be able to do the work of collaborating with students towards liberation—to create communities where teachers and students build knowledge together that will lead to a more equitable society. Among them are texts by, for, and about the oppressed, as well as texts that help to illuminate the path to liberation. When educators find a text that fits the first category, it may not necessarily fit the second. In this paper, I examine one text by a Latina author about a character hoping for a better future, the recent Newbery Award winner *The Last Cuentista* by Donna Barbara Higuera, through the lens of Paulo Freire's pedagogies to see how one highly regarded text by a minoritized author might be used to support liberation and where it might fall short.

Theoretical Framework: Freire's Literacies

While Freire's pedagogy is about much more than learning to read, learning to decode and comprehend print text is a foundational component of Freire's model of education. He divides his model into two parts: literacy and post-literacy. These two parts are often referred to as "reading the world" and "reading the world," respectively. In literacy, students learn to decode and comprehend writing; in post-literacy they learn to decode and comprehend the world. Despite the "post" part of "post-literacy," students do not have to "read the word" before they can "read the world." Students often come to literacy because they started to read the world (post-literacy) and saw that they needed to change it; sometimes they learn about this needed change through the literacy work. In either case, as students learn to read and write print text (and images) they learn more about the world, which helps them better understand print text. "This becomes deeper and more diversified, as the act of knowing in which it began" (Freire, 1978/1983, p. 100). The learner finds themselves in one of the most common themes in Freirean pedagogy: the dialectic.

Though Freire's work provides very few examples of literature qua literature being used by him or Freirean educators, it's possible to imagine how literature—fiction and nonfiction—could be used by critical educators in his vision. *Education and Democracy* offersthe case study of the Manoel de Paiva School, where literature is used alongside articles and other printed media from the environment in lieu of a textbook in order to address more "contemporary issues of [students'] lives" (O'Cadiz, et. al., 1998, p. 219). Literature, in Freirean pedagogy, is one tool for exploring a generative theme and providing perspectives from which students examine their world (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 84).

In order to use literature with a generative theme that facilitates exploration of the students' environments, it is necessary for much of the literature to be written by and about people who are similar to

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the students' themselves. While she does not explicitly cite Freire, Rudine Sims Bishop offers "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors," as a helpful framework for discussing these texts that could be useful in these communities (1990). Freirean pedagogy uses texts that *reflect* the world around the students and the generative theme, but the reflection of Bishop's mirror texts also gets deeper into "the essence of dialogue itself: *the word*" (emphasis original) (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 68). The word itself has two parts: reflection and action. Freire is of course not saying that the reflection needs to come from a literal mirror or even a figurative literary mirror, but reflection is essential to dialogue and action. As students learn to read the word, teachers are also learning more about their students and their world, which informs their teaching and helps them teach their students literacy as well as identify ways that students and teachers will work for change in their communities. Through this dialogue everyone learns and the outcome is not just recreated knowledge, it's action (praxis). A text that facilitated reflection (and supported action) would be a useful tool in a Freirean classroom. But as Bishop and others have pointed out, these reflections can be hard to come by in the literature that is available. Recently, this has shifted slightly. Since 2015, the most prestigious award in children's literature, the Newbery Award, has been awarded to a person of color every year except one. In the 93 years prior to that only five people of color had ever received the award. As children's literature diversifies and critical educators have more mirrors for their students, there is still the question of how well these books support a liberatory pedagogy.

The Last Cuentista

In 2022, the ALA awarded the Newbery Medal for only the second time to a Latina author, Donna Barba Higuera, for *The Last Cuentista*. (It was also the *first* time it ever granted the award to a science fiction novel.) *The Last Cuentista* also won its respective award for a book written by a member of a minoritized group that "best portrays, affirms, and celebrates" that culture—in this case, the Pura Belpré Award. Because the book is science fiction, there is a unique opportunity to look at both the world of the book through the lens of Freirean pedagogy and also look at the book from our perspective in the present on Earth as a potential tool for critical pedagogy. And given that Higuera and her main character are Latina, a possible reflective tool for millions of Latinx students.

The Story

The book tells the story of Petra Peña, a 12-year-old girl living in the year 2061. Haley's Comet is on a collision course with Earth. It is predicted to wipe out all of humanity, but a select few have been chosen to travel to a new planet called Sagan. Many people, including Petra and her family, will travel in suspended animation for 380 years and when they arrive will colonize Sagan for the human race. They will be supported by other humans, called monitors, who will monitor their suspension and maintain the ship for several generations until everyone arrives on Sagan. Petra's family is chosen because her parents are important scientists: her mother is a botanist, and her father is a geologist. Petra is reluctant to leave her abuela, Lita, and the cuentos she tells her. One consolation is how Petra will spend the next 380 years: while everyone is in suspended animation they will also be receiving "downloadable cognizance," or "cogs," implantations that deposit large amounts of knowledge into the recipient. Petra will receive cogs on botany and geology and also an elective on mythology so she can be a storyteller like her abuela. But of course, not everything goes to plan. First Petra does not receive the mythology cog as promised and also when she is put into suspended animation, she is still conscious. Her monitor, Ben, reads stories to Petra for a couple of days until she turns 13 and then "off the record," he "downloads" several civilizations of mythology as well as the complete works of several authors: Gaiman, Erdrich, Butler, Morrison, R.L. Stine, and others. She finally goes to sleep then and is reawakened 381 years later only to have all of these authors immediately systematically wiped from her memory. The people on the ship have renamed Petra to be Zeta-1 and expect her to "serve the Collective" as their botany and geology expert. The Collective is understood to have evolved from the monitors who were originally tasked with maintaining the ship when they left in 2061. They have genetically engineered themselves to lack diversity in

the name of equality. The author is careful to describe The Collective in a way that does not fit with any known race or ethnicity currently on Earth: they have translucent skin that reveals the tendons, muscles, and blood vessels beneath, and their features all have a lavender cast (Higuera, 2021, p. 73). We learn that virtually all the passengers from Earth who were meant to be kept in stasis until arrival on Sagan have been awoken at various points throughout the trip and had their memories wiped or, if memory elimination failed, they were "purged." The malfunction with Petra's original "downloads," due to the fact that she was on the cusp of adolescence but was still treated as a juvenile, means she is the only passenger on the ship who retains full memory of her life on Earth and their original mission. The remainder of the book is Petra's quest to free herself and the other people who were once Earthlings so they do not have to sacrifice themselves for The Collective.

The themes that the author highlights in *The Last Cuentista* are familiar in middle grade fiction and compatible with progressive educational goals: we are our stories, diversity is good, celebrate the uniqueness of individuals. The awards committee also likely appreciated the celebration of Mexican storytelling and culture through Petra's retelling of her abuela's cuentos and also a recurring appearance of another Pura Belpré Award-winning book by a Mexican American author, Yuyi Morales's *Dreamers* (2018).[1] In *The Last Cuentista*, Petra's younger brother, Javier, brings this book—about a single mother immigrating to the United States with her baby and finding community and solace in the library—aboard the ship with him as one of his few possessions. *Dreamers* reappears at several important points in the book to remind the characters of the power of story and to reenforce the theme of immigration and migration.

Cogs, Banking, and the Nature of Knowledge

One theme that stands out when examined through a Freirean lens is how knowledge and learning is approached in Petra's world. There are two primary ways of learning: storytelling and Downloadable Cognizance ("cogs"). Both of them reveal predominantly anti-Freirean ideas about the power dynamics of knowledge and learning and how learning and knowledge should be communicated and constructed.

Downloadable Cognizance is the most glaring example of the "banking" (Freire, 1970/1993) model of education. The "cogs" are spheres that are implanted at the base of a person's skull that contain a predetermined body of knowledge that, when implanted in the person, simply "soaks in instantly. Nothing like school, where I have to work to remember it all" (Higuera, 2021, p. 55). Many aspects of this "learning" fit the description of Freire's banking model of education. First and foremost, with the cogs, knowledge is something that can be easily packaged into a topic, and then deposited into the brain of a learner. This fits neatly within Freire's description of a banking model in which teachers "'fill' the students by making deposits of information which he or she considers to constitute true knowledge" (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 57). Freire goes on to describe how this model perpetuates systems of oppression, which are mirrored in *The Last Cuentista*: "Since people 'receive' the world as passive entities, education should make them more passive still, and adapt them to the world. The educated individual is the adapted person, because she or he is better 'fit' for the world" (ibid). In *Cuentisa*, the learners are so passive they are literally in stasis. As the story progresses, this kind of learning becomes highly manipulated by Petra's oppressors. The Collective has ensured the recipients of cogs will have the knowledge necessary to help them colonize Sagan. People are pulled out of stasis who have cogs that The Collective needs at certain times, and when they are "reactivated" The Collective is looking for "impeccable knowledge and compliance" (Higuera, 2021, p. 85). People who possess *more* than the required knowledge are reprogrammed and, if that does not work to erase "unnecessary" knowledge, they are "purged."

This model of education and knowledge is framed as clearly evil, but the evil comes from the erasure and disregard for aspects of the person aside from their knowledge. The story does not question this method of knowledge transfer as having any inherent problems. Freire's warning that the structure of the banking model itself creates passivity isn't illustrated here. This is clear because the character of Petra is still a hero who tries to fight back against The Collective despite being

1 This paper's title comes from this text.

the recipient of biology and geology knowledge deposits and, more importantly, never having engaged in any kind of dialogue that we see.

Which brings us to the story's most problematic perspective with respect to Freirean pedagogy: not that it might be useful to dump a lot of information into someone's head, but that people will learn and grow without ever engaging in any kind of dialogue. Freire does not say that there is never cause for the rote memorization of certain facts. He would probably appreciate having the ability to flip a switch and instantly be able to name all of the muscles in the human body or locate every country in the world on a map. However, this kind of learning does not even rise to the level of "necessary but insufficient," leaving it miles away from "sufficient" (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 31).

In illustrating how and why stories are essential to humanity, the book falls short. Stories are windows and mirrors. They are opportunities for dialogue. But, in The Last Cuentista they are simply one more thing to be deposited by bankers, used to mollify the listener into acceptance.

"But wait," one might say, "isn't one of the predominant themes of the book that stories are important?" Petra is ostensibly, according to the title, humanity's last storyteller. This must illuminate some importance to learning and knowledge beyond banking. But storytelling is not often dialogue, and it is not dialogue here, either. Petra is the recipient of stories from Lita. She is discouraged from interacting with Lita's stories or asking questions:

> "Había una vez" she begins her story, "a young fire snake nagual. His mother was Earth, his father the sun."
>
> "A nagual snake?" I ask. "But how can the sun and Earth be parents to something part human, part animal—"
>
> "*Sssh*. This is my story." (p. 3)

This particular story is even used to obscure and soften reality:

> "I'm scared Lita," I whisper.
>
> She pats my arm. "But for a moment, did you forget your troubles?'
>
> I don't answer out of shame. Her story *had* made me forget. Forget about what could happen to her and everyone else (ibid).

Later in the story, as Petra tries to free herself and other children who left Earth with her from The Collective, she uses stories, but like Lita, she uses them to pacify and even manipulate, not to engage in dialogue: "When we go on the next scouting mission," Petra tells the other children, "you all have to follow my directions. If you do, I promise to tell you as many cuentos as you want" (p. 209).

Petra's love of stories is peppered throughout the book, and the early scenes in which her monitor goes to great lengths to ensure that she hears as many stories as possible communicate that stories are essential to humanity. But in illustrating how and why stories are essential to humanity, the book falls short. Stories are windows and mirrors. They are opportunities for dialogue. But, in *The Last Cuentista* they are simply one more thing to be deposited by bankers, used to mollify the listener into acceptance.

Class, the Oppressor, and the Oppressed

The other theme of *The Last Cuentista* that is especially relevant to Freirean pedagogy is how it addresses power between groups. The book is a part of the current advancement for representation of minoritized identities in children's literature. For a long time, one of the most common storylines featuring a non-White protagonist were stories of struggle that stemmed from the oppression or obstacles imposed on a character's ethnicity (Thomas, 2016). Books such as *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* or *Esperanza Rising* are still widely taught in schools today because they are well-written texts that feature non-White protagonists, and also teach lessons about the struggles of Black Americans in the South or Mexican American migrant workers. In contrast to this framing, Petra's ethnicity is an aspect of her character that fills out her background and colors how she approaches the challenges she faces in the story, but it is only the source of her challenge in as much as

the antagonists of the story seek to wipe out the idea of ethnicity entirely with the goal of utopic unity and equality. Petra's parents are not struggling undocumented immigrants, they are accomplished scientists who have been invited onboard a ship sent to populate a new civilization. In the names and descriptions of the other passengers on board the ship, the author clearly makesan effort to depict a diverse group of people who have been sent to colonize Sagan: Petra describes the line of people boarding her ship as having "rainbow tones of neutral skin colors from white to dark brown" (Higuera, 2021, p. 22) who have last names like Nguyen and Aqarwal. The brief, cursory indications of the other characters' ethnicities gives the impression that in the year 2061 ethnic diversity is the norm, not something to be heavily commented upon. In many ways this is an advancement in the world of diverse children's literature. Mexican American readers should be able to read about characters who trans-language in Spanish and English and who are accomplished scientists. Non-White ethnicity does not need to be a burden.

This post-racialization of Earth 2061 is something to reflect upon given Freire's oppressor/oppressed dialectic. Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed has two stages: the oppressed realize they are being oppressed and through praxis they commit to transforming the system, and in the second stage this pedagogy and praxis no longer belongs only to the oppressed, it belongs to everyone (Freire, 1970/1993, p. 36). Power has to be reinvented, it cannot simply pass to the oppressed lest they become the oppressors (p. 39). In Freire's work he talks mostly of the oppressor and oppressed in relation to class. In America today, it is very difficult to separate race from the oppressor/oppressed class dichotomy. The economic and governmental regulations of the U.S. have tied race to class on many levels, from red lining to gentrification to education. But Freire saw class as the most salient stratifier. Fortyyears in the future, this story would have us believe that race has somehow been disentangled from this, but it avoids directly addressing class in terms of this dialectic. The only mention of class comes in Chapter 2, when the author (via Petra) describes how the world came to have three giant ships capable of traveling to a far-away planet in the first place. They were originally "luxury vessels to take rich people across the galaxy in comfort. . . reserved for the adventurous elite." Petra explicitly says the people who were supposed to board these ships were "nothing like us" (p. 7). The implication is that the starkest class distinctions of the oppressor/oppressed dialectic are not at play here. The very rich are not the ones escaping the planet's demise. But the author also does not give us any clues about what divides the "have"s from the "have-nots" at this moment in (future) history. Petra narrates, "How did those government politicians choose?" (p. 7) with no answer. The world still has power imbalances that aren't clearly defined.

In *The Last Cuentista* there are three groups. The group Petra is a member of, which is elite in any interpretation and, from the perspective of the other two groups in the book, the oppressor. Petra, her family, and everyone else who is put into suspended animation on the ship was specially chosen: "scientists, terra-formers, and leaders the government thought deserved to live more than others," with no stated criteria for this decision (p. 7). The parameters of the story are such that Petra's group of Sagan colonists are not explicitly oppressing the people being left behind on Earth. A solar flare has redirected Haley's Comet on a collision course with Earth only a week before the events of the beginning of the story take place (p. 8), creating a time crunch in which it is not conceivable that even a truly egalitarian society would have been able to figure out how to save everyone. By creating this time crunch and not revealing the criteria that the government used to select the people to colonize Sagan, the author seems to be performing a kind of feint—a passing of the buck on the discussion of whether Petra and her family made an ethical decision in agreeing to the mission. Petra voices her concerns about this briefly: she is reluctant to leave her abuela and at one point threatens to reveal her disability, a degenerative eye disease, to the people organizing the loading of the ship (p.10). Even though we don't know the actual criteria by which any of the passengers were chosen, Petra infers (and her parents confirm) that a disability would not be welcome. (This ableism is not directly addressed. Petra's disability is only mentioned at a few points in the story, and it is largely used as a method to complicate the plot.) It is also in this moment that the author gives the reader

the starkest picture of who is being left behind: "I don't want to remember the woman pulling off her wedding ring and pushing her baby forward, toward the armed guard. 'Please, please,' she mouthed over and over as we drove right through the gates" (pp. 11-12). There is acknowledgement that there is a great injustice happening, but the story avoids addressing who or what systems exactly are responsible for the imbalance of power. Short of stating in the first-person narrative "If I could, I'd let them all on" (p. 49), Petra does nothing to right this injustice.

The other oppressor/oppressed dialectic is less constrained by time and circumstance of the book. The question of whether and whom to evacuate from Earth hasto be answered within a week, and Freire would admit that this was not enough time to dismantle systems of oppression that led to decisions that saved only a select few. Once some people are on the ship though, another conflict arises. While still on Earth the reader learns of "an international movement" that has "received both great praise and even greater criticism," asking us to "imagine a world where humans could reach a consensus. With collective unity, we can avoid conflict. With no conflict, no war. Without the cost of wars, no starvation. Without differences in culture, in appearance, knowledge…" (p. 17). The spokesman for the group goes on to explain: "Inconsistency and inequality are what have led us to such unrest and unhappiness" (p. 18). The story has presented a dilemma that is not uncommon in Newbery-winning fantasy literature: "Wouldn't it be nice if there was peace and equality? But what if that meant we had to eliminate diversity? That's not such an easy decision, is it?!" This rebellion against sameness is a theme in Madeline L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962) and Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993), and it becomes the central theme of *The Last Cuentista*. Some members of this international group make it aboard Petra's ship among the monitors. We learn on page 50 that of the three ships slated to leave Earth and transport people to Sagan, one has left several days before Petra's ship and the third was to leave just after Petra's but was attacked by people on Earth who were being left behind. This third ship was the ship carrying the current politicians and president. Petra, in her semi-suspended state upon leaving Earth, hears the "Lead Monitor" say that this functional elimination of the current structure will allow them to "create a new history."

For revolutions to happen there must be an overthrow of the current oppressor. However, the story erases this by simply disappearing the government. A coup can be bloodless if one leaves the current government behind on a different planet. The Collective, of which the Lead Monitor is a member, says they want to remake and rewrite the world in a way that will be equitable for all. They acknowledge that the current structure doesn't allow for this. However, rather than participating in a dialogue that transforms their environment and liberates themselves and the government oppressors, the government just disappears and there is a void. And, in the space in which The Collective establishes a new government, no dialogue happens. Freire is explicit that a clear egalitarian vision needs to be developed and maintained through constant cooperation and dialogue (p. 39). Like many other vagaries in the plot, the author fails to show how this takeover actually takes place—our narrator is asleep for the entire evolution of the people who develop from the plan developed by either a group or one leader. What we do know is that, while egalitarianism is the goal, their only plan to achieve that is to equalize everyone physically and culturally (in that remnants of culture such as history and story are eliminated). Again, class is ignored, and rather than developing a pedagogy for everyone the oppressed become the oppressors.

This example of a failed liberation of the oppressed makes *The Last Cuentista* useful as a tool for Freirean pedagogy. The characters in the book agree that egalitarianism is good, but sameness is not the ideal way to achieve that: "I saw Dad shaking his head. 'Equality's good. But equality and sameness are two different things . . . It'll be our job to remember the parts we got wrong and make it better for our children and grandchildren. Embrace our differences, and still find a way to make peace'" (p. 19). Once Petra is awoken by The Collective the book outlines the ways in which this uniform and utilitarian society are not ideal: if it has potential to benefit the whole society, individuals are sacrificed. They also do not exactly follow through on their promise of no war: while there appears to be no major conflicts among members of The Collective them-

selves, when they arrive on Sagan and it is revealed that it is likely that the first ship to leave did arrive safely and has started to establish a settlement, The Collective tries to devise a way to wipe them out. The conclusion being that sure, The Collective can establish a world without war as long as they eliminate anyone who is not a member of The Collective—and isn't that what war on Earth was in the first place? The Collective has recreated the same problems of Earth even though they claim to have addressed the problems that caused them. This leaves a space for educators and readers to discuss: what would a truly liberatory pedagogy be for the future citizens of Sagan?

Conclusion

Science fiction stories are designed to highlight injustices and problems with our current society, and what is slightly jarring about *The Last Cuentista* is that while it does shine a spotlight on the problems with erasure of diversity and culture, the fact that it does *not* shine a spotlight on other problems of the current culture such as class and uncritical models of education may make it seem like it is okay with these injustices. However, the failing of the characters in *The Last Cuentista* to live up to Freirean pedagogy still make it a fruitful text for educators using a Freirean pedagogy—perhaps even more so than a text that presented an ideal. The "cogs" seem cool! But they fall drastically short of creating a liberatory pedagogy, so what would we need to add? The role of story in the text is also ripe for examination. Why is story important? When is it important to rewrite stories? What do stories tell us about others and ourselves? The author also perhaps purposely left plenty of unanswered questions that could spur dialogue in addition to problematizing her educational system. When Petra says, "It'll be our job to remember the parts we got wrong" (p. 19)—what did we get wrong? What is the way to make peace? In leaving these unanswered, the book serves as launching point for dialogue that could be quite productive.

Having books or characters who are the same ethnicity as an oppressed student is not sufficient for creating a liberatory pedagogy, but they are necessary. The recent diverse winners of ALA awards do necessary but not sufficient work to reflect our society and problematize different structures within it in a way that could facilitate dialogue in classrooms. This has not always been true of children's literature, but there does seem to be some indication that publishers, educators, and people who evaluate books are providing more and more opportunities to find and use these texts. There is always reason to be hopeful.

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Shifting Literacies in "Carried Away" by Alice Munro

Joyce K. Goldenstern

We usually think of literacy as the ability to write, read, understand written material, most specifically printed material. When that printed material is fiction¸ we expect to find a certain quality of coherence, such as unity of time,place, and character. Reading realistic fiction requires many literacy skills including decoding,and associations, and sometimes the arc of narration (and its sense of chronology) as well. In truth, there are many literacies. We hear today of numerical literacy, media literacy, computer literacy – all of which call for different acquired skills to navigate information needed to function successfully as a modern human being (or to engage our modern imaginations). Before these modern literacies evolved, , the literacy of orality and its conventions governed the way human beings negotiated and understood a pre-scientific world. In oral storytelling, narrators used recurring images and symbols, rather than a specific sequence of words to present mythology and folktales whose narrative arcs incorporate repetitive cycles They invoked what might be called psychological time rather than strict chronology (Roloff, 1993). Images or symbols are integral to realist genres as well, but might create different associations and ways of unfolding from what they evoke in oral literary genres. In an oral tradition, specific words (with the exception of stock phrases) are not fixed as they are in printed material. It is an image or symbol that is repeated and retold, not specific words per se. In oral cultures, "all utterances are winged, gone before they are pronounced," says scholar Ivan Illich (1991), thus estimating the fleeting worth of words and the impossibility of memory as "conceived as a storage room" to keep specific words in tact (Illich, 1991).

Even with new technologies, old media are seldom completely abandoned. Orality, manuscript, print, electronic, and wireless media co-exist in the modern world. Today's magic realism, for example, often demands that we navigate two different literacies at once: from orality, the literacy of myth and folktale (magic) and from print, the literacy of realistic fiction (realism). If we can transverse these two literacies successfully, we will have a doubly rich reading experience, though we may find ourselves in a liminal space where we are unable to come to a definite resolution or interpretation of meaning, thus leaving meaning uncomfortably (but fruitfully) open. I would like to explore the beauty and texture of shifting literacies in Alice Munro's "Carried Away."

"Carried Away" is a long short story (sometimes considered a novella) with four sections. The first three are realistic, taking place in a small fictional town (Carstairs) in Ontario, Canada at the time of World War I and the Spanish flu epidemic, specifically 1917-1919. Louisa, the town's librarian, corresponds with a local soldier fighting overseas – a young man named Jack Agnew. Although Jack is not someone Louisa knows personally, he initiated a romantic correspondence with

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her, spurred by a long-time, secret infatuation and by a dismal awareness of his probable impending death in battle. He does not, however, die in war, but when he returns to town, does not pursue the epistolary romance. Unbeknownst to Louise, Jack was engaged to someone else during their correspondence and feels he must fulfill his promise to marry his fiancé, Grace Horne. Though he survived the war, he nevertheless soon is killed, decapitated in a gruesome industrial accident in the Doud piano factory where he is working. Later, Louisa marries Arthur Doud, the owner of the factory in an odd and unsettling turn of events.

Reading Time in Tolpuddle Martyrs

The section of "Carried Away" called *Tolpuddle Martyrs* calls on us to shift to the skills of oral literacy as we read it. Though Munro's work is usually best appreciated as realistic fiction, and Munro herself would not usually be considered a magic realist, she does employ some of the conventions of magic realism in several of her stories, including this one. The reader has difficulty understanding the *Tolpuddle Martyrs* in strictly realistic terms, though by considering Louisa as old and ill and confused, some of the contradictions in the section can be logically (and realistically) explained away. The heart specialist, whom Louisa has gone to London, Ontario to consult, describes her heart as "wonky" and her pulse as "jumpy" (Munro, 1997), thus preparing us to accept Louisa's perceptions as unreliable, rather than magical. If the reader is determined to interpret *Tolpuddle Martyrs* in strictly realistic terms, he or she can rationalize that the appearance of the long-dead Jack (Louisa's former love interest) is purely a figment of Louisa's confusion. Such a reader, however, might have difficulty sorting out fantasy from fact throughout: for example, Did Louisa "really" read the newspaper story about Jack Agnew, the union spokesman from Toronto? Did someone seeming to be Jack "really" approach her? Did she "really" speak with Nancy, Jack's protégé? Were those she took at first to be the martyrs "really" Mennonites? The story does not give us enough information to answer these questions with certainty. The story does, however, give us enough provocative material to shift literacies from realism to magic, and to negotiate the questions above in another way and with another sense of time.

Though there are many terms one could use to denote the time evoked in folk material of the oral literary tradition (sacred time, mythic time, nonlinear time, cyclical time), I will often use the term *psychological time* in this paper, for it suggests that the gaps in sequence and logic that one finds in folk material (as in dreams) have importance and meaning to which one needs to be attentive and are not mere whimsy. The appearance of Jack in *Tolpuddle Martyrs* is unsettling, for we know he has died. Many readers scramble to try to find a way to make sense of it. Is there a possibility that Jack never died? But no, that is preposterous. His accident and its aftermath have been detailed in previous sections with realistic precision and with virtually no room for error. Chronological time cannot reconcile his sudden appearance here with what we have been told with certitude about his accident, death, and funeral in previous sections. Is there a possibility that this union leader is not Jack? But again, No. This stranger knows about Jack's wife, Grace, his daughter, Lillian, his father, Patrick Agnew, and his secret love, Louisa. His labor union affiliation is in accordance with Jack's life (and death). Furthermore, no possible cynical reason for an imposter to deceive Louisa presents itself in the story. Scholar Miriam Marty Clark (1996) has suggested that Jack's appearance signals an eruption of energy that the story thus far has suppressed and that needs to be "read":

> The repressed and appropriated energies of revolution return to compel the narrative out of linear time, to reverse its irreversible premise, to force a rereading and a rewriting of the past. These energies are powerful enough to disrupt both realist practice and the practices that have governed reading and interpretation into the twentieth century.

The reader must go beyond chronology, then, to make sense of the non-sense prevalent in this section of "Carried Away."

Resurrection

Resurrection from death is a common occurrence in mythology and religion, and a common occurrence

on an even more personal level. Those of us who have had parents or spouses die, often find ourselves visiting with our dearly departed in our dreams. It is not too much of a stretch, then, to assume that the theological acceptance of resurrection stems from a psychological reality and a need for completion beyond what the biological sometimes allows (Roloff, 1993). Resurrection is part of what Eliade (2005) in his classical study calls "the eternal return" – that part of traditional culture's consciousness that strives to combat the vicissitudes of time with atemporal, sacred ritual and belief in order to mitigate suffering and anxiety: ". . .through the repetition of paradigmatic gestures and by means of periodic ceremonies, archaic man succeeded, as we have seen, in annulling time," declares Mircea Eliade (2005).

Jack's resurrection in the *Tolpuddle Martyrs* is described eloquently by Munro as a "radiant vanishing consolation" (Munro 1997). It has afforded Louisa with an opportunity to take stock of her life. In a relevant article, Ildikó de Papp Carrington (1993) has suggested that Jack's resurrection allows needed psychological consolation and wish fulfillment: "Louisa's hallucination fulfills her wish not only to see Jack but also to shape his life as he has shaped hers: to have him rise from his original status as she has from hers" (Carrington, 1993). Carrington's mention of status refers to Jack "becoming" an articulate union spokesperson and leader after having been a factory worker. His resurrection as an able leader suggests a kinder fate might have awaited him than that of his untimely death -- a kinder fate that Louisa would have preferred for him: not only because it would allow him to survive and flourish but also would afford him the respect of an elevated social status, paralleling her own elevated status as a rich, married woman.

After Jack's death, Louisa unexpectedly marries Arthur Doud, the factory's owner. She tells the resurrected Jack, "And it turned out to be something else that I wanted entirely. I wanted to marry him and get into a normal life" (Munro, 1997). Being forced to consider Jack again perhaps reminds Louisa of conflicting allegiances and of possibilities not realized. She remembers getting to know Arthur after Jack's death and shares her memories with Jack. On Saturday evenings, Arthur visited the library where she worked, first to return Jack's books¸ but then to bask in the calm and quiet atmosphere of the empty library, and finally to be near Louisa with whom he was falling in love. As Arthur Doud sat reading at a table, Louisa would sometimes find herself looking up from her work to stare at the back of his neck and imagine it being struck and severed, indicating that she, in part, blamed him¸ the factory owner, for the dangerous conditions that led to the terrible accident and the death of her former (and forever) "would-be" lover. Jack and Louisa never consummated their long-distance love after the war. Jack's declarations of love in his letters to Louise, spurred by his certainty that he would die during the Great War, could never come to fruition because Jack felt obligated to marry Grace Horne with whom he had been engaged before the war.

Roberto Calasso's description of a mythic hero resonates as the reader considers Jack's resurrection:

> Mythical figures live many lives, die many deaths, and in this they differ from characters found in novels, who can never go beyond the single gesture. But in each of these lives and deaths all others are present, and we can hear their echo. Only when we become aware of a sudden consistency between incompatibles can we say we have crossed the threshold of myth (Calasso, 1994, p. 22).

Calasso's sentiments in this passage support the need to shift literacies from the print literacy of novels to the oral literacy of myth when trying to understand mythic "gestures," such as resurrection. His quote also calls readers to consider the "consistency between incompatibles" in all the Jacks: Jack the soldier, Jack the lover, Jack the reader, Jack the husband and father, Jack the factory worker, and Jack the resurrected union leader.

Binary Opposition

Jack's resurrection in *Tolpuddle Martyrs* sets in motion related binary opposites that further urge the reader to consider how best to read time in the story. Louisa, though she chats with the labor organizer Jack, fails to embrace his resurrected presence. As Louisa explains to Jack how pragmatic (rather than spiritual) she has gotten with age, she exclaims, "What a thing to talk to a dead man about" (Munro, 1997). Jack, however, never

admits his death, but rather calls his disappearance from Carstairs a sudden "opportunity to leave," presumably to become a union leader (Munro, 1997). Hence we have the binary opposition of death versus renewed life or even (considering the resurrection) eternal life. Binary images have been used as tools to understand folk material first by Levi-Straus (1969) and then by other structuralists in such a way that diminishes the importance of sequence and chronology, for it is the recurring pattern that these polar opposite pairs explore that reveals the significance of a folk story, more so than the linear narration. The binary opposition in *Tolpuddle Martyrs* forces us to focus on psychological time and the nature of time itself. Closely related to the pairing of death versus eternal life, the pairing of eternal love versus transitory love is presented as a point of debate. "Love never dies" (Munro, 1997) proclaims Jack. Louisa counters, "Love dies all the time" (Munro, 1997).

The psychological time ordering Tolpuddle Martyrs requires the readers of "Carried Away" (and many other modern stories) to shift literacy skills and to contemplate the nature of time itself.

Louisa has not always held such a cynical view. She, in her youth, had entered into two impossible, but potentially transcendent, relationships (one of them being with Jack) -- relationships with romantic longing and intense letter writing. Though now as a well-to-do aged widow and factory owner, Louisa sides with pragmatism and realism, she finds herself in the *Tolpuddle Martyrs* in the grips of an uncomfortable alternate reality – one in which the eternal and idealistic hold sway and youthful aspirations cannot be ignored: an old "intention" fires her "cells" as her hand rests on a chair "not far from [Jack's]," and in her mind she repeats his declaration, "*Oh, Never dies*" (Munro, 1997).

Triangle in Mythology

Just as the phenomenon of resurrection belies chronological time, but fulfills psychological time and introduces psychic opposition, so too do other mythological elements of *Tolpuddle Martyrs.* Indeed, we can assess the love triangle (Jack-Arthur-Louisa) as a type of Marxist myth – a dialectic triangle. Scholars of mythology (Patai,1972; Yair and Soyer, 2008) have noted ways in which Marxist ideology conforms to the form of myth. For example, the Hegelian-Marxist idea of dialectic (thesis, antithesis, synthesis) can be traced to the mythical idea of a magical triangle "which probably derived its significance from its correspondence to the male sexual organs" (Patai 1972), and which was considered eternal (beyond chronological time). In Marxist terms (and using Patai's schema), the *thesis* consists of bourgeois society (represented in the story by Arthur, the owner of a factory). The *antithesis* consists of the proletariat, which splits off from bourgeois society and negates it (represented in the story by Jack, a factory worker and later a trade union representative). The *synthesis*, according to Marxist theory, will occur sometime in the distant future when workers unite and take over the means of production and an ideal communist society emerges. In the story, Louisa does serve as a potential tool for synthesis in that she has loved Jack and has married Arthur: a bridge between the thesis and antithesis -- though she falls short of true synthesis to be sure, for class struggles persist as evidenced by Jack's union activity.

According to Yair and Soyer (2008), Marxism is predicated on two assumptions about human nature: First, that humans are creative users of tools, and second, that humans thrive when they live in harmony with nature. Harmony with nature evokes a golden age, a mythical Garden of Eden. In Munro's story, the character who comes closest to the ideal of an uncorrupted man, who would be most at home in the first garden is Patrick Agnew, Jack's father, who gardens and fishes and is described as a "lone wolf," fending for himself. Clark (1996) analyzes him in terms of pre-capitalism. In the *Tolpuddle Martyrs* section, Jack remembers his father by saying, "Sometimes I think he had the right idea" (Munro, 1997, p. 560). Louisa had passed Patrick many years before on the windy day of Jack's funeral, but they did not speak: Louisa, pensive and sad, wrapped her coat around her as she strode; Patrick, shunning conversation and focused on fishing suckers, minded his own business -- each alone in his or her own solitude, searching singular

ways to mourn.

The Marxist magical triangle, its myth of future utopia, and its primordial vision of man before capitalism can be joined with its spectacular celebrations of mythical heroes, who "live" beyond the grave (Lenin, Che, Hugo Chavez, the Haymarket martyrs, and, of course, the Tolpuddle martyrs). This reinforces a pattern of the eternal rather than the temporal, and in as much as these mythical elements are included in Munro's story, they call on readers to employ a literacy of orality when reading parts of "Carried Away."

Puddle, Muddle

The title of the section *Tolpuddle Martyrs* is drawn from actual historical events in trade union history and Tolpuddle itself is the name of a real town in the county of Dorset in southwest England where nineteenth century farm workers sought to organize for their mutual benefit. Authorities deemed their activities, which included taking a loyalty oath, illegal and arrested them. Several of the Tolpuddle "martyrs" settled in London, Ontario (the town where Louisa visits the doctor and runs into the resurrected Jack) after being released from prison in Australia where they had been deported. Their history dovetails nicely with the Marxist dialectic (the magic triangle) that Munro (1997) sets up in her story and which was discussed previously. Not only does the history and ritual celebration of the Tolpuddle martyrs inspire the last section of "Carried Away," but also, I would argue, the unusual sound of the name *tolpuddle* inspires it as well. The word itself seems fortuitously to set off at once a series of related word-images or sound images or linguistic-complexes (as Kugler, 1982 calls them) that populate the section, undermining linearity and reinforcing psychological time and psychological associations in a way not dissimilar to the way a psychoanalyst uses them. They rely upon word associations or Freudian slips to understand the neurosis of a troubled patient. The word *tolpuddle* elicits the words *mud, puddle, muddle* – three word-images repeated in this section of "Carried Away," all three emphasizing the text's purposeful lack of clarity and sequence. We have already briefly mentioned how Louisa provides a murky synthesis to the dialectic set up between Jack and Arthur. Tellingly, her children call her affectionately by her nickname "Mud" (presumably a childish mispronunciation of Mother, which has stuck for years, her son and stepdaughter now grown). Though not an ideologue, Louisa's life as a factory owner's wife has allied her with her husband's interests, though she sees her participation in his life mostly in terms of her own hard work: "We worked hard...We tried making everything we could think of... I still work...I am always thinking about the factory, that is what fills my mind" (Munro, 1997). Nonetheless, she is confused enough or interested enough in the perspective of the working class to read about and then walk toward the gathering Tolpuddle celebration; she is aware enough to mention low wages in Quebec to Jack; and she is open enough to remember her ill feelings toward Arthur after Jack's industrial accident. In general, "Carried Away" does not strive to delineate clear lines of class tension and these related word-images emphasize that point. Though this story references class issues and conflicts, it does so as a mythic backdrop to idiosyncratic characters – characters who can be read mythologically (with the literacy skills of oral tradition), but who also must be read realistically as complex characters. Both Jack and Louisa remain considerate and pliant throughout their conversation despite their different class interests, and we know from other sections of the story that profit alone does not motivate the conscientious capitalist Arthur, a character impelled by authenticity (Pruitt, 2000). Character types are not fixed in the story, and thus readers benefit from trying to understand them from shifting literacies.

The actors representing the Tolpuddle Martyrs, when they finally appear before Jack and Louisa, slowly "melt into a puddle" (Munro, 1997, p. 561) as Jack mingles with them and then also disappears before Louisa's eyes: "a traitor, helplessly" (Munro, 1997, p.562). It is, perhaps, the sound of and watery associations of the word *puddle* that make Louisa realize that she has gone "under a wave," that she finds herself now in a hopeless "muddle" (Munro, 1997, p.562) and that surprisingly those she once took to be the somber martyrs have transformed into or been replaced by traveling Mennonites waiting in a temporary bus station, passing out butterscotch mints. Reality itself is in flux. Any narrative momentum in this section simply dissolves, leaving the profundity of liminal space and time (space and time

between myth and reality) to prevail. What remains at the end of this section are holes and gaps and an old woman's puzzlement: her question – What place is this? – hangs in the air, begging an answer.

Upon Time

"What place is this?" is the question, then, that ends the section – but not quite. Visually on the page, after the question is asked and unanswered, we see four more paragraphs that draw the story to a close. Though technically these paragraphs fall under the section labeled *Tolpuddle Martyrs,* they serve as a coda to the entire story and conclude it, visually setting off on their own with extra space. Notably this coda not only concludes the story, but in a certain sense begins it as well, for it takes us back to the day Louisa first comes to Carstairs to live in the hotel and work in the library. This day has been alluded to previously in the narrative, but does not, in fact, begin the narrative and so is not really part of the main storyline or story sequence itself, just as Louisa's life before Carstairs has been alluded to, but seems as remote as Greek mythology before the Olympians, the time of mist and chaos.

Munro (1997) jars us with her first sentence of the coda: "On the day of Miss Tamblyn's death, it happened that Louisa was staying in the Commercial Hotel" (Munro, 1997, p.562). Who is this Miss Tamblyn? Oh, yes, we have heard that name before, mentioned briefly by Arthur as he mused one evening in the library. Miss Tamblyn was the old woman who worked as the librarian before Louisa did. She was Louisa's professional predecessor: Louisa, hearing of her death, makes a "swift decision" to secure the job for herself. She believed in, we are told, "the unforeseen intervention, the uniqueness of her fate" (Munro, 1997, p.563). But why are we learning of this long-ago day now at the end of the story? Why are we here "in this place" when we have just been in another town and never got the muddle there sorted out? Why are we being taken back to the first day in Carstairs?

Folk material often uses the stock phrase "upon time." "Once upon a time" is a way to begin a story, but it also signals something strange about how we shall consider time in that story. What does it mean to be "upon time"? In these final paragraphs of "Carried Away," the young woman Louisa is assessing the town where she will spend the rest of her life from the perspective of her third-floor room in the Commercial Hotel: She feels calm as she stares at "the snow-covered hills over the rooftops" (Munro, 1997, p.563), and the whole town stretches out before her. It is at this poignant moment as she peruses the town from above that the reader (who has already read her whole story) understands that along with the quaint town nestled in a river valley, Louisa's whole life is stretching out before her: she is "upon time": ". . . the streets were lined with mature elm and maple trees. She had never been here when the leaves were on the trees. It must make a great difference. So much that lay open now would be concealed" (Munro, 1997, p.563).

The coda in "Carried Away" may signify Louisa's death. Louisa's illness and bafflement experienced in London, Ontario in *Tolpuddle Martyrs* and her visit to the heart specialist there may foreshadow her imminent demise. One of the horse-drawn sleighs referenced in the coda might well be a hearse, carrying her in a coffin. And so it might be: In the end, the beginning. In the beginning, the end – the cyclical nature of time is the sacred, psychological time of oral literature, which has marked and enriched this complex, realistic story. The psychological time ordering *Tolpuddle Martyrs* requires the readers of "Carried Away" (and many other modern stories[*)] to shift literacy skills and to contemplate the nature of time itself.

Note

I have used the idea of shifting literacies to understand and analyze the story "Runaway" by Alice Munro, the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, the story "Bluebeard's Eggs" by Margaret Atwood, and the story "Flowering Judas" by Katherine Anne Porter. These are just four of many examples which lend themselves to such analysis. As I indicated in the opening paragraphs, shifting literacies might also be applied to much of literature categorized as magic realism.

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Critical and Authentic Reading in Secondary English Arts Classrooms

Jennifer Gallman

Banning and challenging books in the United States is not a new endeavor; however, the uptick of book challenges, specifically those in secondary English Language Arts (ELA) classrooms, creates new anxieties for English teachers who worry that culturally diverse student and author voices will be silenced. Friedman & Johnson (2022) of Pen America reported an increase of over two thousand banned books by over one thousand different authors/illustrators/translators, and of those thousands of restricted materials, around forty percent are related to LGBTQIA+ themes or non-White characters. Simultaneously, the varied student population in the United States continues to grow, creating an imbalance of real-world representation in the classroom curriculum. The U.S. Government Accountability Office released a report on July 14, 2022, stating, "during the 2020-21 school year, more than a third of students (about 18.5 million) attended schools where 75% or more students were of a single race or ethnicity" (Nowicki, 2022); therefore, schools are still divided racially, ethnically, and economically regardless of the growth in student diversity. In fact, the Institute of Education Sciences in May 2022 announced a decrease in White students from 2009 to 2020. The acceleration in student diversity should be reflected in the curriculum taught within the ELA classroom by providing students opportunities to read children's and young adult books related to social justice issues, thereby foregrounding critical literacy and providing authentic experiences within the classroom.

Framework

In a critical literacy framework, students are asked to engage with the materials given to them (or preferably the materials they choose) and ask questions regarding and synthesizing information about important topics such as history, race, and gender. McLaughlin & DeVoogd (2004) indicated that critical literacy requires "a need to question rather than passively accept the information we encounter" (p. 52). Often in secondary public school classrooms, students sit at their desks and are given the assignment to read and answer comprehension questions–passively ingesting any information the educator deems important or skimming the surface of a text. Paolo Freire called this act of passive education the banking model in the groundbreaking work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. As students continue to be consumers in the education process, Freire (1970/1993) suggested "the more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them" (p. 73). The educator in power who believes in this banking model provides the fragmented and subjective view of reality to control the materials selected for the course curriculum and eliminate choice and critical literacy from the curriculum. Instead, educators enacting a critical literacy approach ask their students to challenge the world around them through texts that represent their identities, their race and

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gender, and their communities.

To guide this literature review and define critical literacy in the twenty-first century, I used the four tenets of critical literacy from Lewison et al. (2002) who looked at over thirty years of meanings behind critical literacy. The four tenets include "(1) disrupting the commonplace, (2) interrogating multiple viewpoints, (3) focusing on sociopolitical issues, and (4) taking action and promoting social justice (Lewison et al., 2002, p. 382). Each of the four tenets directly connects to the four themes of social injustice, literacy and power, authentic reading, and critical literacy (as a topic as well) by providing critical educators with the power to include more inclusive texts in the classroom.

Lewison et al. (2002) characterize disrupting the commonplace by understanding the historical stance of school subjects as a problem (Shor, 1987), learning to question the purpose of texts (Luke & Freebody, 1997), integrating critical media literacy and pop culture (Marsh, 2000; Shannon, 1995; Vasquez, 2000), incorporating critical and hopeful language (Shannon, 1995), and analyzing how texts establish or criticize the status quo (Fairclough, 1989, p. 383; Gee, 1990). Interrogating multiple viewpoints allows students to reflect on multiple perspectives that may be contradictory to the reader (Lewison, Leland,& Harste, 2000; Nieto, 1999), investigating whose voices are represented and whose voices are silenced (Luke & Freebody, 1997), from those voices who are silenced, figuring out how to raise those voices (Harste et al., 2000), examining narratives and counternarratives (Farrell, 1998; Lewison et al., 2002, p. 383). By focusing on sociopolitical issues, Lewison et al. (2002) suggest examining the sociopolitical involvements around us (Boozer, Maras, & Brummett, 1999), studying language and power to disrupt unequal power relationships (Fairclough, 1989; Gee, 1990), incorporating literacy into daily life and its politics (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993), and seeing literacy as a means to empower those not in power to build consciousness and resistance (Giroux, 1993). Finally, in order to take action and achieve social justice, educators need to engage in praxis (Freire, 1970/1993), question privilege and justice through language (Comber, 2001), study language for features of domination, access, diversity, and change current conversations (Janks, 2000). By providing students with opportunities to read about social injustice through the power of authentic and critical reading, all four tenets of critical literacy are possible (given educator buy-in and a supportive administration) but unlikely if students are passive recipients of canonized literature that represents a singular, outdated viewpoint of reality.

Methods

Research pertaining to critical and authentic reading was reviewed in order to examine the relationship between stakeholders and multicultural literature that is often banned or challenged. Specifically, the purpose of this review is to identify research that supports diverse texts in the secondary English Language Arts classroom. A literature search related to critical and authentic reading in the English Language Arts curriculum took place in the following databases using only peer-reviewed results and a date range of 1989-2022: Academic Search Complete, Education Full Text, Education Research Complete, EBSCO Host, and ERIC. I used several keywords to search for relevant peer-reviewed articles and then refined those keywords as searches returned fewer results. While some keywords like social justice returned several results though not necessarily related to curriculum, other keywords like literacy and power returned fewer results though literacy alone returned more results than the phrase literacy and power. The term critical literacy returned the most articles and was important for exploring the framework for the literature review as well as a subtopic.

To be included, an article had to meet the following criteria: (a) printed in a peer-reviewed journal; (b) written in English; (c) must address one of the keywords/subjects found in Table One; (d) focused on specific age groups of learners; and (e) the full-text was available. Book chapters were also included for analysis. Essays, commentaries, government reports, book reviews, and magazine and/or newspaper articles were excluded.

The keywords are summarized below, with the number of resulting articles for each keyword search with a beginning limiter of the publication dates of 2020-2023 then expanding back to 1993 to include

foundational works (See Table 1). Articles were printed and sorted into categories of similar topics (social justice, literacy and power, authentic reading, and critical literacy). The four tenets from Lewison et al. (2002) were critical in accepting and organizing articles based on keywords (see Table 1). Several articles were discarded after concluding that the articles were not related to the four tenets, English Language Arts, secondary school, banned or challenged books, or were book reviews or booklists of recommended texts.

Table 1. *Keyword Search for articles published from 1989 to 2022*

Keyword	Tenet	Number of Articles
Social Justice	1. Disrupting the commonplace 2. Interrogating multiple viewpoints 3. Focusing on sociopolitical lives 4. Taking action and promoting social justice	48
Literacy and Power	1. Disrupting the commonplace 2. Interrogating multiple viewpoints	50 (searched separately and together)
Authentic Reading	1. Interrogating multiple viewpoints	32
Critical Literacy	1. Disrupting the commonplace 2. Interrogating multiple viewpoints 3. Focusing on sociopolitical lives 4. Taking action and promoting social justice	68

Note: There is some overlap in the keyword search of several articles

Literature

Social Justice

Today, more publishers are highlighting the voices of authors of color, and more LGBTQ authors and allies are telling the stories of marginalized youth. To silence these voices is to mute student voices in the classroom, which essentially stifles any equitable opportunity to learn. Educators who fight against book bans and for diversity in children's and young adult literature are social justice advocates in the education system, but there has to be a buy-in from secondary English teachers specifically to see themselves as agents of change. Moje (2007) argued that learning opportunities must "provide access to mainstream knowledge and practices but also provide opportunities to question, challenge, and reconstruct knowledge" (p. 4). Essentially, a social justice lens provides students the opportunities to access materials that they not only consume but learn to critically engage; the problem is that not all students receive these opportunities.

Cazden et al., (1996) argued that "literacy educators and students must see themselves as active participants in social change, as learners and students who can be active designers--makers--of social futures" (p. 64). While this alignment of English teachers as social justice advocates is not an easy process, the transition is certainly a vital one for the protection of a student population that needs multicultural literature in the classroom (Savitz, et al., 2022).

To begin this process, one must embrace not only a social justice mindset but also a socially just pedagogy. Moje (2007) clarified socially just pedagogy as "equitable opportunities to learn" (p. 3) and social justice pedagogy as "involv[ing] more than providing equitable learning opportunities" (p. 4). While an ELA teacher may provide an opportunity to access culturally encompassing texts (socially just pedagogy), they should also provide opportunities to critically engage (social justice pedagogy) with those texts. Part of having those equitable outcomes is offering choices in inclusive texts; therefore, the first step of becoming a social justice educator is looking at one's view of the school. Cazden et al. (1996) clearly stated, "An authentically democratic view of schools must include a vision of meaningful success for all, a vision of success that is not defined exclusively in economic terms" (p. 67). Equitable and meaningful opportunities can be provided by offering meaningful texts because providing White-only texts to classrooms of mostly non-White students is not providing children with a view of their own lives and cultures. Silva & Savitz (2019) highlighted the significance of including more diverse young adult (YA) literature to critically analyze adolescent constructs (p. 330). By allowing students the opportunity to identify with these texts, they can progress to analyzing those texts through a critical lens that analyzing the canon does not provide.

One way to incorporate a critical lens is to look at current news and determine who has the power and who does not – whose voices are represented and whose are silenced (Dunkerly-Bean & Bean, 2016). If a critical literacy educator faces a situation in which they cannot change the curriculum in favor of socially just pedagogy, they can still change the narrative by asking students to add their diverse voices to canonized texts. Implications for the classroom here could be providing Socratic Seminars where students have the opportunity to discuss connections between the provided text and real-world events. For example, students are not given a choice of what text to read due to current and restrictive policy, so the class reads *Twelve Angry Men* by Reginald Rose. A critical literacy educator can open dialogue with their students through a Socratic Seminar where students read fiction or nonfiction social justice issues such as police brutality (read *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds or *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone) or the mistreatment and hatred towards Muslim Americans and Chinese Americans (read *Internment* by Samira Ahmed or *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang). In the Socratic Seminar format, students first meet together as a group to discuss the themes present in the texts, asking each other questions about connections to the texts and themes, and building empathy towards each other. After the Socratic Seminar, students receive more individualized instruction in how they continue to respond to the text; for example, students have a choice in how they complete their final engagement with the text, which may be to research more about the topics and themes of the text (current legal cases or news articles that showcase the present-day relevance of the themes), create a presentation related to historical events, or teach the class connections to a paired text.

Providing choice is an important component of critical literacy classrooms. Asking a student to ignore their backgrounds, cultures, and identities forfeits any hope of social justice in the education system. In an equitable education system, the student is the center of the learning process, and all other methods or frameworks, or strategies, branch off from the student's learning preferences. Kaput (2018) clarifies that there is no agreed-upon definition for student-centered learning; however, "the unifying theme is that in student-centered learning the model shifts from being adult-centered and standardized to student-centric and individualized" (p. 10). Learning, then, becomes personalized to each student, allowing students the space to research related topics to canonized or non-flexible texts allows students to change the narrative.

There is power in literature and literacy: the power within the students, the power within the written word, the power within the author, and the power within the subject matter. When a critical literacy educator has a multicultural student population (even when they do not) , and the curriculum prohibits inclusive texts, institutionalized racism overpowers minority cultures.

Diaz (2021) asked educators to include student backgrounds, identities, and social structures to allow for their future success (p. 13). To facilitate this, researchers have critically analyzed YA literature based on broad social themes such as freedom (Bean & Harper, 2006), privilege (Glenn, 2008), social justice (Glasgow, 2001), or specific demographics of people found in the text with whom some students can identify, such as rape victims (Alsup, 2003). If an educator has thirty students in the classroom, certainly they are thirty students with thirty different backgrounds and experiences. The likelihood of choosing one novel that connects to all thirty students is low. Providing a variety of choices increases the likelihood that students will be able to connect to the text. One tangible way to provide more choices in the secondary ELA classroom is through book clubs where students have the opportunity to select a book to read with a small group of their peers connected to a broader theme the whole class is studying.

Literacy and Power

There is power in literature and literacy: the power within the students, the power within the written word, the power within the author, and the power within the subject matter. When a critical literacy educator has a multicultural student population (even when

they do not) , and the curriculum prohibits inclusive texts, institutionalized racism overpowers minority cultures (Fairclough, 2022). All educators have a unique responsibility to engage students using multicultural literature thereby empowering student voices in the classroom.

Incorporating multicultural literacy "has both 'tangible' and 'intangible' benefits of both empowerment and dignity" (Madison & Cole, 2022, p. 209). Some examples of tangible benefits may include an increase in participation by minority students in the classroom as well as students learning about differing viewpoints and cultures. Some examples of intangible gains may include increasing self-esteem and pride in one's identity. Recognizing that what occurs outside of the classroom has a direct impact on the students in the classroom allows an educator to make decisions regarding curriculum that includes incorporating comprehensive texts and raising up student voices. Pennycook (2016) suggested that "everything in the classroom...needs to be seen as social and cultural practices that have broader implications than just elements of classroom interaction" (p. 33). The power of aligning one's curriculum with real-world events, modern cultural practices, and new and evolving identities lies at the heart of, not only socially just pedagogy, but in education itself.

Because a classroom is representative of social and cultural practices, there exist levels of power structures between educator and student, student and student, and educator and administration. Savitz, et al. (2022) suggest:

White students, students of color, and other historically marginalized students need educational opportunities that will not simply support students' access to social, economic, and academic power structures, but also develop language and literacy practices capable of challenging the White-dominated status quo (p. 2).

Essentially, a critical literacy or social justice educator seeks to empower all students, and an initial step towards the dismantling of the power structures that currently control the education system is to challenge the power structures that dictate curriculum. To interrogate and ultimately challenge those power structures through literacy is to embrace inclusive texts and amplify the voices of the disenfranchised. The issue here is the policy itself and the difficult journey to make any systemic change. Policy assume[s] that teachers who are empowered, sincere, and serious about their work would be able to tailor programs and activities to the needs and interests of individual children. Such an approach makes sense only when teacher knowledge is widely and richly distributed in our profession. To offer these prerogatives in the face of narrow and shallow knowledge is to guarantee that misguided practices, even perversions of the very intent of the movement, will be widespread. The puzzle, of course, is where to begin the reform—by ensuring that the knowledge precedes the prerogative, or by ceding the prerogative to teachers as a way of leveraging their motivation for greater knowledge. (Pearson, 2004, p. 223).

A blueprint for policy change is not created by one critical literacy educator but by a movement of educators to intentionally and meaningfully decide that enough is enough. No more gag orders. No more silence. No more book bans.

Adam Stone (2022) of TEACH Magazine provides some tangible implications for the classroom in terms of the policy change including: having conversations with parents or guardians about books and inviting parents or guardians to join in conversations with their children and with the teacher about the book's content, allowing time after reading a challenged or banned book for students to write testimonials or reviews explaining what they enjoyed about the book, joining groups like PEN America, NCTE, or the ACLU to help fight policies that seek to ban books and materials in the classroom, and becoming friends with the school's librarian(s) who are often more knowledgeable about the school's current status with certain books. Building relationships with administrators, district office faculty, local community leaders, students, and parents are the most beneficial steps toward fighting policy change.

Authentic Reading

Young adults bring excitement and anxiety, joy and heartache, reflection and criticism into the classroom, and they, perhaps more than anyone else, acknowledge that what happens in their lives outside

of school becomes a part of the fabric of their student lives. Educators can acknowledge that "what goes on inside the classroom is always tied to what goes on outside" (Pennycook, 2016, p. 33). The unpredictability, and often tragic nature, of the real world can lead to many conversations in the classroom that are critical for fostering growth and supporting identity. When faced with a devastating event like a school shooting or police brutality, classrooms need to be spaces where students feel safe to have conversations, and books are often mechanisms for these types of dialogues. Not only a space for safety, but classrooms themselves are also locations for interrogating injustice and false narratives (Wilder & Msseemmaa, 2019). For example, a book like *A Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds, can lead students to think critically about the cycle of violence and decisions that not only impact one's own life but the life of a possibly innocent person. *Monday's Not Coming* by Tiffany D. Jackson, forces students to think about their classmates and understand that no one knows what is going on with the student next to them and that trauma and abuse can easily be concealed. Allowing students the opportunity to make these connections to themselves and to their classmates increases self-awareness and empathy.

These situations of crisis are not to be avoided, bottled up, and thrown away; instead, critical literacy educators must embrace these heavy topics by incorporating opportunities to read children's and young adult books of other's perspectives and, potentially, to converse with other students about possible trauma. In discussing adolescent literacy, Dunkerly-Bean & Bean (2016) stated, "the language of adolescent literacy has largely been one of crisis" (pp. 456-457). More children's and young adult authors are writing about traumatic events because traumatic events occur almost daily in the United States. Silva and Savitz (2019) believe YA literature allows opportunities for students to critically engage in topics that are relevant to their lives, their identities, and their cultures. If educators continue to disregard what is happening outside the classroom, the students sitting in the classroom are less likely to have a true understanding of all of the events, both the tragic and the fantastic. Unfortunately, many of the books being banned and challenged in the last few years are relevant to the tragedies, and the emotions to process these events can be suppressed by decision-makers and banking educators. Books can be therapeutic, not only for the author but for the reader.

Many of the books being banned and challenged are also critical in order to understand history. Concerning children's books, Duncan (2020) pointed out that when teaching historical topics like slavery many children's books omit vital information. Some authors may be afraid of including too much information that would deem the books as controversial or inappropriate for a specific grade level. The traditional thinking is that perhaps it is better to give children some history rather than no history at all. However, educators need to ask whose story is being excluded when these "controversial" topics are left out of texts.

Brown vs. The Board of Education, declared segregation in education unconstitutional in 1954; however, there is little payoff from the legislation regarding diversity of materials and curricula. Looking at "education after Brown," Guinier (2004) asserted, "Public education became a battlefield rather than a constructive gravitational force within many communities" (p. 114). Parents attacked teachers, children attacked each other, and political forces became a mainstay in the curriculum. Many places in the South saw violence and racism pending desegregating schools, and many schools today contend with racial conflict, a lack of resources, and an overall stranglehold by those in power (Hawes & Parker, 2016). Perhaps Alim & Paris (2017) said it best: "the purpose of state-sanctioned schooling has been to forward the largely assimilationist and often violent White imperial project, with students and families being asked to lose their languages, literacies, cultures, and histories in order to achieve in schools" (p. 1). Think about canonized books here (with excerpts still found in most textbooks across the country): *To Kill a Mockingbird* (often taught in ninth or tenth grade), *The Great Gatsby* (often taught in eleventh grade or American literature), and *Beowulf* (often taught in twelfth grade or British literature) all represent the bedrock of Western culture and the White savior mentality. Instead of, or as a pairing with, teaching these canonized texts, critical

literacy educators can pair *To Kill a Mockingbird* with *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson or *Stamped from the Beginning* by Ibram X. Kendi in tenth grade to discuss the history of racism in America, pair *The Great Gatsby* with *Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry in eleventh grade to discuss the American Dream and personal sacrifice, and pair *Beowulf* with *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe in twelfth grade to discuss the honor and glory of the English culture and the violence of imperialism.

Critical Literacy

Once students are given the tools to think critically about the world around them, critical literacy educators are likely to see growth in their students' empathy towards each other and a deeper understanding of the events that happen in their lives. The purpose of education "is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential" (hooks, 1994, p. 13). Whether a conversation occurs through open dialogue, debate, or journaling, books are conversation starters and powerful tools for student growth.

Nevertheless, growth may not exist without critical literacy, critical thinking, critical conversation, and critical reflection. Thinking of the last few years particularly, which include the COVID-19 years, an increase in school and mass shootings, and an increase in police brutality, "it is more important than ever to provide our students with the discipline and disposition to view issues that arise in society, to collaborate on potential resolutions to those issues, and to debate the merits of proposed resolutions" (Malloy et al., 2020, p. 97). Many of these topics are found in books like *All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds which discusses police brutality and *This is Where It Ends* by Marieke Nijkamp which deals with school shootings.

One of the most significant areas of book challenges and bans involves LGBTQIA+ and sexual content. *Together Apart* by Erin A. Craig, Auriane Desombre, Erin Hahn, and others which follows teen relationships including the love story of two boys. *The 57 Bus* by Dashka Slater follows an agender teen who is set on fire on a bus ride home where both the agender character and the violence of setting a human being on fire are both controversial. *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe is an autobiographical graphic novel that became the most widely known banned book in the United States since 2021 (Alter, 2022). Of the American Library Association's (2023) 2022 Top 13 Most Challenged Books, all 13 include LGBTQIA+ and sexual content. While these topics are certainly difficult, they allow spaces for students to wrestle with questions of character and motivation, of seeing they are not alone in their experiences.

Students need this reflective practice to cope with challenging topics that exist within society. Therefore, putting these books in the hands of students can ignite curiosity and passion about difficult and uncomfortable topics. Arguing the need for critical literacy, Cridland-Hughes (2016) calls for an education system that is inclusive of all students from all backgrounds as they represent not only themselves but their families and communities. While many public school districts have grown more conservative in the last decade in regard to curriculum and book choices, the lives that students bring into the classrooms, which are reflected in children's and young adult books, are increasingly complicated. Student voices deserve to be heard, authors' voices deserve to be read, and educator voices deserve to be respected.

Conclusion

The themes of social justice, literacy and power, authentic reading, and critical literacy appear throughout the literature, leading to one main conclusion: social justice is the result of powerful, authentic, and critical literacy when administration allows educators curricular diversity and when students become actively and critically engaged with these diverse materials. More scholars today are speaking out against discrepancies in the lack of equity and access in secondary ELA curricula by providing arguments for social justice texts that can replace canonized literature, or pair with canonized literature, at the very least. Power must be won through the struggle against those who seek (banking educators and conservative politicians) to restrict culturally encompassing materials and given to the social justice advocates, the educators, who

want to amplify the voices of their students. Ultimately, culturally diverse texts encourage empathy, create bonds between students and the community, allow students to engage in authentic conversations about controversial topics, and ask students to change the world. As cliche as that may sound, in 2022, amidst the thousands of attempts to silence specific voices, educators are now the negotiator between the powerful voices in a school district and the voices that matter most: the students.

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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.

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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.

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