

Experiencing Cultural Diversity Through Film:
A Practitioner Inquiry on Developing Cultural Proficiency in a High School
Spanish Classroom

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ABSTRACT

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World Language classrooms are an ideal place to have discussions related to race, culture, and other topics related to diversity, but many of these chances are missed based on the teacher's experience, outdated textbooks, and a history of placing grammar first. This practitioner inquiry held the goal of incorporating the Cultural Proficiency Continuum Framework into the Spanish curriculum in a 9th grade Spanish I classroom. The teaching of this framework alongside the use of films and documentaries provided a rich scenario for the students to discuss topics of race and cultural diversity. This paper will share pedagogical methods as well as student responses and feedback from this year-long study.

Karen Wohlwend, Ph.D., Chair

James Damico, Ph.D.

Sharon Daley, Ph.D.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As a high school Spanish student, I remember very few of the cultural lessons that we were taught. I am also not sure if I had any key takeaways from cultural discussions that seemed to impact my life or the lives of the students around me. The lessons felt very far away and “foreign”. However, the one lesson I still remember more than 20 years later comes from a video we watched in class about the Day of the Dead (*Día de los Muertos*). Day of the Dead is a tradition celebrated on November 1st and 2nd among many communities in Mexico that honor

their lost loved ones. The video displayed a tradition of a relatively small village that celebrated the Day of the Dead by parading around the town with their mummified ancestors. I remember thinking that it was one of the strangest things that I had seen, and I did not develop an appreciation or admiration for this important celebration. The lesson did at least accomplish one goal: I have not forgotten that video. The lesson, however, missed another goal: helping students value other cultures and find ways to relate this learning to their daily lives.

During my days as a high school student, culture was treated as this far off thing that we needed to learn some facts about. It was not discussed as being something that could relate to our daily lives, nor was it explicitly discussed as being a topic that could help us relate better to individuals around us. On a positive note, my ability to conjugate verbs, memorize vocabulary words and reading skills were honed to a very high level. My personal experience helps to highlight the dichotomy that is often drawn by world language instructors between the importance of linguistics as compared to culture.

Statement of the Problem: Challenges for Improved World Languages Education

My experience as a student is not unique as World Languages courses have the difficult challenge of balancing vocabulary and grammar instruction along with teaching about other cultures (Arens, 2010; Furstenberg, 2010; Kearney, 2010; Scarino, 2010;). The term, World Languages (WL), has gained more popularity over the last couple of decades as a more inclusive term that now replaces “Foreign Languages” to reflect languages that are currently being spoken throughout the world. This change in terminology can help bring what was once taught as a faraway concept into the modern age where interactions with various languages and cultures is a simpler and a more common occurrence. The overall hope of this study is to provide WL instructors a flexible resource that can bring added relevancy and purpose to their cultural

lessons. The tool that I have chosen to use centers around the idea of Cultural Proficiency (Lindsey 2009; Lindsey et al., 2010; Lindsey et al., 2020) This need for improved culturally enriched World Language instruction intersects with the need to recruit and retain teachers. In the following pages I will present some of the difficulties already impacting WL instruction in the US.

World Languages Instructor Recruitment and Retention

There is a nation-wide teacher shortage in the US and language education instructors are not immune to this shortage. World Language has been identified as a specific shortage area (Burke & Ceo 2022; Garcia et al., 2018; Kissau, 2020; Okraski & Madison, 2020; Swanson & Mason, 2017). This is not a new struggle but has been exacerbated by numerous factors including teacher retirement, high teacher attrition rates, and decreased interest in the field (Burke & Ceo 2022; Garcia et al., 2018; Kissau, 2020). Kissau et al. (2022) also shared the pandemic related challenges that faced WL instructors and teacher preparation programs. Future WL instructors were unable to complete student teaching clinicals as well as had their study abroad experiences eliminated (Kissau et al., 2022). Those were two of the most valuable experiences in my preparation to become a teacher and I still draw from what I learned in those experiences today.

High schools and middle schools have been cutting language programs as well as variety of the languages offered within the school (Baggett; 2016; Basok & Sayer; 2020; Stein-Smith, 2021). Languages have been touted as important, but then the resources allocated to language programs (salary, resources, and training) fail to back this claim (Garcia et al. 2018). The cutting of WL programs is not specific to high schools but is also being noticed in university contexts as well (Burke & Ceo 2022; Garcia et al. 2018). This has led to less students studying languages as

a major or minor in a field that already receives less interest than other fields. The shortage of language majors then impacts the recruitment pool for trained language instructors. Schools have been trying to combat this shortage with various programs, but to a minimal impact (Garcia et al., 2018; Kissau, 2020). Swanson and Mason (2017) wrote the following,

For years educator recruitment programs such as Recruiting National Teachers, Inc., Teach for America, and Troops to Teachers have aimed to increase the number of teachers regardless of content area by focusing on individuals who are about to enter the job market. However, little has been reported about their success to help overcome the teacher shortage, especially in WL teaching. (pg. 253)

During my time as a high school WL teacher, I have worked with a number of teachers from various nationwide as well as state-wide recruitment attempts to draw teachers into Title I schools. I have seen little long-term success or let alone short-term success from these efforts as these teachers are rarely equipped for the classrooms that they were entering.

Once schools have hired a qualified WL instructor, the struggle is not over. Burke and Ceo (2022) found that WL instructors in Title 1 schools have an attrition rate of 20%. The ability to keep WL instructors in more established and financially backed schools is not a simple task either (Okraski & Madison, 2020). The general reasons for WL instructors leaving the field consist of increased student enrollments, teacher retirements, legislation, negative perceptions of the field, administrative and collegial support, availability of materials and increased testing for WL education majors (Burke & Ceo, 2022; Okraski & Madison, 2019). Since I left my role at my prior high school, four teachers have been hired and each quit within their first two weeks of taking the job. The school finished the year without a Spanish teacher and the students were

forced to use an online program. Finding out ways to keep WL instructors in their positions and learning more about the current causes for the shortage can provide a key research topic for the future and one that I may take on.

Preparing Highly Qualified World Languages Instructors

Given the problem of a national teacher shortage, it is important to understand what is expected of highly qualified WL instructors. In the United States, WL instructors have been tasked with two overarching goals: to teach students a new language (speaking, reading, writing and listening), and to help them value the cultures and peoples associated with that language.

The first goal, language learning, is supported by many step-by-step textbooks, apps, videos and other methods to help students learn to speak, read, write, and listen in a new language (Arens, 2010; Borden, 2022; Alla et al., 2021; Osborn, 2006). Creating vocabulary lists, grammar tutorials, and activities is a rather simple process. Language textbooks have developed many ways to help build a foundation linguistically and have also dedicated most of the content to this end. Due to this emphasis, it should be no surprise that many WL classrooms have dedicated much of their class time for memorization of vocabulary and grammar-based drills (Alla et al., 2021).

This overemphasis on grammar can leave students feeling that the language has no connection to their lives outside of the classroom (Osborn, 2006). When in reality with today's merging of cultures throughout the world, language instructors need to take advantage of this and highlight this in their classrooms. Borden (2022) found that most cultural content presented in textbooks is given through a homogeneous lens that does not allow for the rich diversity of Spanish speaking cultures that can be found in traditional Spanish speaking nations and beyond. The US has the second largest population of Spanish speakers at 60 million which is only

trailing behind the country of Mexico (Colon-Aguirre, 2022). If the US has more Spanish speakers than the country of Spain, then this should make an impact on the textbooks and the ways that culture is represented. This shift in view could help students in the US recognize how this cultural and linguistic knowledge can be of benefit to them in their daily lives.

While grammar and vocabulary instruction are extremely important, they need to be supplemented and balanced with cultural instruction as well. Galeano and Torres (2014) concluded, “The continued prioritization of linguistic objectives by classroom foreign language teachers along with a continued presentation of culture in a traditional information acquisition approach impedes K-12 foreign language learners from meeting this objective” (pg. 70). Kidwell (2019) shared the importance of cultural proficiency as, “Successful communication will require cultural proficiency in addition to language proficiency” (p.1). If successful communication is the goal, and it is, then WL instructors need to be able to provide instruction related to both culture and linguistics within their classrooms.

The second goal, teaching culture, provides added complexity for a number of reasons. Culture is constantly changing, “valuing something” can be hard to assess, and is typically not given as much attention in textbooks or in modern language teacher preparation programs (Ducate & Steckenbiller, 2017; Galeano & Torres, 2014; Li, 2016; Osborn, 2006; Scarino, 2010; Yang & Chen, 2016). Ducate and Steckenbiller (2017) wrote, “WL instructors will avoid teaching culture because they do not want to perpetuate stereotypes, they feel underprepared, and they do not want to sacrifice communication for the focus on culture” (p. 204). Teacher preparation programs and professional development offered specifically to WL instructors can help with the first two worries of perpetuating stereotypes and being underprepared.

Due to the consistent change in culture, Galeano and Torres (2014) highlighted the importance of a cultural teaching tool that can be adaptable to multiple situations. They wrote, “Such a model does not prepare students to interact in a single target culture, but provides instruction so that students can develop the means to understand any given differing cultural contexts in which they need to function” (Galeano & Torres, 2014; p. 66). I feel that by using the cultural proficiency work done by Lindsey (2009), WL instructors could have a tool that would allow students to apply to a variety of contexts and languages. I am a Spanish teacher, but I can see this model working in other WL courses as well.

Lastly, Yang and Chen (2016) shared that teachers and teacher preparation programs will often leave out the cultural component, believing it should be rooted in anthropology rather than language instruction. Unfortunately, this is a flawed view that is hindering current language programs as well as future language programs (Yang & Chen, 2016). I can personally attest to this statement as I was not provided with practical ways to present cultural topics in my classroom let alone emphasize the importance of these lessons to the lives of our students.

Learning about other cultures has been described as an important skill for the future of our nation and WL classrooms can be used to reach this goal (Furstenberg, 2010; Glynn et.al, 2014; Osborn, 2006). Even though culture has been described as an important skill for students in the future, many WL instructors view this content as less than or inferior to the teaching of grammar and vocabulary (Arens, 2010; Galeano & Torres, 2014; Furstenburg 2010; Scarino, 2010;). Furstenburg (2010) posited that many WL instructors view the teaching of culture as a topic that belongs to anthropologists and not for language classrooms. With the lack of textbook resources and often negative attitudes toward teaching culture, we can see a cycle of ineffective language classrooms churning out future WL instructors who are likely to follow what they have

seen (Glynn et. al 2014; Lortie, 1975). Lortie (1975) concluded that teachers of any subject are likely to teach in similar ways that they were taught. This desire to teach in a similar way to what you have been taught can lead to positive instructional methods, but also to flawed methods if that teacher had not experienced classrooms with strong pedagogical backing.

The American Council for Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) developed five standards for Modern Language Instructors (ACTFL, 2012), known as the 5 C's: Communication, Cultures, Communities, Comparisons and Connections. Four of the C's explicitly represent cultural topics and the fifth C, Communication, contains subheadings related to culture. With the majority of the standards relating to culture, one would assume that a substantial amount of training and resources would be dedicated to the teaching of culture. This is unfortunately not the case as many teachers are left to fend for themselves when teaching current cultural topics or to use antiquated activities provided in textbooks that help students learn facts about cultures that would likely miss the opportunity to relate it to their lives (Borden, 2022; Ennsner, 2016; Kidwell, 2019; Li, 2016; Scarino, 2010; Swanson & Mason, 2018).

The lack of training as to how to teach culture in WL teacher preparation programs was highlighted by Kidwell (2019) as she studied professors and recent graduates from a WL education program. Li (2016) also found this as she shared, "The second problem is that there is an observable mismatch between the academic discussion and the practices of culture teaching" (p. 771). Researchers are finding this lack in WL teacher training programs and something needs to be done to remedy this. This need for improved culturally enriched WL instruction intersects with the need to recruit and retain teachers.

Significance

The lack of resources, training, and qualified candidates can leave WL instructors in a sink or swim scenario while teaching culture in their classrooms (Glynn et al. 2014; Kidwell, 2019; Li, 2016; Swanson & Mason, 2018; Osborn, 2006; Yang, 2013). Schools shouldn't just hope that new WL teachers will swim when thrown in the deep end of the pool, but rather provide them with proper training and resources so that they can survive and thrive in a variety of contexts. Swanson and Mason (2018) pointed out that finding qualified WL instructors has been a problem for 70 years in the US and other nations (p. 251). WL classroom results have been such a struggle as a nation that Osborn (2006) described WL programs in the US as having a "legacy of nonsuccess" (p. 4). If that is the legacy and Yang and Chen (2016) shared how the majority of language instructors teach in the way that they were taught, then things do look pretty dismal if there is no reform to textbooks and WL teacher preparation programs. It is sad to see that more appropriate changes have not been enacted in the area of WL classrooms and that the subpar treatment of this area has been allowed to go on for more than 70 years in the US.

The value of the cultural knowledge that could be taught in WL courses is too important to leave for chance or on the individual efforts of a small percentage of teachers that are equipped and willing to teach culture as more than just a set of facts to be memorized. Students need updated skill sets to work best in a world that is continually changing and bringing more people from diverse backgrounds into close proximity (Glynn et al. 2014) The WL textbooks of old and pedagogies within WL classrooms need rethinking and strong models of how to prepare their students to go beyond the ability to conjugate a verb and memorize the capital of each Spanish speaking country (Scarino, 2010). My hope in this study is that students will be able to see how the cultural knowledge they are learning can help them and their classmates mitigate

their cultural misunderstandings throughout the day. This cultural knowledge should also provide relevance to their lives outside the walls of the school as they interact with their neighbors, friends and family members.

Cultural proficiency is a goal I have for my students as it is something that I have had to work on and can see the benefits of this in my interactions with my students and others I encounter. Cultural proficiency can be described as: “a way of being, a mind-set, a worldview, as well as a lens through which we view ourselves and others” (Nuri-Robins, 2012 p. 3). Well-designed and modeled cultural proficiency instruction in the high school WL context has the potential to make a big impact on the worldviews of the students. Cultural proficiency shares similar tenets and ideas to other terms such as: cultural awareness, cultural consciousness, and culturally responsive (Lindsey, 2017; Lindsey, et al. 2018). I have chosen to stick with the term cultural proficiency based on my knowledge and experience with this particular terminology.

I use the word *modeled* because cultural proficiency instruction is not just a topic to be discussed, but is a practice to live out (Lindsey, et al. 2019). During my time as a teacher, I have learned that students are adept at picking out people they deem “fake”. This term “fake” refers to someone that does not live in an authentic way: they do not practice what they preach, or they are teaching for a paycheck. A high level of respect must be earned by the teacher to be able to start the discussion of culture with their students. If the teacher cannot model cultural proficiency in their interactions, it will be that much more difficult for that teacher to engage the students in conversations on culture. This respect begins on the first day as the teacher learns names and interacts with the new group of students. Can the teacher pronounce my name? Did the teacher smile at me? Did the teacher relate to me or share any commonality? Teachers need to enter and

conduct their classes with a level of cultural proficiency to gain the respect of their students and earn the right to have discussions relating to cultural diversity.

Throughout my international travel and study-abroad experiences as well as my post bachelor's degree studies, I have grown to understand more about the complexities of culture, privilege, relationships, and how to navigate my interactions with a diverse group of students. This does not mean that I arrived, but that I am on the journey and will continue to be on this journey of cultural learning as long as my brain allows. The skills to navigate culture personally, and then to teach others about this topic rarely comes naturally to teachers and often needs extra training (Kidwell, 2019).

Local Context

This study takes place in an urban high school located in the US Midwest. The high school is located in an impoverished but slowing gentrifying area in a mid-sized city. The study focused on 9th grade students enrolled in the six Spanish I courses that I taught. The number of students in the study was around 100 throughout the semester. The racial demographics of the students in the study were roughly: 50% Latinx, 30% Caucasian, and 20% African American. The school has been designated a Title I school with more than 90% of the student body receiving free and reduced lunch.

The school was a part of a recent takeover that combined two schools into one governed by the charter organization heading up the takeover. This takeover drastically changed the climate in the school and created an environment that made day-to-day tasks and procedures difficult to accomplish. The takeover was conducted by a school that had previously experienced a low level of disruptions throughout the day and had not encountered a need to employ hall monitors, school resource officers, and other staff members dedicated to the overall behavioral

and emotional needs of the students. The school that was taken over, where I had also taught for two years, depended on a team of eight staff members that were dedicated to the specific behavioral and emotional needs of their student body.

After a short amount of time into the school year all those key individuals were no longer in their roles (most were never even given the chance to start the year), and there was no intention of hiring replacements. As a teacher this meant that I needed to be the first responder in the halls to any disruptions within my area during passing periods and occasionally other times. For some reason, my corner of the school was a very popular area for sharing disagreements verbally and physically and I found myself helping mitigate these exchanges on a weekly and sometimes a daily basis. It also meant that disruptive students did not have a place to go (In school detention/suspension room) and we as teachers needed to do everything, we could to keep those students within our classrooms as long as it was safe. This is not to say that I do not believe in this policy, but it made classroom activities more difficult to manage.

The school year also began with masking for all students and staff to combat the spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 contact tracing and quarantines also made it difficult to achieve consistent attendance during the first semester of the study. The building also chose to use table barriers which helped prevent the spread of germs, but also made it difficult for partner work and conversations to take place. During the second semester that this study was conducted masks were optional and very few students spent time away from class during quarantine. This provided more continuity in the classroom but the students still did not come out of their shells conversationally.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this practitioner inquiry research study is to analyze my use of documentaries and films to increase high school students' cultural proficiency through activities designed to raise students' awareness and appreciation for culture as well as language in a 9th grade Spanish World Languages classroom. To track changes in students' development, I used a commercial cultural proficiency assessment tool to inform my culturally relevant teaching of the ACTFL standards (Robins, 2012; Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016, Lindsey et al., 2007; Lindsey et al., 2009). I used this tool to provide a guideline for my students' self-assessments as we looked at culture through films and documentaries throughout the school year. Nuri-Robins (2012) shares the benefits of specifically teaching for cultural proficiency as being: "proactive, provides tools that can be used in any setting, focus is on behavioral not emotional, and it can be applied to both organizational and individual behaviors" (p. 3). When I looked at these benefits, I began to see the potential for this study as I hoped to use this with high school students rather than with leaders of schools or businesses as prior studies have used as their focus (Cross et al., 1989; Ford, 2019). I believe that this development of a worldview can make a difference in schools and in the communities where they live and places they will live.

The results from this practitioner inquiry may provide world language teachers a framework that could be applied to a variety of languages and cultures being taught and still provides teachers with flexibility to teach the cultural content of their choosing or what has been assigned to them through their departments. Galeano and Torres (2014) studied a similar model (Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity) and stated, "Such a model does not prepare students to interact in a single target culture, but provides instruction so that students can develop the means to understand any given differing cultural contexts in which they need to

function” (pg. 66). Their conclusion that certain cultural instruction models could be applied in multiple contexts provides support for my hope to see the cultural proficiency framework used in a variety of WL classrooms.

The results from this study may also show the importance of modern films and documentaries that are becoming more and more accessible thanks to technology upgrades. These documentaries and films that are being produced by the peoples and people groups that they are representing can provide valuable information that is current and relevant to the lives of our students. I cannot think of a time during my schooling when there was so much access to cultural content that is still current and true to the people that are being shown.

Research Questions

Having experienced and observed a lack of resources for world language teachers to meet the guidelines of ACTFL’s 5 C’s, I decided to look into ways that my research could benefit future and current WL teachers. I also wanted to take the time to critique my own teaching and evaluate to what extent my pedagogies supported the use of cultural proficiency. For this practitioner inquiry case study I am hoping to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the benefits and limitations of teaching the cultural proficiency Framework in conjunction with the Spanish standards (5 C’s) in a High School Spanish Classroom?
2. In what ways do my teaching practices engage student’s developing cultural proficiency?

Conceptual Framework: Asset-Orientation to Cultural Proficiency

Cultural proficiency serves as the conceptual framework for this study (Nuri-Robins, 2012; Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016, Lindsey et al., 2007; Lindsey et al., 2009). The successful uses of cultural proficiency guidelines in other contexts led me to believe that it could also be successfully implemented in a high school WL context (Byrners & Hillis, 2018; Byram, 1997; Diaz-Cruz & Hagan, 2020; Nugent & Catalano, 2015; Quezada & Alexandrowicz, 2019).

The concept of cultural proficiency is based on the work of Terry Cross et. al, (1989) as described in “Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care”. This article discussed the needs associated with providing culturally proficient mental health services to immigrant children and families. Cross et al. noted that many mental health service providers lacked the understanding and care to best approach their work with varying minority groups within the US and their children. Cross et al. discussed barriers to achieving cultural proficiency, important tenets to understand, and also a continuum to help others decide where they fall on this journey to proficiency.

The cultural proficiency framework grew out of Cross and colleague’s work and focused on the need for better training of teachers and leaders in regard to cultural competencies while working with diverse populations of students. Lindsey et al. (2018) wrote, “This book focuses on what it takes for all educators to believe they can educate all learners in ways that embrace students’ cultures as assets and students’ learning differences as just that- differences rather than deficits” (pg. 1). This quote highlights the commitment to viewing the strengths students possess and less on their perceived weaknesses. This asset-based viewpoint draws from the foundational “funds of knowledge” work done by Moll et al. (1992). Brion (2021) added this description of the framework, “Cultural proficiency is a mindset. It is not about knowing everything about

every single culture. Rather, it is about being willing to learn about other cultures and being inclusive in our words and practices” (pg. 34). This definition provides support for the adaptability of the cultural proficiency framework and how it can be applied in numerous contexts.

Significance

The results from this study may lead to a more formal approach to facilitating the development of cultural proficiency in WL students. The methods used in this study in a Spanish class could be replicated in other WL courses that are being taught. This model could also be used in collegiate WL courses. Because this is the type of training that many future educators are receiving, it would seem plausible to find teachers capable of delivering the Cultural Proficiency model to their students (Byrners & Hillis, 2018; Byram, 1997; Nugent & Catalano, 2015; Quezada & Alexandrowicz, 2019). As many schools are seeking to teach equity and justice material in the classroom, the flexibility and already established standards in the WL classroom, provide the ideal setting for teaching this important topic (Ennser, 2016; Glynn et al., 2014; Osborn, 2006). This coursework provides value for students of all backgrounds and hopefully the learning that can happen about oneself can then lead to more learning as a group as healthy dialogues are encouraged and supported in the WL classroom.

Clark-Loque and Latunde (2019) provided a challenge to their readers that I plan to focus on throughout this work to provide the best instruction I can to my students by saying: “Culturally proficient leaders first review their own beliefs and assumptions. This inside-out approach is a continuous, reflective process that ensures equitable policies and practices to underserved students” (p. 6)

If this is to be a successful endeavor, I need to be continuously doing the work that I am promoting to the students as well. This study helped me complete an assessment as to the extent I was proficient at encouraging students to develop cultural proficiency as measured by a cultural proficiency continuum framework within my classroom.

Positionality of Teacher/Researcher

As the teacher and the researcher of this practitioner inquiry case study project, I recognize how my personal background and experiences represent mostly dominant communities in the U.S (White, Male, English Speaking, Heterosexual, Christian), and that in order for this project to be successful, I needed to consistently look inward and question myself on my motives and viewpoints. I needed to understand that trust from my students of color may take time to earn and that I needed to be open and honest with myself and with my students about areas where I lack knowledge and experience in regard to the topics of diversity and inclusion that we discussed in class. My plan was to establish rapport and trust with my students early in the semester and work hard towards mutual trust by the end of the first or second semester with them. I also needed to show the students that I was in the process of learning as well and that the thoughts they shared in class in discussions and assignments continued to inform me as well as I furthered my learning. Lindsey and Lindsey (2016) wrote, “The guiding principles of cultural proficiency are core values that regard students’ cultures as assets” (p.52). Moll et al, (1992) also helped shape my views on how to look at my students’ strengths and backgrounds (funds of knowledge) as valuable. I aspire to view my students in this way and avoid the often default method of seeing all the deficits before looking at them as holding deep insights into their own experiences.

As a student in my various degree programs, I have had numerous opportunities to study culture, privilege, and social justice. During college I spent seven months living with a host family in Argentina and fully immersed myself into the local context (baseball league, church, gym, and school). I share a couple of these experiences because I believe that the various travels I have completed abroad (short and long-term), teaching experiences (Los Angeles, and Indianapolis), and coursework from my three programs (undergraduate, master's and current doctoral work) have prepared me to discuss topics of culture. I was not necessarily taught "how to teach culture", but I was given some tools (specifically the cultural proficiency continuum framework), and multiple life experiences to shape my worldview to see many of the hidden injustices, privileges, and disparities that are created in society. I share this because I think it can be difficult for a new teacher without a lot of life experiences in other cultural contexts to successfully engage in topics of culture with their students. I believe that the work that I have done reflecting upon my biases and privileges has helped me do a better job of discussing cultural topics with my students than what I would have done as a young teacher.

Organization of the Study

The practitioner inquiry study I conducted had roughly 100 students and was focused on the instruction I provided to these students during one academic year. The problem being addressed relates to the difficulties WL teachers often suffer while trying to deliver culturally relevant instruction. These difficulties are exacerbated by grammar focused textbooks, and little time spent in the preparation in WL teacher education programs related to teaching cultural topics.

For this study I used a range of data collection opportunities within my classroom. I taught 6 sections of Spanish 1 and implemented a Pre-Interest Inventory, as my first data point,

during the second week of school after all assent forms were sent home and families were provided time to decline participation. After the Pre- Instruction Interest Inventory (see appendix B) was completed, I taught aspects of cultural proficiency and used that as a basis for each cultural lesson I taught during the semester. I audio-recorded lessons in my classes on a few occasions but stopped when I realized that the conversations in group settings were not rich in content and that the students preferred to write or have conversations with me after class. A researcher observation journal allowed me to reflect on those moments of instruction as well as to capture the comments and discussions with students that were not recorded in the formal classroom context. The interest inventory was given to the students two additional times: once in December and a final time in May. The questions remained consistent except for some final reflection questions that were included in the May interest inventory.

Student artifacts from various assignments were collected and analyzed. Across the six sections of Spanish 1, a large amount of data was collected. My plan was to use this data to help drive future instruction and to share some examples of what the students shared throughout the cultural units that were discussed. This data provided me with daily feedback that helped guide my instruction day to day and would also be able to help me for future years of instruction. For the purposes of this study, I focus primarily on the data retrieved from the interest inventories as well as the student responses to reflection questions that were asked at the end of each film or documentary (see Appendices H-K)

Summary

In this chapter I shared the problem: WL instructors often lack the training and resources to adequately teach the cultural standards (5 C's) that have been created by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages. Cultural instruction within WL classrooms holds

great value to the students as they enter an increasingly diverse workforce and world and needs more thought in textbooks and teacher preparation programs. This study hopes to provide an example and potential template for WL instructors using the cultural proficiency guidelines. I provided a brief description of the cultural proficiency continuum framework as well as the impact it has had in my own personal growth and worldview development. I also shared a summary of the data that was collected as well as how it could be used to guide this study as well as my own teaching. In the upcoming chapters I describe the data that was collected as well as how it was analyzed.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Introduction

This review of the literature discusses cultural proficiency as it relates to World Language Education (WL) as well as more general references to best pedagogical practices for building cultural proficiency within the students. The beginning of this literature review explains the importance of culture being taught alongside language as well as the standards that have been created to encourage this. The next component highlights the various aspects and uses of the cultural proficiency framework. The final section ties my inquiry project in with the topics and theories discussed.

I begin by defining the word, “culture”. Culture is a word that encompasses a wide variety of aspects that people do or participate in as a part of a group. These activities can include dances, meals, religious ceremonies, sports, songs, words, and several other attributes (Bican, 2021). Everyone in the world has “culture” and that culture is changing and adapting as each person navigates the many channels and avenues that life may take them down. Some individuals may not notice their culture if they are a part of a dominant group in the society where they live, but that does not mean that they do not possess culture. In those instances it can be important to help them recognize their own cultural practices and activities and that culture doesn’t just belong to groups that are read about in textbooks and may live far away.

Individuals may also be a part of multiple cultures and find ways to exist and thrive in these multiple cultures. A young student may experience one culture at home, another culture at school and church, and then a different culture as they spend time with friends in their neighborhood. The navigation of these different spaces while maintaining one’s own home

culture can be difficult. Assimilationists might say that this young student would need to change/hide their home culture (if different from the others) to best fit in and adapt to the other scenarios. A more culturally aware (competent, proficient) approach would help this young girl maintain her own cultural identity as she navigates through some of these culturally diverse ecosystems.

Why Teach Culture in World Language Classrooms?

The teaching of language is not a new thing in the US nor is it something of recent invention throughout the world. The ability to speak another language has been widely viewed as an asset that can improve commerce, relations, and job opportunities (Ali et al., 2015; Furstenberg, 2010; Kidwell, 2017). This pursuit of language learners has led instructors to focus predominantly on vocabulary and grammatical structures while leaving out people skills (cultural knowledge) which are a key component to the goals of language learning listed above (Kramsch, 2014; Rossomundo & Lord, 2017; Kidwell, 2017). Although the importance of both parts of language learning is becoming more recognized, many teachers still tend to compartmentalize culture from grammar instruction as it can be difficult to combine the two effectively (Byram and Kramsch, 2008).

Elda & Perry (2016) shared their struggle in incorporating culture into their classroom and the difficulty they had in finding space within a rigid curriculum.

Wonderful intentions aside, foreign language instructors must contend with the constraints of course requirements and syllabi, so implementing this ideal agenda proves a challenge. In this article, I want to share the process that led me to reevaluate my role as an instructor and question the limitations of the talk for-talk's-sake communicative

method in which the linguistic aspect of beginners' instruction omits most of what really matters: culture.” (p.8)

In some well-established high schools, this can be a struggle to edit the curriculum to include extra cultural components.

Language instruction without culture often results in a very transactional form of communication. This type of communication can lead to misunderstandings and can also leave out the human elements of care and respect. With technology making communication simpler with live translation availability with wifi access, the teaching of culture becomes even more important in language classrooms. Chiesa (2012) wrote, “Since culture and language are inextricably intertwined, learning a language necessitates familiarizing oneself with the culture” (pg. 26). Kidwell (2017) further explained the importance of the inclusion of culture in language instruction when she stated, “Language teachers must not only teach language – they must also help students understand the nature of culture and culture’s impact on language, communication, and interaction” (pg. 223). Culture and linguistics work in tandem for effective communication in any language and need to be taught this way.

Language and culture work together to assist intercultural exchanges between individuals as well as groups and need to be studied together (Ali et al., 2015). Travel and opportunities to move across the globe continue to bring people from differing backgrounds into proximity and it is important to prepare students for their future and current multicultural context (Kramsch, 2014). People need not move physically anymore as they can also interact virtually with anyone that has access to wifi. This changing world requires the teaching and passing on of intercultural skills from generation to generation (Kidwell, 2019).

Standards for World Language Teacher Preparation

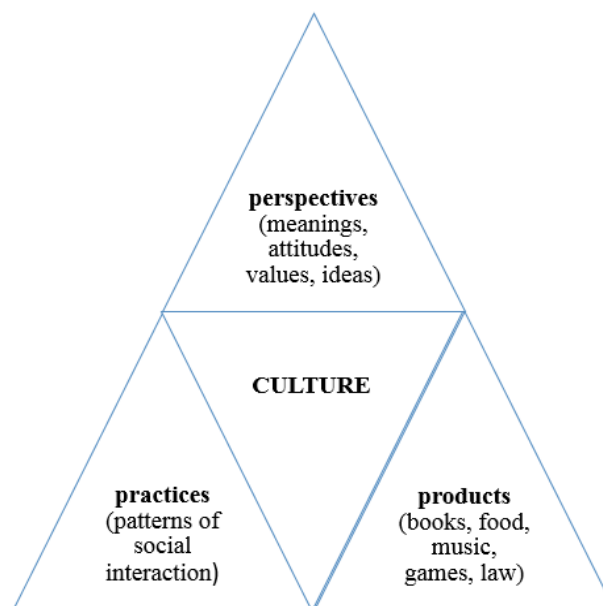
Nearly 20 years after their initial creation of the 5 C's the National Standards Collaborative Board (2015) revisited and updated their World Language Standards and these are the ones in use today. ACTFL's 5 C's (Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) are the most used standards used by WL teachers in the US (National Standards Collaborative, 2015). The goal of the Communication standard as described by ACTFL is, "Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes". The intent of Cultures is to, "Interact with cultural competence and understanding". The Connections standard states, "Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career related situations". The purpose of the Comparisons standard is, "Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence". The final standard of Communities is described as, "Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world" (National Standards Collaborative, 2015).

In an article focused on the "Culture C" written by Sandy Cutshall (2010), she wrote, "In the best language education happening today, the study of another language is synonymous with the study of another culture" (pg. 32). The 5 C's display the importance of culture being taught in conjunction with grammatical and lexical language instruction. WL instructors need to take the time to find ways to treat these two topics as equal partners in the pursuit of teaching a new language. As I describe in the next section, this may not be as easy as it seems.

Within the heading of "Culture C" ACTFL has assigned "The Three Ps of Culture": Perspectives, Practices and Products (see Figure 1 below). These three aspects of culture work

together in a relationship that is multidirectional and constantly intermingling. Perspectives are representative of the general worldviews possessed by the people of the culture being studied (keeping in mind not to create or reinforce stereotypes). Practices are described by Cutshall (2010) as, “Patterns of social interactions or behaviors accepted by a society, such as rites of passage, use of forms of discourse, social “pecking order,” and use of space” (pg. 33). And lastly, examples of products can be: books, arts and crafts, tools, foods, laws, dress, types of dwellings, music, dances, and games (Cutshall, 2010). Each area impacts the other area and that is why they are typically shown as a triangle with arrows pointing each direction to display their interconnectedness.

Figure 1: 3 Ps of Culture (Genova, 2018)



World Language Teacher Preparation for Cultural Instruction

I also want to discuss the lack of training and experience needed to properly instruct culturally relevant material within the WL context. Historically, culture has been treated as a list

of facts to be memorized or to be made aware of and nothing more (Arens, 2010; Furstenburg, 2010; Osborn, 2006; Scarino, 2010). This can also be seen in the textbooks that have been used for decades and also on the amount of time dedicated to training specific to teaching culture within the classroom (Arens, 2010; Galeano & Torres, 2014; Osborn, 2006). With the lack of training, modeling and emphasis given in textbooks it is no wonder that culture instruction is lacking in WL classrooms.

I had a very positive experience learning language during high school and that is what led me to want to become a Spanish teacher. I spent four years learning the language, and also observing the methods that my teachers used while instructing the material. As I thought about how I wanted to teach my future students, I used my experiences as a template for how to teach in my own classroom. I remember playing games, making movies, earning candy, acing grammar tests, and conjugating verbs. However, I cannot remember any impactful cultural lesson that I could apply to my life at that time or that is still impacting me today. I share this story because this describes a common experience that then shaped my thinking in what is important to be taught in a WL classroom. Lortie (1975) coined the phrase “apprenticeship of observation” to describe this tendency of teachers to teach in the way that they were taught. Grammar and vocabulary memorization were of the utmost importance and the teaching of cultural facts were used as “throwaway days”.

This was my mindset as I began to think about teaching, and I cannot remember any classes I took during my teacher education training that prepared me to do the 5 C’s any justice. My classes did prepare me to encounter and value new cultures as I studied abroad and grew in my own personal journey with differing cultures, but they did not prepare me to share my knowledge with my students in a practical way. Kidwell (2017) described my personal

experience with culture as being common as well as the lack of pedagogical instruction to go along with the personal growth in my own cultural proficiency.

The literature further backs up my experience as Yang and Chen (2016) found that many WL instructors do not value cultural instruction, resort to teaching culture as they were taught, lack personal experience with culture, and believe that students will pick up the cultural nuances on their own. In order to teach cultural knowledge that is life impacting involves reflection, space for respectful dialogue, and a teacher that is doing cultural reflection in their life as well (Yang & Chen, 2016). A language textbook handed to a new teacher is likely going to fall short of these necessary components for meaningful cultural learning and that is why teacher preparation programs and professional development efforts for WL instructors will be critical for the betterment of the profession (Ulrich, 2004). Kidwell (2017) wrote,

Without professional preparation to do so, teachers are likely to teach as they were taught, prioritizing linguistic objectives and perpetuating outdated modes of curriculum and pedagogy. One essential aspect of that professional preparation is an understanding of the nature of culture, and the ability to define the concept.
(pg. 222)

Future WL instructors need to be taught explicitly and be provided with models of how cultural instruction is to be done effectively if they are to be able to recreate these impactful experiences within their own classrooms.

It seems counterintuitive that a teacher of a modern language would be hesitant to teach culture, but that is a common sentiment among language instructors (Byram & Kramsch, 2008; Galeano & Torres, 2014; Yang & Chen, 2016). A teacher that has this sentiment often puts language learning above all and ignores the cultural instruction. Finding a balanced teacher is

possible, but language instructors tend to lean towards one side or the other: Culture or Grammar/Vocabulary (Furstenburg, 2010; Scarino, 2010). These two topics should go hand in hand, but as I have described, this is shaped by a teacher's personal experience as a language learner and then by the language preparation programs, they have been a part of or not (emergency licensure scenarios) (Swanson & Mason, 2017).

Due to the shortage of language instructors WL instructors are often given emergency licenses and spend more time learning classroom management (and this is appropriate) than they do learning about how to apply the 5 C's to their classroom (Swanson & Mason, 2017). Burke and Ceo (2022) discovered, "School districts cited that they hired teachers without traditional preparation because there was a lack of qualified applicants who applied and subjects such as world languages fell in the "must hire for difficult to fill positions" (pg. 336). Teachers that are hired in alternative manners are also 25% more likely to leave the profession and that contributes to the shortage as well (Burke & Ceo, 2022). Quezada and Alexandrowicz (2019) stated, "Preparing effective dual-language global teachers who will be culturally proficient is paramount not because of state licensure mandates, but because society owes it to its school children" (pg. 186). While schools need to fill their classrooms with teachers, there still needs to be some balance to ensure that their students are receiving a proper education.

On a different note, Kidwell's (2019) article discussed a strong teacher preparation program that helped teacher candidates with their own self-reflection and awareness, but then neglected to teach them how to teach/share that knowledge. It is not enough to merely develop self-awareness among teacher candidates and hope that they can then create similar learning opportunities for their future students without proper instruction of how to teach culture. Kidwell warned that, "without explicit preparation or guidance, teaching about culture could pose a major

challenge to new teachers” (pg. 8). An area highlighted by Kidwell’s research is the need for more investigation into the methods of teaching culture that are being incorporated into WL education programs. Quezada and Alexandrowicz (2019) also wrote, “There is less research on how to best prepare global dual-language teachers in teacher education programs. We promote cultural proficiency as a strong theoretical framework to develop culturally proficient global dual-language teachers” (pg. 186). This final quote was encouraging and reassuring to me of the work I am attempting as I hope to improve not only my classroom, but other WL classrooms as well.

Expanding Resources for World Language Teaching

Textbooks have been used throughout the years to guide teachers of most content areas as they instruct their classes. WL teachers have followed the same usage of textbooks to drive their instruction for better or worse (Rossomundo & Lord, 2017). Teachers are often handed a textbook to teach from in order to create continuity among multiple sections and to ensure that the required subject matters are covered (Ulrich, 2004). The problem with many language textbooks is that they inadequately address cultural topics and place more emphasis on grammatical constructs (Rossomundo & Lord, 2017). Even if the language textbook does an exemplary job of presenting cultural knowledge, that textbook is likely to become outdated in three years (Cozart et al., 2021). Kidwell (2017) wrote, “This view of culture (cognitive knowledge to be acquired) continues to be the traditional approach taken by language teachers, and it is an approach that has been supported by published teaching materials, curricula, and standards documents” (pg. 225). If the teaching materials are the driving force for many teachers, then schools will continue to see language classrooms focus more on the grammatical aspects of the language and less on the culture. I also want to note that grammatical instruction is not a bad

thing, but I am trying to point out the importance of balance and making sure to incorporate a balanced approach to the teaching of a language.

Another downside of language textbooks is that they are expensive and this cost leads many schools and teachers to find other ways to instruct their students or continue to use outdated materials (Cozart et al., 2021). Unfortunately, many schools choose to continue using outdated materials or costly textbooks to cut costs. Teachers may also choose to use outdated or irrelevant textbooks because of the ease and structure they provide. Cozart et al. (2021) discussed other options that would be more cost effective and relevant but would require a lot more effort and preparation from the teacher. The internet has a wealth of free material that is available to us and they recommend using what we have at our disposal via free options that Cozart et al. (2021) call “Open Educational Resources”. I have tried to use as many of these resources as possible in my avoidance of using out of date textbooks within the classes I have taught. This is difficult to standardize, but there could be ways to instruct teachers how to collect this material and make it work for them in their classrooms.

After sharing many of the struggles WL instructors face in their role, I would also like to offer some suggestions and resources to help improve instruction about other cultures within a WL context. Freire (2014) wrote, “Liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferal information” (pg.86). Culture needs to be taught with discussion, reflection, and opportunities to apply the principles in real life situations. Culture is not meant to be a list of facts, but rather the study of an ever-changing society. Culture is also something that does not need to remain solely under anthropological studies but can branch out into other aspects of academia like language. I hope to share how the use of a self-assessment tool for cultural

proficiency can provide structure and guidance for WL teachers and help them lead their students towards living culturally proficient lives.

How the Research Literature Relates To My Study

After reviewing the literature I am able to draw a few main points. The first point is that recruiting and keeping highly qualified language instructors is a difficult task and one that needs further work. Once the teacher is hired, there is no guarantee that this teacher would be able to teach cultural topics or that their own cultural proficiency is at a level to do so and to ensure that this is a reality in their classroom, professional development on cultural proficiency. The final point is that the continuum could be a useful resource in the classroom and that this is a method that need not only be reserved for businesses and school corporations. This is a framework that could be used successfully with teenagers in a WL classroom.

I have seen these struggles in my own teaching career as well as the many colleagues I have had throughout the years as well. I have seen a high turnover among my fellow WL instructors and also a vast difference in their cultural knowledge as well as ability/care to incorporate culture into their curriculum. I had the privilege to travel, reflect, and then be trained in cultural proficiency under the tutelage of culturally proficient professors during my master's degree program. The combination of these skills and experience have helped prepare me to incorporate the topic of culture into my Spanish curriculum.

The hope of this inquiry project is to discover to what extent these methods can benefit the students in my classroom and find ways that this could be replicated in other WL contexts.

Conclusion

In this chapter I began by presenting the literature relating to culture education in the WL context. I followed up this section with a description of the standards (5 Cs) as well as why culture education is important. Next, I tried to paint the picture of the difficulties faced by WL instructors in their pursuit of teaching culture within their classrooms as well as the difficulties schools face in hiring WL instructors. I concluded my review of the literature with a possible solution in the cultural proficiency continuum framework as a potential resource that could help teachers incorporate culture into their classrooms.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter I begin by restating the purpose and revisiting the Research Questions. I then discuss in more depth Practitioner Inquiry and why I chose that as the research method for this study. This is followed by descriptions of the site, participants as well as the role I take as the teacher/researcher. The penultimate portion of this chapter discusses the data that was collected, how it was analyzed, and then how the data was shared after being gathered and analyzed. Possible limitations of the study and the sharing of potential findings bring this chapter to a close. With this chapter I plan to outline the mechanics of this study as well as further describe its overarching purpose of helping students become more culturally proficient.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this practitioner inquiry project is to analyze the use of the Cultural Proficiency Continuum Framework in a 9th grade Spanish classroom and evaluate to what degree it could help assist in the teaching of cultural standards. As mentioned in prior stages in the research, this cultural proficiency self-assessment is generally defined as a framework that may help guide groups (9th grade Spanish students) and individuals toward higher levels of cultural proficiency (Lindsey et al., 2019 & Lindsey et al., 2018). Cultural proficiency maintains a goal of awareness of other cultures and an appreciation of these other cultures that may lead to a willingness to advocate for cultural groups that may be receiving discrimination.

Having experienced and observed a lack of resources for world language teachers to meet the guidelines of ACTFL's 5 C's (Communities, Communication, Culture, Connections & Comparisons), I decided to investigate ways that my research could benefit future and current WL teachers (National Standards Collaborative, 2015). I also wanted to take the time to critique

my own teaching and evaluate to what extent my pedagogies (teaching methods and materials) supported the cultural proficiency framework. For this practitioner inquiry case study I am hoping to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the benefits and limitations of using the Cultural Proficiency Framework in conjunction with the ACTFL Spanish standards (5 C's) in a High School Spanish Classroom?
2. In what ways do my teaching practices engage student's developing cultural proficiency?

These two research questions guided this study and provided a model for future and current WL teachers as they teach cultural standards within their classrooms. These questions also provide a chance for me to critique my own teaching and take an in-depth look into the pedagogies I have incorporated.

Research Approach

Practitioner Inquiry is a branch of Action Research that involves practicing teachers implementing research principles within the classes they teach and then writing up their findings to share with other interested parties (e.g., teachers, researchers, policy makers etc.) (Kennedy & Dana, 2021). Action Research stems from a bottom-up process of change as teachers/practitioners develop research questions arising from events, problems or professional interests that they have found important (Efron & Ravid, 2020). It has taken some time to be recognized by other disciplines as legitimate research but after a few decades of consistent work, it is now a more widely accepted research approach (Bertling, 2020; Ward & Erickson, 2021).

This style helps keep the research work closer to the groups and individuals that are the intended recipients of the potential changes the research can activate.

The practicality of this style of research and its relevance to my role as a teacher was a major draw in my choosing this for my dissertation research approach. I also appreciate how an overarching goal of practitioner inquiry is to help achieve equality for students and school districts that have traditionally been underserved. Having taught solely in Title I schools during my career I have developed a passion for teaching and working directly with students that have historically been underserved. As I begin my transition into the collegiate world, I hope to still have a positive impact on this demographic of students and schools through research as well as training the future educators to be successful in Title I contexts.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) shared five important themes in practitioner research:

1. taking on issues of equity, engagement, and agency
2. developing conceptual framework
3. inventing and reinventing communities of inquiry
4. shaping school reform and educational policy
5. re-forming research and practice in universities (p. 7)

With these goals in mind, I once again found this research approach fit what I have hoped to accomplish with my teaching and research questions. Practitioner inquiry puts the onus on teachers that are currently in the classroom and working at the ground level with a wide variety of contexts (Efron & Ravid, 2020). This research is specific to neighborhoods and communities but can provide insight into policies and challenge broad stroke policies like “No Child Left Behind” that may have been well intended but failed to meet the unique needs in the US

educational system (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). As a growing number of classroom instructors share their case studies and the body of literature and data grows, policymakers can be adequately informed and effectively prepare to help school districts in need of change (Efron & Ravid, 2020). And at the more micro-scale, individual teachers can learn about these findings and implement best practices in their classrooms as they see fit for their unique settings. My hope would be that for my project it can impact the work I currently do, and then help make ripples as I hope to work with future WL educators and possibly current WL educators in professional development settings.

Role of the Researcher

In this practitioner inquiry project, I play the role of teacher and researcher. As I looked at needs within my classroom, and city, I felt it was important to use my classroom as a catalyst for deeper discussions on the topic of culture. WL classrooms provide a rich context for cultural studies; however, they are not often taken advantage of as grammatical topics tend to be given the majority of time and effort (Byram and Kramsch, 2008; Kidwell, 2019; Rossomundo & Lord, 2017). I spent time during my master's program learning about the cultural proficiency framework and trained residence hall advisors to become more culturally proficient as they worked with a diverse student body in their dormitories on campus. Based on my experiences training students and having been trained myself by a specialist in cultural proficiency, Dr. Richard Martinez, I felt confident in bringing this framework into a high school context with my Spanish students. Dr. Martinez was a co-author for the book, *Culturally Proficient Coaching: Supporting Educators to Create Equitable Schools* (2020). I had been teaching my

Spanish classes with a culturally proficient lens but had not invited the students into learning more about cultural proficiency as we discussed varying cultures throughout our class context.

Formulating this study as a practitioner inquiry case study fits the goals of this study as this was designed to investigate the continuum framework's potential usefulness in the context of a high school Spanish classroom. The number of participants and the scale of the overall project make this a fit for a practitioner inquiry project.

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum Framework used in this study allows student to self-assess their own development according to six levels: cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, cultural blindness, cultural pre-competence, cultural competence, and cultural proficiency (Lindsey et al., 2019). This tool has been researched and implemented with college students, employees within a business context, as well as with teacher preparation programs, but I have not found research discussing its implementation in the secondary school setting (McIver et al., 2022; Diaz-Cruz & Hagan, 2020). The review of the literature I completed highlighted a gap in the literature that I believe I can help fill in. The results from this study can begin to provide the literature for the benefits of the the cultural proficiency continuum framework in secondary schooling contexts and more specifically within WL classrooms.

Context for the Study

The high school where this case study took place was located in a mid-sized city (just under one million residents) located in the midwest. I have been a full-time Spanish teacher at this school for three years and was beginning my fourth year as I began to collect data. There was only one other Spanish teacher at the school, and this allowed creative freedom in the planning and preparation for classroom content. This high school is a Title I charter high school

that was in the process of a takeover where a local charter organization took over the leadership from a for-profit charter organization that had been in place for nearly a decade. Over 80% of the students receive free or reduced lunch and have been listed as “economically disadvantaged” by a USNews report (2021). The student body consists of 71% minority student enrollment, with 51% of the students identifying as Hispanic/Latino. The remaining 49% of racial and ethnic demographics are: 11% African American, 29% White, and 9% Two or More Races (2021). The ratio of male students to female students is 52% female and 48% male. During my time at this school, students and faculty have worked to create an overall welcoming atmosphere towards diverse backgrounds, ideas, and cultures. This does not mean that our school went about the year without any issues, but in general it had a more welcoming environment to differing backgrounds than what I had seen in other contexts.

The historical timeframe of this study, 2021, is also important as many COVID-19 related policies were being implemented as the students were just returning from months of e-learning. The school was using masks, social distancing, physical dividers, and at times staggered schedules for students (students came on specific days to alleviate the total amount of students present in the building at any one time). The school policies also required quarantines for any students that tested positive for COVID-19 or that had been exposed to it and contact tracing was in full force. The quarantines deeply impacted the classroom dynamics school-wide and frequently classes would be impacted as they had many students out at a time on mandatory quarantine. I also noticed that the masks made students less willing to speak out in class and it was difficult to hold class discussions. This difficulty impacted my ability to have discussions related to culture like I had hoped, but I was still able to gain great insight into my students' thinking through written assignments.

The diversity of the student body, the political unease (eg. around the Trump presidency, murder of George Floyd, January 6th Capital Riot, etc.), and my desire to help improve the areas where I work and live all influenced the creation of this study. The research questions help guide the hopes of this study in finding benefits and limitations of incorporating the cultural proficiency continuum framework in the classroom chosen for this study. The research questions allow for reflection and discussion as to the extent that the cultural proficiency continuum framework may benefit the students as well as to decide the effectiveness of the pedagogies implemented.

Research Participants

At the beginning of the semester all students in my Spanish I classes (6 sections) were provided with an Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved assent form (See Appendix A). The classes held 15-25 students and had roughly 130 students overall. This number experienced flux as the student body underwent frequent changes to their living situations, impacting their school attendance. Students and their families were given the opportunity to opt out of the study, but none of them chose this route. The students in these classes were mostly 9th grade students with a small number of 10th grade students that were repeating the class. The Spanish class is one that is designed for heritage speakers of Spanish and students learning Spanish for the first time to be together. With 50% of my students identifying as Latino/Hispanic, it was important to find topics that could be engaging to both groups (heritage Spanish speakers and Spanish learners).

The assignments and topics I chose allowed me to show videos with Spanish audio (providing heritage speakers with a chance to improve their listening), and English subtitles (allowing the English only speaking students a chance to listen to Spanish and also understand

what is going on through the reading of the subtitles) that were created by individuals from the countries that were being portrayed. For example: Netflix was promoting documentaries about food in Mexico that were created by Mexican filmmakers and producers with my favorite one titled: *Taco Chronicles* (2019). I appreciate the authenticity that is brought into these shows and documentaries and the ease of access to this content. I also tried to choose video and content from countries that my students were less familiar with to provide more chances to learn something new. Since many of my students and their families were from Spanish speaking countries in Central America, I tried to mix in a few documentaries and bits of information representing Caribbean nations as well as South American countries: Cuba and the Cameraman (2017) and *Mi Amigo Alexis* (2019), which is a Chilean film.

During my analysis I also looked at the teaching methods and materials I incorporated into my classroom. This component ties in directly to my second research question: In what ways do my teaching practices engage student's developing cultural proficiency? A key component of this project was to evaluate the pedagogies and materials that I utilized throughout the school year. This evaluation not only provided helpful feedback for me to use personally as I Continue to teach but may also provide insight for other language instructors.

Data Collection Methods

For this practitioner inquiry case study study I used a myriad of data collection opportunities within my classroom. I taught each class the same material without the use of a control group as I believed that each class would benefit from the explicit teaching of cultural proficiency. After the pre-interest inventory was completed, I began to teach the aspects of cultural proficiency and used that as a framework for each cultural lesson I taught for the

remainder of the year. A researcher journal was used in order to reflect on those moments of instruction as well as to capture the comments, and discussions with students that were not recorded in the formal classroom context. The researcher journal was a vital component of practitioner inquiry as it helps to capture my own thoughts and reflections in the moment as well as some data that may be forgotten because it is not written out or recorded (Efron & Ravid, 2020).

Student artifacts from various assignments were collected and analyzed. Student reflections from films and documentaries comprised the main source of student artifacts as I found these to be the best source of responses and engagement from the students throughout the year. The following table helps display how my research questions relate to the data collected.

Table 1.

Research Questions with Data Collection Methods

Research Questions	Data Collection Methods
<p>What are the benefits and limitations of teaching the Cultural Proficiency Framework in conjunction with the Spanish standards (5 C's) in a High School Spanish Classroom?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interest Inventories ● Student Artifacts ● Teacher/Researcher Journal
<p>In what ways do my teaching practices engage student's developing cultural proficiency?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interest Inventories ● Teacher/Researcher Journal ● Classroom Materials ● Lesson Plans

Data Analysis Procedures: CPCF

First, I analyzed the responses and the data gained from the pre, mid, and post interest inventories. This demonstrated any differences in how the students self-identified on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum Framework for the topic provided on the question (Race, Language, Socio-economic status, etc.). It was a possibility that students may progress or digress as they moved towards the intended goal of cultural proficiency. Progress may be seen in students that have developed further knowledge on the subject and have been able to wrestle with how this topic may impact them and how they may have internalized the topics discussed in class. Digression may also occur for students who have learned more about cultures in relation to their own personal worldview and now realize that maybe they weren't as proficient as they thought they were before gaining knowledge on cultural proficiency. It sounds strange, but I would consider the pedagogies and materials to be effective if they have caused a student to move backwards [move to a lower number] on the continuum for that reason.

Through my data analysis I discovered five students who had initially identified as a higher number on the continuum (proficiency) on the first interest inventory, and then on December self-evaluation they had identified as a number that was one step below their initial evaluation. This data was not the focus for the analysis, but it still provided an important insight into the students' self-critical awareness of their proficiency and their cultural experiences. The program I used to collect the data, google forms, provided charts and statistics in real time as I collected the students' responses (see appendix C).

The bulk of my data was taken from students' responses and reflections after watching the films and documentaries that were shown during the school year (Mi Amigo Alexis, Cuba and the Cameraman). After meeting with my advisors this was decided as the best course of

action to mitigate the vast amount of data, I had collected throughout the school year. From each of these assignments I chose the questions that garnered the most engagement from students and provided examples of their responses. I searched for a spectrum of responses from the students (low level, average level, and high level), and provided samples of each of these levels to analyze. These responses provided a way to share insights into what the documentaries and reflection questions helped the students process in their minds.

Table 2.

Data Analysis Timeline

Data Type/Source	Timeline for Collection
Pre-Survey	September
Mid Survey	January
Post Survey	June
Year End Student Long Answer Survey Reflections	July
Student Reflection Question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cuba and the Cameraman (September) ● Nailed It Mexico (October) ● Coco (November) ● Mi Amigo Alexis (January) ● Taco Chronicles (February) ● Encanto (March) ● Zootopia (June) 	September-May (School year)
Researcher Notes	September-May (School Year)

Data Analysis Procedures: Practitioner Inquiry

After looking at the data from the interest inventories, I began to pour over the qualitative data from the researcher notes. In this analysis I looked for common themes and hoped to draw some connections to my research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The method I aligned with was Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) as described by Braun and Clarke (2021). Lastly, I reviewed my research notes looking for similar themes and used them to search for any irregularities in my thinking or as a reference to confirm what data is found from the discussions and student work.

Since I completed a similar study with Resident Advisors when I was working on my master's degree, I knew that I had preconceived notions of what results I may have found in this study. An example of one of these notions comes from the fact that I have done a similar study with college students, and it was successful. This success has led me to believe that it could be done in a different setting and is why I have embarked on this journey. Those notions could have acted as a blinding factor for me and that is why I asked someone else to look at the data I had collected.

Most of the data came from the student reflections and responses to the films and documentaries. This data was analyzed based on the level of engagement (see figure 2) the students displayed as they provided written reflections to the discussion questions. I also searched for common themes among the student responses.

Responses from Five Focal Students

In order to share some of the highlights of the student responses I selected five students who completed all of the assignments or the majority of assignments. These students were

selected based on the depth and thoughtfulness they put into their responses as we discussed the various films throughout the school year. These students were thoughtful in their responses, added to classroom discussions, and wanted to keep talking outside of the classroom time dedicated to topics related to culture. As I looked back through their responses for the purpose of this data analysis, I couldn't help but smile and even tear up while reading their honest thoughts. I hope you are encouraged as well as you read through these responses from a sampling of these young high school students. I have done my best to share information about these students without providing easily identifiable attributes and I also used pseudonyms to maintain their anonymity as well.

Table 3.

Rubric for Level of Student Engagement of Response

Criteria	Low Level Response	Average Level Response	High Level Response
Application of the CPCF Framework to Student's life	Provided facts about what was displayed in the movie. Did not draw connections to their own life.	Shared examples from the movie and drew a connection to their own life.	Shared examples from the movie, drew connections to cultural proficiency and then related it to their own life/experience.
Application of the CPCF Framework to Film	Provided facts about what was displayed in the movie. Did not draw connections to the continuum.	Shared examples from the movie and drew a connection to cultural proficiency.	Shared examples from the movie, drew connections to cultural proficiency and then related it to their own experience with cultural proficiency.
Use of Classroom Terminology	Did not use terminology related to the cultural proficiency continuum.	Attempted to use the terminology related to the cultural proficiency continuum.	Accurately used the terms related to the cultural proficiency continuum. Or a comparable rewording of the

			terminology
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This data was analyzed in a slightly different method as I searched for low, average, and high-level responses from the students. These responses were shared and analyzed to discover what reflection questions and activities were most beneficial to the students and what activities should be repeated in future lessons or changed. The hope from this section of data analysis was to provide insight to myself as the teacher what activities worked well and what ones did not based on student responses. This rubric was created to help share my thought process as I assessed the student responses with my readers as well as to help me stay consistent with my assessments as I analyze the data.

Triangulation/Validation Approaches

In order to triangulate the data that was collected, I compared the various forms of data that have been collected. From this study, I had pre, mid, and post interest inventories from the students that chose to complete them, student artifacts from assignments, and researcher field notes. Emerging themes from each set of data collected were compared with the data from the other data points of the study. I have chosen these various methods of data collection to enhance the reliability of this data collection process (Creswell & Poth 2016).

Limitations of the study

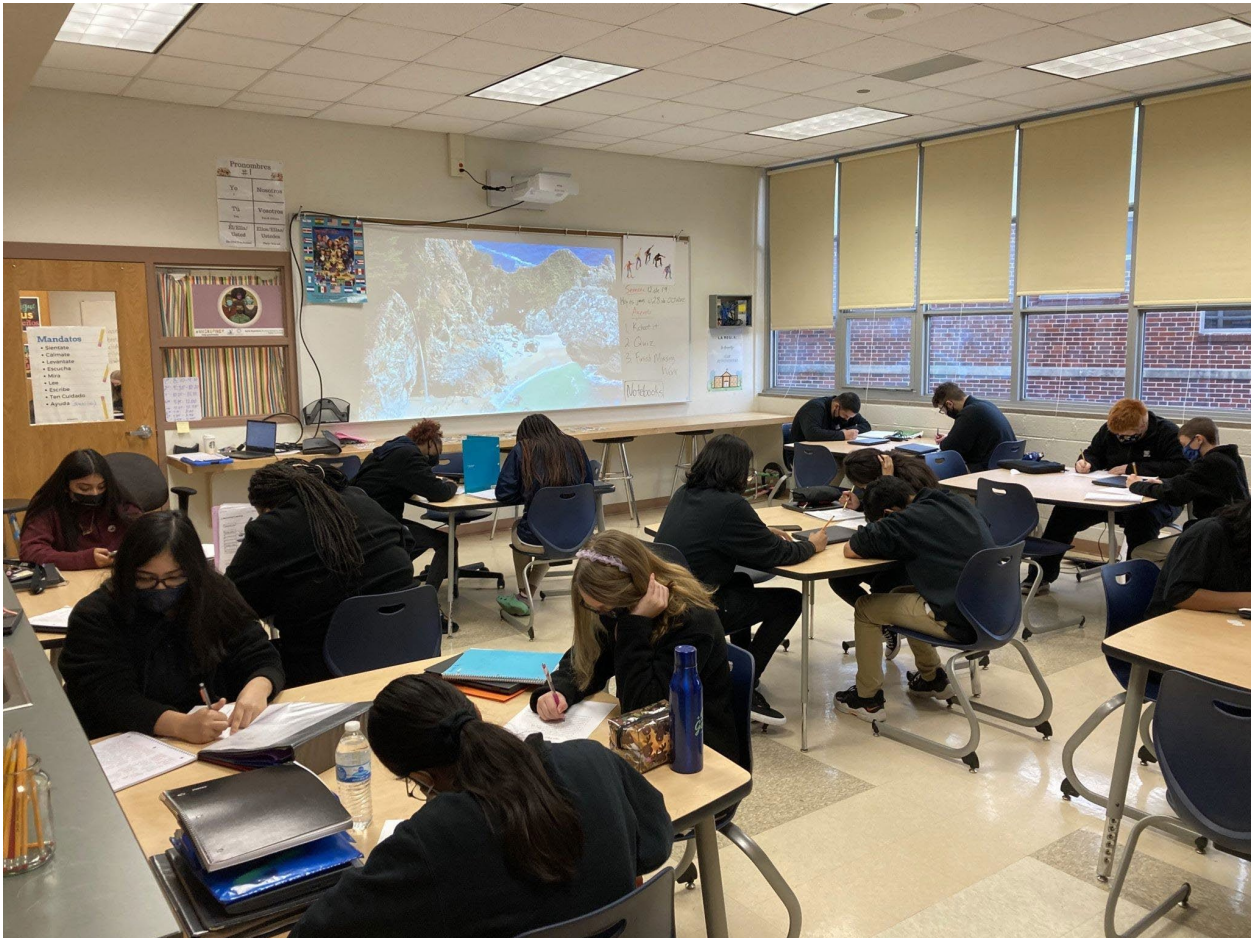
The area that created a limitation to this study I attributed to COVID-19. As I designed this study, I had hoped to record classroom discussions relating to culture and use that data, but the classroom discussions we had were short and, in some classes, nonexistent. Students did not have a desire to discuss these topics aloud as their Covid masks almost seemed to serve as muzzles. Each time a student attempted to speak, his or her classmates struggled to hear them

even if they were paying attention. I also had to move closer to each student to try to hear what they were sharing, and this often discouraged them from speaking as well. Classroom management issues also made it difficult to hold healthy classroom discussions. On a positive note, the students were willing to write down their thoughts and opinions and those assignments provided much of my data collected.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shared the overall purpose and research questions that were guiding this study. I shared some key highlights of qualitative practitioner inquiry and why that methodology is best fitting to my study. Next, demographics of the participants, researcher, and site were provided as background to the study. Data collection methods and timeline were shared as well as how the data relates to the research questions. To wrap up the chapter, limitations, ethical issues and expected outcomes were provided. The following chapters provide an in-depth look into the data and share the patterns and findings that arose from this practitioner inquiry case study.

Chapter 4: Examining Cultural Proficiency in a High School Classroom Context



My Class and Students

The classroom I taught in was a typical space when thinking about a high school classroom. It was unique in that it had extra office space with windows in the back that I allowed students to use if they needed a break from the business and noise of the main classroom space. My classroom was on the second floor of a 100-year-old building that had stood the test of time relatively well with its brick exterior and cinder block interior. As a charter school corporation, the decision was made to only allow tables with chairs in each classroom as opposed to having the individual desks in rows as many envision a high school classroom to look. One of my walls

was entirely made of windows which allowed everyone the ability to see outside and observe the occasional snowfall. These snowfalls were especially memorable as several of my students had never seen snow falling from the sky prior to this year.

A large whiteboard in the front doubled as a screen for the mounted projector which is where we watched all of our films during the year. I purchased a separate speaker to provide better sound quality and volume to ensure all students could hear the movies. Additionally, I adjusted the subtitles to be as large as possible allowing students in any place in the classroom the ability to view and read the subtitles. All students were able to achieve a good view of the screen and participate fully in watching the movies.

My students were mostly in their first year of high school, but I also had around 15 students that were sophomores. In each class I had no more than 26 students, and this was a welcome change to having had some classes with over 30 students in the past. My smallest class hovered around 18 students. When I share numbers of students it is hard to share exact numbers as the student body was consistently in flux due to complex situations at “home”. Teaching at this school opened my eyes to poverty, homelessness, foster care, group homes, impacts of incarceration on the family, divorce, and many other struggles that I had not been aware of in my own schooling or in my prior teaching positions.

I taught six of the seven sections of Spanish I that were offered at our school. The relatively large freshman class as well as the handful of students repeating the class from the prior year of Covid, made for a big group to teach. Our school did not offer a separate class for heritage speakers of Spanish and this meant that classes were mixed with students that already spoke Spanish fluently and ones that could barely ask for water in Spanish. This made teaching complex at times but also allowed for students the ability to teach and help one another. I only

had 5 students that were learning English for the first time, and I did my best to help them improve on their English in my classroom as well as provide them with a class that validated their lived experiences and first language. Around a third of my students had Individual Education Plans (IEPs), but most of them just required extra time for tests and assignments. The IEPs present did not create a major impact on what we were doing in my classroom.

Standards-Based Education and Standards-Based Grading

When my school, like many schools in the U.S., started to make a shift to Standards Based Grading (SBG), I needed to make a change in my grading practices. Standards based grading tries to get away from the typical percentage grading (9/10 = 90% = A-) and is attempting to measure whether or not the student is meeting the standard assigned to the topic (Lewis; 2022). Townley and Buckmiller (2020) describe SBG as “a philosophy of grading separating learning goals and work habits, repurposing homework as practice, and emphasizing more recent evidence of learning rather than averaging multiple attempts (p.2). One of the major difficulties in incorporating this style of grading is getting “buy in” from the teachers and community. The teachers typically have an increased workload and learning curve as it is unlikely that they had ever been graded under this system (Townley & Buckmiller; 2020). Parents and community members have a similar struggle in adopting this philosophy as it is something that is new, and they have unlikely experienced.

Standards can be as simple as: Students can identify a present tense verb in a paragraph 4 out of 5 times. It sounds very simple, and it holds a lot of similarities to the traditional grading styles, but it is really attempting to hone in on specific standards and identify whether or not the student can do it. I like using sports analogies to describe this style of grading as it can help demonstrate how a standards-based grading system can not only share what the students can do,

but then can also describe areas of need in greater detail. If a student is playing basketball and at the end of the game, they receive an overall grade of a B+, that is helpful to know that overall, the student is doing well, but it seems to lack the feedback necessary for someone to improve. In a standards-based approach the student would receive feedback on each standard that is being assessed. A list of standards could include Free throw shooting, passing, dribbling, running, defense, and following instructions from the coach. If the student could receive a “grade” for each of these specific standards, it should be more beneficial to that player and help them know how to improve in a very specific way.

Another aspect of Standards Based Grading that I find to be helpful is providing students the opportunity to reassess (Lewis; 2022). If a student is not capable of conjugating a verb in the present tense during the first week of instruction, but then after the second week is able to do that, I think it is appropriate to reassess that student and then upgrade the grade that was assessed the week prior to accurately reflect the student’s knowledge. A question I like to ask myself is, “What does this grade mean?” Does it reflect the students' knowledge from a month ago without any updates? Does it just reflect the student’s ability to participate or to turn assignments in on time?

Standards based grading tends to operate in the “gray” parts of education and I like how it provides some flexibility for student learning and improvement. By gray I mean that there is not one right way to complete this task. There can be more than one correct way to assess a student within this method and look at students’ individual strengths. In my classroom this allowed me to assess some students orally instead of asking them to write out their thoughts. I found that writing intimidated some of my students and that they couldn’t fully express themselves in that way.

Grading was a little different in our school as we graded using a scale of “No Evidence” to a 4 (proficient). A 4 was described as a student who knows the content well enough that they could teach someone else. For each question, I would provide the students with a sentence total for the different levels. A one sentence answer could get a 1. A two-three sentences answer could get a 2. An answer with three-four sentences could get a 3. An answer with five or more sentences could achieve a 4. Additionally, I would remind students about how the depth of their responses impacted their score as well and that five low level sentences would not receive a 4. Students were accustomed to this style of grading and understood what they needed to produce in order to achieve the score they desired.

Students would also have the option to choose a certain amount of questions to answer from the total number of questions provided. I would provide the students with ten questions, but the students only had to respond to seven of them. The ability to provide them with extra options to choose to answer is another example of the flexibility I enjoyed with standards-based grading. This allowed students to focus on the questions that they felt most comfortable with, and it provided them with some options and gave them a little more ownership in their learning which can help with motivation. Because of these choices, I did not receive answers from each of my selected students for all the questions.

Realities of Spanish Teaching in a Small High School

Leading into this school year, I had been teaching high school for seven years. Five of those were spent teaching Spanish and two of them as a P.E teacher. My first two years as a teacher were spent in Los Angeles teaching mostly heritage Spanish classes in a student body that was 92% Latinx. Four of the five classes I taught were for heritage speakers and only one class would look like a “traditional” Spanish class that was teaching a new language to students

that grew up speaking a different language. Teaching heritage classes during those first two years opened my eyes to the grammatical needs of heritage speakers and to the variety of cultures represented by Spanish speakers. With 20 countries that claim Spanish as their main language, you are going to find a lot of variety in customs, foods, dialect, etc.

My experiences teaching Spanish at the school where the study took place were different throughout my years. I mostly taught Spanish I as that was where there was the greatest need for teachers and classroom management. I taught one section of Spanish IV for two years (the only section offered), and this provided a bit of reprieve from the craziness of Spanish I as I had Seniors and only a handful of students in each class. In Spanish IV we were able to hold conversations about culture and current events as that was not as much of an opportunity in my other classes based on the classroom management needs. The conversations were deep and meaningful and through that class I was able to see something that I wanted to recreate to some extent in my other classes.

I often describe teaching Spanish in small schools as the “Wild West”. In small school settings the language teacher is often alone or may have one other language colleague. Administration does not typically pay the language teachers much attention as World Languages are not a tested subject and very rarely in my experience does an administrator come from a language teaching background. The lack of understanding of the language curriculum, lack of oversight of department members, and lack of available resources made teaching language a very freeing experience. I enjoyed the freedom that I had to choose my own curriculum and I didn’t mind being a bit of a lone wolf when it came to my content. This scenario can be and was very intimidating for new teachers as that freedom and lack of built-in structure was overwhelming. Add that to a student body that has experienced numerous traumas throughout

their young lives, and you have a position that is very difficult to fill and keep filled for multiple years. During Covid, I had to take on extra classes as one fellow Spanish teacher quit, and then again after a second language teacher who had filled that position for a month then quit as well. I cannot criticize any of my colleagues as I only spent four years at that school myself, but that is still three more years than anyone else I worked with in language education or from the four individuals who came and left after I did.

Incorporating Cultural Proficiency into the Spanish Language Curriculum

Even though I had freedom, I still chose to align with the typical pacing of a Spanish curriculum. I created my own notes, worksheets, tests and projects because a current textbook was not available, and even if it were, I don't believe that I would have relied upon it. We would start off the year with the basics of Spanish grammar and important vocabulary words and phrases and by the end of the year the students were aware of the Present, Past and Future tenses of Spanish. Students were immersed in the Spanish language with reading, writing, and listening activities. Speaking was very limited based on their abilities, masks for Covid protocols, class sizes and classroom management needs.

Students were introduced to a variety of cultures and other important geographical information relating to the 20 Spanish speaking nations. As I taught cultural topics to my students, cultural proficiency was the driving point behind my teaching and my interactions with my students. While this was a major focus of my teaching, it wasn't something that I discussed explicitly with my students, nor did I directly incorporate cultural awareness terminology into my lessons. I hoped that cultural awareness would be instilled in their minds and done through "osmosis". When I say "osmosis", I look at this as an activity that is done without explicitly explaining the purpose to the students. I do think that these activities can work and do work, but

I wanted to go the extra mile and share with the students the “method to my madness”. It does also follow the pedagogical emphasis on sharing with students the standards that they were working on and providing them with “I can” statements. An “I can” statement is an easy way to share with students what they will be able to do at the end of a lesson. For example, “I can conjugate a regular -ar verb in the present tense in Spanish”. The whole purpose of this is to help the students understand why we are doing what we are doing and have them be a part of the journey.

When it came time to develop my thesis and research, I came up with the idea of incorporating the cultural proficiency continuum into my classroom and share with students some of the “behind the scenes” of why I teach the cultural topics that I do much like the standards I mentioned above. I didn’t think this would be too difficult to incorporate into the activities that we were already doing in class. The main additions were the interest inventories and the addition of a few questions to each of my end of movie reflections. I also added a day where I taught cultural proficiency and what it entailed. This was probably the biggest time addition, but I believe that it was time well spent, and I had the freedom to do so. I don’t want to give the impression that I was teaching topics that did not relate to Spanish standards, as that was something that I made sure I did, but I was able to teach the standards in a way that I found most relevant to current language topics and needs. I have other friends teaching in positions where their curriculum is so crunched for time that it would be difficult to incorporate something new into the school year without any major changes. Based on my personal experiences and prior research work done with cultural proficiency, I felt that it would create the perfect model to use in my classroom to help students relate the cultural lessons to their own lives. The continuum is

simple to understand and provides a visual for the goal of cultural proficiency that I have for my students.

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum Framework

The first step to understanding the Cultural Proficiency Framework involves understanding the four main tools within the Cultural Proficiency Framework: The Five Essential Elements, The Guiding Principles, The Barriers to Cultural Proficiency and lastly, the Cultural Proficiency Continuum (Lindsey R et al. 2019). These four tools work together to help teachers, leaders, and students learn about their cultural views, backgrounds, and how they are working together to influence how they act in a variety of settings. In the following pages I describe each of these tools in more detail.

The Five Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency

The five essential elements are listed as: assessing cultural knowledge, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge (Lindsey R., 2017). Assessing cultural knowledge involves looking inwardly to discover more about your own cultural attributes and what you have grown accustomed to doing in your life. This inward look is a key component to growing culturally proficient (Lindsey R., 2017).

The Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency

Within the Cultural Proficiency Continuum Framework, Lindsey D, et al., (2018) have listed the following nine principles as a focus for cultural proficiency:

1. Culture is a predominant force in people's and school's lives.
2. People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture.

3. People have group identities and individual identities.
4. Diversity within cultures is vast and significant.
5. Each cultural group has unique cultural needs.
6. The best of both worlds enhances the capacity of all.
7. The family, as defined by each culture, is the primary system of support in the education of children.
8. School systems must recognize that marginalized populations have to be at least bicultural and that this status creates a unique set of issues to which the system must be equipped to respond.
9. Inherent in cross cultural interactions are dynamics that must be acknowledged, adjusted to, and accepted.

I share these because these are the foundational beliefs that drive the idea of becoming culturally proficient. These are similar concepts and beliefs to other cultural awareness terms, but I felt it was important to share these. Each of these principles could be taught with a full lesson, but for the sake of time I provide a brief summation. Each context is unique and school leaders need to be aware of the specific needs of the families and individuals within that context. For the purposes of my study, I helped my students understand the cultures they are a part of at home, in their neighborhoods and in the other activities they are involved in (church, work, sports, clubs, etc.). Helping students recognize the diverse contexts and activities they are all a part of can help them become more aware of their own personal culture and prepare them to learn about and value the cultures of the students around them.

The final aspect of the guiding principles I highlighted for my students involved their interactions with the dominant culture as referenced by the second principle. It is important for

them to look introspectively at the moments where they may represent the dominant culture in one context but then are a part of a non-dominant group in the next. Students need to recognize which side of the coin they represent (dominant/non-dominant) and be willing to place themselves in the shoes of someone from the other group.

The Barriers to Cultural Proficiency

The next of the four tools of cultural proficiency addresses barriers as caveats that assist in overcoming resistance to change. There are four barriers that impede progress to cultural proficiency: unawareness of the need to adapt, resistance to change, systemic oppression, and a sense of privilege and entitlement (Lindsey et al., 2019). These barriers are important to recognize in this type of work as students need to know what could hold them back from the goal of cultural proficiency. In preparing for competition, it is good to know what the opposing force is bringing to the battle.

Unawareness of the Need to Adapt

The unawareness of a need to adapt is a common struggle and a responsibility that cannot solely be placed upon that individual. Through conversation and intergroup contact, one can begin to develop an awareness of the need to move towards cultural proficiency. This provides further support for the implementation of this framework in WL classrooms to help bring awareness to students that may not even realize this need. I had a wide variety of students on the spectrum of awareness, and it was fun to see them grow throughout the year. It was also interesting to see how some of the students that initially felt that they were aware, learned throughout the year that they still had room to grow and learn.

Resistance to Change

Students who are resistant to change are a reality and one that requires patience and tact. Teachers will encounter students that are not interested in changing their cultural proficiency and a pre-existing or relationship in progress will be key. It is unrealistic to believe that every student will “buy in” to this idea and teachers need to respect and journey with this type of student as well. In my class I had a few students that expressed frustration in regard to topics related to privilege. I distinctly remember a white family exiting the school building and asking, “Where is my white privilege?” I am not sure what led to this, but that question has stuck with me as many of our white families were deeply entrenched in poverty and had a difficult time hearing about this privilege they possessed.

Hopefully the modeling of how two individuals can have different viewpoints and still journey through a school year together can provide a lasting positive perspective on cultural proficiency and leave that student willing to dialogue again in the future. The teacher needs to be cautious of shutting students down in this type of context and discussion. I did my best to be sensitive to all of my students and the varying experiences they brought to the classroom.

Systemic Oppression

Systemic oppression manifests itself through past and present policies and practices that have led to one or more groups being more successful than others (Lindsey et al., 2019). The racial and ethnic diversity in our school provided a variety of experiences among the students and was helpful in displaying to them the importance of this conversation. Many of my students directly felt the difficulties and results of systemic oppression and they did not need me to convince them that these systems existed, whereas there were a few students that would downplay the existence of these systems. Thankfully these differing viewpoints did not manifest

themselves in unhealthy ways throughout the school year. In general, the students were respectful of one another and had learned to coexist in a positive way.

Sense of Privilege or Entitlement

A sense of privilege or entitlement is driven by an individual or a group’s belief that their achievements are based solely on merit and their individual and or group efforts (Lindsey et al., 2019). In the school setting that we were in I did not see this as much among my students. With the high level of poverty in the student body this sense of privilege was not as prevalent as what I had seen when I worked at a private religious institution of higher education. This is an area that I needed to continuously check myself on as this could creep into my viewpoints and interpretations of various scenarios I encountered.

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum

Figure 2.

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum

THE CULTURAL PROFICIENCY CONTINUUM: DEPICTING UNHEALTHY AND HEALTHY PRACTICES					
Cultural DESTRUCTIVENESS	Cultural INCAPACITY	Cultural BLINDNESS	Cultural PRECOMPETENCE	Cultural COMPETENCE	Cultural PROFICIENCY
COMPLIANCE-BASED TOLERANCE FOR DIVERSITY			TRANSFORMATION FOR EQUITY		
<p>Cultural destructiveness: Seeking to eliminate referents to the culture of “others” in all aspects of the school and in relationship with their communities.</p>	<p>Cultural incapacity: Trivializing “other” communities and seeking to make them appear to be wrong.</p>	<p>Cultural blindness: Pretending not to see or acknowledge the status and culture of marginalized communities and choosing to ignore the experiences of such groups within the school and community.</p>	<p>Cultural precompetence: Increasingly aware of what you and the school don’t know about working with marginalized communities. It is at this key level of development that you and the school can move in a positive, constructive direction, or you can vacillate, stop, and possibly regress.</p>	<p>Cultural competence: Manifesting your personal values and behaviors and the school’s policies and practices in a manner that is inclusive with marginalized cultures and communities that are new or different from you and the school.</p>	<p>Cultural proficiency: Advocating for lifelong learning in order to be increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of the cultural groups served by the school. Holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy.</p>

SOURCE: Adapted from Terrell & Lindsey, 2009.

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum consists of six indicators as to where an individual may fall in regard to their cultural abilities. The six indicators are: cultural destructiveness,

cultural incapacity, cultural blindness, cultural pre-competence, cultural competence, and cultural proficiency (Lindsey et al., 2019). The following list provided by Lindsey et al. (2019) provides a description for each of the aspects of the continuum:

1. **Cultural Destructiveness** – Seeking to eliminate references to the culture of ‘others’ in all aspects of the school and in relationship with their communities.
2. **Cultural Incapacity** – Trivializing historically marginalized communities and seeking to make them appear to be wrong.
3. **Cultural Blindness** – Pretending not to see or acknowledge the status and culture of marginalized communities and choosing to ignore the experiences of such groups within the school and community.
4. **Cultural Pre-competence** – Increasingly aware of what you and the school don’t know about working with marginalized communities. It is at this key level of development that you and the school can move in a positive, constructive direction or you can vacillate, stop and possibly regress.
5. **Cultural Competence** – Manifesting your personal values and behaviors and the school’s policies and practices in a manner that is inclusive with diverse cultures and communities that are new or different from you and the school.
6. **Cultural Proficiency** - Advocating for life-long learning for the purpose of being increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of the cultural groups served by the school. Holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy.

These six markers on the road to cultural proficiency are helpful in a wide variety of cultural aspects. One could apply this continuum about race, ethnicity, gender, language,

socioeconomic status, and then go even deeper within those broad headings to help students recognize where they land in their journey towards proficiency.

Using the 5C Standards to Justify a Cultural Proficiency Approach

Figure 3.

The “5Cs” Standards of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages



The more time I spent thinking about my situation in my classes, with many heritage Spanish speakers mixed in with new Spanish learners, I tried to come up with what I really felt was important for my students while they were with me in class but also for their futures. In a world that is continually fighting over differences (politics, race, religion, ideas, culture, etc.), I felt that my class could be a great place to promote unity and learning from one another rather than “othering” anyone who looked or thought something different from themselves.

To justify the inclusion of cultural proficiency in my Spanish curriculum, I turned to the standards developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the professional organization for educators in World Languages: the 5Cs--Communication, Community, Connections, Comparisons, Cultures.

Communication

The first standard I want to mention is Communication. This is probably the most popular standard of the five C's when thinking about a language course as speaking the language is the end goal for most of the learners I have encountered. ACTFL describes the goal of communication as "Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes" (National Standards Collaborative, 2015). This is the standard that typically drives most instruction and emphasis in world language courses.

Communities

The second standard, Communities, states: "Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world" (National Standards Collaborative, 2015). Language is more than just words, as a smartphone can provide that, but for an individual to be able to connect with those from differing backgrounds it is important to understand and value these differences to help build bridges. I hoped that my class could help students develop this critical understanding of cultures in order to best use the language we were practicing or reinforcing in the classroom.

Connection

The third standard, Connections, states, "Learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures" (National Standards Collaborative, 2015). This ties in with what I have been discussing and also with what I hope for

my students to be able to do as they interact with current peers and with those they encounter in the future. If students are to evaluate information and diverse perspectives, I think it is important for them to have a lens to evaluate this information. I believe that the cultural proficiency continuum framework provides an excellent model and lens to teach students to be able to best accomplish this standard.

Comparison

The fourth standard that directly relates to cultures within the 5 C's is comparisons. Comparisons states, "Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence" (National Standards Collaborative, 2015). ACTFL uses the term "cultural competence" which I would say is interchangeable with the term I prefer of cultural proficiency. With the curriculum I have created for my students I can see this goal coming to fruition for my students. Cultural competence/proficiency isn't something that will typically just develop without intentionality. The CPCF provides a framework that intentionally discusses proficiency in culture and is essential for my student's development just as I saw it as a key component on my journey of cultural learning. A journey that I am still on.

Cultures

The final standard is appropriately titled, Cultures. This standard states, "Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied" (National Standards Collaborative, 2015). Using films, I believe that I have been able to accomplish this final standard related to culture as provided by the 5C's. The films that we watched were in their original language, Spanish, and students were able to hear its use in authentic cultural exchanges. I felt that it was important for students to see

films that were produced in the countries that were represented and let the actors/producers show their audiences how they viewed culture from their perspectives.

Conclusion

In this chapter I described the school where this study took place and the practices that I had that led into this project. I shared the key components of the Cultural Proficiency Continuum Framework and all of the components that comprise this model. I ended this chapter with a description of how the 5 C's that ACTFL created to help World Language instructors and how these standards helped influence my work.

Through the help of the 5C's I feel that I was able to in good conscience use the amount of emphasis that I placed on cultural proficiency within my classroom. Four of the five standards directly related to culture, and I took this to heart and created a class that I hope left a lasting impression on my students and helped them to view the world in a way that valued difference and didn't avoid dissonance (maybe quote *Cracking the Codes*). In the documentary by Shakti Butler titled "Cracking the Codes" (2012), a poet discussed the word "dissonance" and how we as humans avoid dissonance. Jelal Huyler (The human psyche will do almost anything to remove dissonance. Dissonance means that which is outside of your comfort zone.) The poem goes much further than that, and I recommend listening to the entire [poem](#), but this is the part that has stuck with me over the years since I first heard this in 2014. As humans we tend to stick with what we know and avoid that which is different. It is a learned behavior to want to step out of that comfort zone and experience something or someone new. We need to help ourselves and our students value that which is different and seek new understandings of this world we share.

Chapter 5: Using Popular Media to Teach Cultural Proficiency

In this chapter I describe in more depth the films that I used throughout the school year as well as share and analyze the student responses. To better understand how the students were engaging with the cultural material I examined some of the responses the students provided throughout the various reflection assignments that corresponded to each documentary or film that we watched. I selected five students to focus on and I have provided a brief description of each student without providing too much detail to be able to identify them. My hope is that the students' reflections drive this chapter and that their in-depth thoughts and reflections can shine and highlight what a ninth-grade student is capable of discussing. The following section discusses each film and the questions that were asked as a part of the reflections as well as the responses that were given by the students. I conclude each film or documentary with my analysis of the students' responses as well as a little reflection on my part.

Broadening Cultural Proficiency through Diverse Perspectives in Films

Films are becoming more and more useful in WL language classrooms as they have become more accessible (Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney, etc.) and more people from more nations are creating content about their lived experiences. "There are numerous compelling reasons to include documentaries in a wide variety of Spanish courses. Documentaries are a rich, authentic source of both language and culture. Students not only hear authentic input from different native speaker voices and varieties of Spanish (from different regions, social class, registers, etc.), but they also benefit from the visual content that film provides." (Hertel & Harrington; 2015 p.550). It is sad that some teachers have overused film as a form of babysitting in the classroom and have given the use of film in the classroom a bad reputation. I always felt

that I had to justify my use of film in my classroom, but this is a great quote to help share its utility within the classroom.

This quote from Elda and Perry (2016) provides another helpful description of the usefulness of film in WL courses:

The pedagogical use of cinema in the language classroom is today a well-established practice. In fact, it is widely recognized that the use of cinema in a language classroom represents an important linguistic and cross-cultural tool. Video material is no longer considered only supplemental support to the traditional textbook but an essential extension of it. The versatility of audiovisual support is extensive, since it can be used in small measures to highlight grammar points and illustrate cultural customs and traditions or serve as the basis for an entire unit devoted to the cinematic traditions (past and present) of the target language and culture.” (p.85)

It is important to tap into this available resource as it can bring the material to life in ways that a textbook can struggle to do. Cano et.al (2022) wrote, “The use of video as a pedagogical resource facilitates the teaching and learning process because it fosters concept construction in a more pleasant and funny way and, at the same time, presents contents in a more dynamic way due to the characteristics of its language and its capacity to stimulate the different sensorial channels that increase motivation and favors learning.” (p. 135). I appreciate how they highlighted the importance of this being a “pleasant and funny” experience. If we as teachers can tap into humor and show materials in a way that they enjoy learning (YouTube, Netflix, etc.) then we can help motivate them to want to learn the material we are presenting. Teachers can tap into the new trends and resources to help increase the motivation of their students and film is a great way to do that.

I introduced each movie with a presentation that shared the basic plot, pictures from the map, and frontloaded some of the cultural aspects to be aware of as they watched. I would also share with them how to observe what they saw throughout the film and to be aware of how they viewed cultural differences that were shown in the film. I encouraged the students to remember that something that is different does not make it wrong. What can you learn from these differences? I would also reiterate with them the idea of cultural proficiency and how that is the overarching goal in all cultural lessons we cover. As the movie is being played, I stop the film at key moments to strike up a conversation or just to remind them of cultural aspects to be looking for. I would also use these pauses to look at grammatical aspects that could be seen on the subtitles. Subtitles provide a great way to connect the grammar and vocabulary we had studied to the subtitles.

In the following section I share something about each film as well as the timeline for when the film was shown. The first film was shown in September and the final film was shown during the last month of school, June. Each film section also includes the questions that were asked along with the responses from the students followed by my analysis of their responses.

Cuba and the Cameraman (September)

Cuba and the Cameraman is a documentary filmed and directed by Jon Alpert. The documentary follows Alpert's numerous visits to Cuba starting in the early 1970s and wrapping up in 2016 with the passing of and funeral procession of Fidel Castro. The appeal of this documentary stems from the relationships that Jon builds throughout the course of his trips to Cuba as he would visit the same individual or family each time he went. This helped to humanize each person or family that he met with and showed the change or "lack thereof" during his 45 years' worth of trips.

I chose this movie because of the relatability of the families that Jon interacted with but also to humanize a world leader that was demonized and villainized in every teaching I ever received regarding him, Fidel Castro. This is not to say that he was a great person or leader, but it certainly provides a new perspective, and that new perspective can help individuals decide how they feel about someone. This is the first documentary of the year, and it is a good one because there is a good amount of English mixed in with the Spanish to help the students “buy in” to the movie.

I also like to use this as an opportunity to help students orient themselves with the reading of subtitles. Growing up I did not like having subtitles shown during any movie or show that I watched because I found them distracting visually as well as mentally as I often found myself reading them too early and spoiling surprises. I don’t believe that my experience was unique as I had many apprehensive students when it came to watching subtitled shows. I also made the subtitles as big of a font as I could, and this also was distracting (in a good way) to the students. Technology and other inclusion-based advances today have provided many more opportunities to watch shows with subtitles and to make the subtitles visible to students in a classroom setting. The ability to increase the font to a size that students in the back of the classroom can see and read is a major advantage and something I did not have access to during my early years of teaching.

Guiding Questions for Cuba and the Cameraman

The following questions were chosen based on my prior experiences watching and discussing this documentary with earlier classes. I wanted students to be able to see the cultural similarities and differences between what they saw in the documentary and what they had seen and experienced in their own lives. I also like asking questions about which character they most

relate to and why. This helps give me some insight into my students' lived experiences and a little bit of a lens through which they view the world. I also like to ask questions about what was most surprising in a film as that helps me get a glimpse into any preconceived notions they may have had about a people group or nation. These questions help students connect the film to their own lives and I think that this is key when it comes to learning to value and understand other cultures.

Table 4.

Guiding Questions for Cuba and the Cameraman

<p>Guiding Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which family (Borregos Bros, Caridad and her kids, or Luis Amores) did you most relate to? Why? 2. What was the most surprising part about Cuba that you learned from the documentary? Why? 3. Wilder said that, "Tourists are more valued than Cubans". What do you think about that statement? Why would he feel that way?

Student Responses to Cuba and the Cameraman

Shannon

Shannon was a 10th grader in this class. Shannon was involved in multiple sports throughout the academic year and was involved to the best of their ability. Attendance was a frequent issue for Shannon, but they usually managed to complete work that was assigned. This was the second class that I had Shannon in and it was a privilege to get to know them more during this school year as the prior year was during Covid. Shannon identified as African American.

Table 5.

Student Responses to Cuba and the Cameraman Question #7

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
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	Which family did you most relate to? Why?
Shannon	I feel like I relate to the Borregos Bros because usually you don't see old men like that working that hard and not being awarded as much as they really should. This reminds me of how me and my dad go around collecting wood pallets and breaking them down to make fences, sheds etc. The reason this reminds me of the Borregos brothers is because my dad is 69 and he's been doing it for longer than I've been alive for no pay.

Shannon's response to this question displayed that they were able to relate this to their own life and experience in living in an urban environment. Even though the documentary showed this family that they related to in the countryside, this student was able to draw a connection to the work ethic that exists in both places. I found it interesting as they mentioned their dad's age and how he is still working hard at 69 and providing for the family. Shannon's response would be a high-level response based on the rubric (see below) I provided earlier as they were able to answer the question fully and relate it to their own life. Deep thinking and connection was clearly displayed by this response.

Table 3.
Rubric for Level of Student Engagement of Response

Criteria	Low Level Response	Average Level Response	High Level Response
Application of the CPCF Framework to Student's life	Provided facts about what was displayed in the movie. Did not draw connections to their own life.	Shared examples from the movie and drew a connection to their own life.	Shared examples from the movie, drew connections to cultural proficiency and then related it to their own life/experience.
Application of the CPCF Framework to Film	Provided facts about what was displayed in the movie. Did not draw connections to the continuum.	Shared examples from the movie and drew a connection to cultural proficiency.	Shared examples from the movie, drew connections to cultural proficiency and then related it to their own experience with cultural proficiency.
Use of Classroom Terminology	Did not use terminology related to the cultural proficiency continuum.	Attempted to use the terminology related to the cultural proficiency continuum.	Accurately used the terms related to the cultural proficiency continuum. Or a comparable rewording of the terminology

Table 6.

Student Responses to Cuba and the Cameraman question #8

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
	What did you enjoy most about Cuba and the Cameraman?
Shannon	I enjoyed the idea of catching up with the families and different strangers at different points of their lives no matter the situation they were in. The reason I enjoy that so much is because I feel like the story of Cuba at the time had a story inside of it, and that was the stories of these “strangers” lives and how they grew and fell as humans. Another thing I enjoyed is how the cameraman and his equipment starts off in black in white and as time goes on the image gets more clear.
Avery	The thing I enjoyed most about this documentary was how nothing was sugar coated. Everything seemed very natural. To illustrate, there were people in the documentary who didn’t want to be on camera, and it wasn’t cut out of the documentary.

In Shannon’s response to this question [#8], they provided some practical reflection on how they noticed the quality of the film changed from the beginning until the end. The film started off with a giant camcorder that could only film in black and white and then ended with the more modern cameras that captured everything in high definition. In addition to that practical reflection I appreciate the recognition of the individual stories that were represented throughout the years. Shannon described this as the “story inside of it” as the goal of the filmmaker, Jon Alpert, shown through in the stories of the people that he followed throughout the decades. It was also interesting how Shannon referred to their life cycle as “grew and fell” as humans. When I first read that with my lens that comes from a church background, I looked at this comment as how “they had grown and then sinned”. The term “fell” for me, takes on more of a sinful connotation rather than death, as Shannon referred to the protagonists in the film. It was touching to watch the students tear up as they learned of the various individuals that had passed away

during the filming of this documentary. I think that the personal touches designed by the filmmaker resonated with the students and helped keep their interest.

Avery

Avery is a student that was undergoing all sorts of medical struggles at home with family. They worked extremely hard to keep up with their studies and had to miss class every once in a while, to help out with needs at home. Avery was also an athlete on top of all the school and familial tasks and kept a positive attitude all throughout. I was able to count on Avery for putting in hard work and deep thoughts on the topics that were discussed in class. Avery identified as African American.

In Avery's response to this question, they appreciated the fact that there were people that were not necessarily interested in being in the documentary, but still came out in the end film, and how that was a positive aspect. I think that goes on to supplement their initial comment of it being a very natural film. If you include people that weren't interested in the film that does make it seem more realistic. This response was more on the medium scale of response levels, but it still provided unique feedback to the documentary and what was most appealing about this type of film to this student. These are some of the reasons that I chose this film in particular and I am thankful as a teacher that this was appreciated by this student and by others.

Mi Amigo Alexis (January)

Mi Amigo Alexis is a Chilean made film that features their most famous soccer player, Alexis Sanchez. Sanchez is a well-known name in Chile much like LeBron James is known in the United States due to his success in professional basketball. This movie stars Alexis Sanchez as himself and his fictional relationship with a young aspiring soccer player named Tito. The movie brings in familial relationships and struggles as well as tackles the topic of sexism and sports

(soccer). The movie provides a modern look into Chilean culture and is one of very few films that are appropriate for school viewing that have been filmed in a Spanish speaking nation that I have encountered that my students would be interested in.

Guiding Questions for Mi Amigo Alexis

The questions I chose for *Mi Amigo Alexis* also came from multiple years and having watched the movie close to 20 times prior to this year. I wanted students to reflect upon the actions of the father as he made a lot of positive changes throughout the movie and was a great example of how people can change their opinions and viewpoints with the help of others and how their children can be agents of change. I also wanted the students to be able to see the similarities between life in Chile and life in the United States. I also tried to open that question up to the students as I realized that some of my students identified more with their country of origin than with the US. I let the students know that they could use their country of origin as a point of reference as opposed to only using the US as their basis for their opinions.

In addition, I wanted to incorporate the Cultural Proficiency Continuum into these questions as we had already spent a lot of time discussing the various levels on the continuum and what actions and beliefs could represent the various categories. This was the second time that I had asked students to look at someone besides themselves and rank them along the scale based on what they had seen or read. The first time I asked students to rank other individuals on the continuum was for a question on their first semester final exam. For the final exam I asked the students to read a newspaper article about a bus driver in Illinois that did not allow a high school soccer player onto his bus because he was carrying a Mexican flag. The news article went on to describe the actions of his high school teammates and coaches and I asked the students to rate the bus driver, teammates, and coaches on the continuum. This was a great way to see the

student’s ability to not only self-assess on the continuum but then to also look at the actions and words of others and attempt to rank them at that moment. I also needed to be careful to let them know that these assessments can change and that it is meant to represent a continuum that does ebb and flow.

Table 7.

Guiding Questions for Mi Amigo Alexis

<p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What level of “Cultural Proficiency” would you say the dad displayed? Why? ¿Qué nivel de proficiencia cultural demostró el papa? ¿Por qué? 2. As you were watching the movie, where would you rate yourself on the cultural proficiency continuum? Why? ¿Mientras veías la película qué nivel de proficiencia cultural tuviste? ¿Por qué? 3. What was most surprising to you about the movie? Why? ¿Qué te sorprendió más de la película? ¿Por qué? 4. Which character did you relate to/ identify with the most? Why? ¿Con cuál de los protagonistas de la película más te identificas o ves similitudes? ¿Por qué? 5. ¿En el futuro, te gustaría visitar Chile? ¿Por qué? Would you like to visit Chile some day? Why?

Table 8.

Student Responses to Mi Amigo Alexis Question #1

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
	What level of “Cultural Proficiency” would you say the dad displayed? Why? ¿Qué nivel de proficiencia cultural demostró el papa? ¿Por qué?
Shannon	Cultural Destruction, one reason being is how if things weren't the way he was familiar with he thought that it was wrong. For example how his daughter wanted to play soccer and he thought it was a dumb dream of her's. Another one being how his son wanted to learn but instead he would derail his ideas and pressure him into playing more soccer
Stevie	I would say the level of “cultural proficiency” the dad displayed was cultural blindness. He was very ignorant about certain things, especially when it came

	to Gloria and her love for soccer. He states multiple times that soccer is a “boy sport.” He even goes, in blind anger, that Gloria is not able to play the sport simply because she’s a girl. I remember in one scene where Tito could not score a goal because of Gloria’s skill, and the dad got frustrated, because he pushed on the stereotype of men supposed to win over women in these types of scenarios.
Ricki	El nivel de proficiencia cultural que demostro el papa es cultural incapacidad. Yo pienso con Gloria no la dejaron jugar futbol y con Tito queria que se convirtiera en un jugador de futbol por el resto de su vida. El penso que lo unico que podia ser gloria era estudiar. A Tito no lo dejaron estudiar. A Tito lo llevaron a una escuela para entrenar para hacer mas profesional. Su papa penso que Gloria no podria ser igual que Tito. <i>(The level of cultural proficiency that the pope demonstrated is cultural incapacity. I think with Gloria they didn't let her play soccer and with Tito they wanted him to become a soccer player for the rest of his life. He thought that the only thing that could be glory was to study. Tito was not allowed to study. Tito was taken to a school to train to become more professional. Her father thought that Gloria couldn't be the same as Tito.)</i>

Stevie

Stevie was one of my most engaged students throughout the school year. Stevie was not in any extracurriculars during the school year but took schoolwork very seriously. Stevie would frequently ask questions and talk at the end of class about the topics being discussed and was a very positive contributor to the overall atmosphere of the class. Stevie identified as African American.

The answer from Stevie clearly recognized the beliefs that the father had and gave specific examples as to how those beliefs would relate to cultural blindness. This answer connected the father’s actions and beliefs to a stereotype that unfortunately exists in many countries. Stevie’s response also provided an example of a scene in the movie that I hoped the students would remember as his sexist beliefs were on full display. As we watched the movie, I also helped let the students know that the viewpoints that the father was expressing were not the

viewpoints or goals of the producers of the movie and that this was a topic that the directors and producers were trying to bring to light in order to enact change in Chile.

Ricki.

Ricki was another one of my most committed students throughout the year. Ricki would ask for extra work and assignments in order to push themselves in a class that was based on their heritage language. This student would always finish work on time or early and would complete exemplary work. I enjoyed finding ways to academically push and encourage Ricki throughout the year. Ricki was also involved in after-school sports that the school offered. Ricki would identify as Latinx.

The two other responses I shared above ranked the father in the two lowest categories on the continuum: Destruction and Incapacity. I was intrigued by how some students allowed their ranking of the father to change based on the changes he made later in the film and how other students left his ranking based on his earlier actions. Ricki ranked the father at incapacity, and I think that I would put him in a similar location. Ricki's examples were strong and were able to show the ways that the father demeaned his daughter throughout the movie based on her sex and based on his cultural views of what men and women should do when it comes to sports. This answer from Ricki was a unique one as they wrote all their responses to this movie in Spanish. Each time I asked questions of the students I provided the questions in both languages and encouraged students that spoke Spanish at home to answer the questions in Spanish. This was a chance for them to push themselves and I also offered the potential for a higher standard ranking in our grading structure (4-exceeding expectations). The questions being in both languages not only provided the Spanish speaking students a chance to read, write and process in their native languages, but it also provided the students that were learning Spanish for the first time the

opportunity to recognize words they knew and learn some other new vocabulary words. I hope that this attempt to provide access and extra knowledge was viewed as one of my attempts at culturally sustaining pedagogy in addition to the fact that it was during a Spanish class.

Table 9.
Student Responses to Mi Amigo Alexis Question #2

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
	As you were watching the movie, where would you rate yourself on the cultural proficiency continuum? Why? ¿Mientras veías la película qué nivel de proficiencia cultural tuviste? ¿Por qué?
Shannon	Cultural Competence, the reason I put myself at cultural competence is because it's different from what I am used to. But I wouldn't mind trying out different cultural activities that they participate in, only because it's different from what I grew up doing does not mean that it's wrong. And that shows that I am willing to grow in different cultures.
Jerri	Top one [Culturally Proficient], i was trying to learn new words but they were speaking very fast but it was an very interesting movie as we watch it again i'll try to look more into the movie so i can learn more words for the quince i have to attend coming up
Stevie	As I was watching the movie I think I would rate myself on the cultural proficiency as cultural competence. I'm not 100% aware of the culture, but I took time and actually enjoyed learning about the Chilean Culture and how they did things differently in their country. At the same time I understood our differences and was aware of how I could change my ways of thinking when it comes to other cultures. One thing that I was unaware of was the lamb cooking/roasting over the fire, but I understood that our culture is different.
Avery	While watching the movie, I would rate myself as cultural competence on the cultural proficiency continuum. This is because I am still learning about other cultures, but while learning I am still respectful and understanding. I also value other cultures and their languages, foods, traditions, etc.

This is a question that I had not asked students in prior years, but I felt it was important for them to reflect on this question in a more formal setting. I hoped that as they looked at their own views while they watched the film that it might become something they would do naturally

outside of this class. There is not a right or wrong answer to this question, and I hoped that they felt that they could be honest with themselves and with me.

Jerri.

Jerri is a student that was not involved in extracurriculars but was actively involved in coursework and class discussions. Jerri was often frustrated with the school and its policies and had a few disciplinary run-ins with the administration. Jerri was learning about culture inside and outside of the class and provided interesting insight into how the world was viewed through their eyes and how they had been shaped. Jerri also identified as African American.

Based on the rubric, I would rate the response by Jerri as a low-level response but the way that they described how this film impacted their life outside of school stood out to me. Jerri mentioned how this film helped prepare them for a friend's Quinceañera party that was coming. A Quinceañera is a big deal in many Mexican households here in the US as well as back in Mexico. It is the celebration of a girl's 15th birthday and can be compared in some ways to a sweet sixteen, but it is more on the level of a big wedding. Since Jerri does not come from a Spanish speaking household it was an honor to be selected to be a part of the Quinceañera "court". Being on the court involved lots of practice of the dance steps and listening to a lot of music and instructions in Spanish. Jerri felt honored to be a part of this celebration and took this Spanish class more seriously than others.

Another response that I want to mention is from Stevie. A goal of mine is to help students appreciate other cultures and have a desire to learn about them and interact with them in culturally appropriate ways. With that being a personal goal and the goal of other WL instructors, it is encouraging to read a response like this one from Stevie. Stevie's response would rank as a high-level response as Stevie used the terminology that was used in class, related

it to the movie and to their own life. It stood out to me as they mentioned their unawareness of Chilean culture prior to the movie and how they were actively engaged in learning about something new, valuing the practices and then finally being able to share some of the cultural aspects that were displayed in the movie. This response was an exemplary response and one that I hope all the students can process in their heads as they are learning about new cultures and places.

I also want to mention Shannon’s response as Shannon mentioned a phrase that I have reiterated over and over throughout the year: “Just because it is different doesn’t make it wrong”. Shannon discussed this in their response and let me know that they were thinking about this statement during the movie. If we immediately think that just because someone does something different than us that it is wrong, it is going to be difficult to learn to value and appreciate those practices. If we can take on a learner’s mindset or even a strengths based (funds of knowledge) approach to life, I think we could see positive changes in our circles of influence.

Table 10.
Student Responses to Mi Amigo Alexis Question # 4

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
	What was most surprising to you about the movie? Why? ¿Qué te sorprendió más de la película? ¿Por qué?
Shannon	The most surprising part about the movie for me is how good it is at expressing the setting and the culture of where the movie takes place. This is because although I don't mind watching movies from different places outside of America, this made me feel the culture of Chile. I also appreciate how it shows all parts of Chile and not just the rich/ “good” parts of Chile.
Jerri	That the father finally let things that he didn’t want to happen, happen like letting his daughter play soccer and not forcing his son to soccer and it’s good he let it happen cause he seemed less in distraught when he finally let her play soccer
Ricki	Lo que más me sorprendió fue cuando Hector empezó a tomar cuando dejo a su familia y se emborrachó. Pero la peor cosa fue que él pensó que con tomar unas cervezas todo se iba a poner bien. Pero con eso no logro nada. Le dio un mal

<p>ejemplo para sus hijos y para verlo así debe de doler. No sabes en qué pensar cuando ves eso. <i>(What surprised me the most was when Hector started drinking when he left his family and got drunk. But the worst thing was that he thought that with a few beers everything would be fine. But with that I get nothing. He set a bad example for his children and to see him like this must hurt. You don't know what to think when you see that.)</i></p>

I find it valuable to ask students what was surprising to them about a film or documentary. This helps get some insight into what expectations they may have had, but then also lets me know what was something that stuck with them and made an impact. This is a relatively simple question and I think that its simplicity is inviting to students and allows them to be honest in their reflection.

Ricki took an interesting view on the scene when the father drank too much after being sent out of the home. Ricki talked about how poor of an example to his children this action was and that this was very surprising. I just found this response personally surprising as I didn't expect this scene to surprise the students. Another moment that reminds me that I need to continue on my own journey towards cultural proficiency. I know that alcoholism is something that is a struggle for people of all demographics, but I just imagined this scene would roll off the students without leaving an impact. I would rate this response as a mid-level response as it was a good response, but there was not a direct written component that related this to their own life and experience with situations like this.

Shannon focused more on the culture of Chile in their response to this question. Shannon's response was also a mid-level response as they appropriately expressed what was surprising, but did not go into more depth that would have increased its level of response. This was the second time that a student shared how they were impressed that a film would show both the positive and negative aspects of a society. I also find that refreshing and is a big reason why I

want the students to watch films that provide a “well rounded” view of a culture. By saying “well rounded”, I am referring to the ability to show all aspects and not just a one sided point of view whether that show only the positives or only the negatives.

Table 11.
Student Responses to Mi Amigo Alexis Question # 5

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
	Which character did you relate to/ identify with the most? Why?
Shannon	Tito, but this is not because of the issues he has with his father, people in real life make a substitution for the role of Tito’s father in my case. The reason being is when people see my size, or even my race they would stereotype me in a way they would expect me to act. The reason this is connected to Tito is because his father expects him to play soccer when he wants to learn, while shooting down Tito’s sisters dream of being a pro soccer player because of her gender.
Jerri	Tito, living a hard life and people you known not being able to get their dreams all the way through so they want to force you to do it but as you get older they understand and support you with what you’d rather do so it’s good to let them know that you’re on your own wave of doing things and not wanting to be like they wish they were
Ricki	Yo creo que yo y Gloria somos similares porque todos piensan que nomas eres niña y juegas futbol, que no eres buena. Desde los tres años he jugado fútbol y todos me critican porque no debo jugar un juego de niños. La cosa de que hay cosas en las que una niña y un niño no pueden jugar un deporte para mí no es justo. Todos tenemos derecho a practicar el deporte de nuestra preferencia. <i>(I think that I and Gloria are similar because everyone thinks that you're just a girl and you play soccer, that you're no good. I've been playing soccer since I was three years old and everyone criticizes me because I shouldn't play a child 's game. The thing that there are things that a girl and a boy cannot play a sport for me is not fair. We all have the right to practice the sport of our choice.)</i>

Once again, I find value in asking students to share which character they identify with the most. We are all drawn to or repelled by different characters in movies based on our life experiences and world views. For this reason, I seek to find out who the students identify with and why.

Shannon’s response was insightful, and it was also ranked as a high-level response.

Shannon was able to find examples in the story, use terminology from class discussions, and

relate the character to their own life. It was sad to read that Shannon identified with Tito because of the stereotypes that they were both discriminated against. I am thankful that Shannon was willing to share this on this assignment, but it still breaks my heart that people make judgments about them based on their size and skin color. The stereotypes and discrimination were based on different attributes, but they were still able to draw similarities in how they have a negative impact in their lives.

Ricki's response was also heartbreaking as they shared the same discrimination that Gloria from the movie faced in regard to playing soccer. These negative experiences of gender stereotyping in sports provided the main reason for why I wanted the students to watch this movie. The producers of this movie attempted to tackle this stereotype head on and brought in some big-name public figures to combat this stereotype. Ricki's response was a high-level response as they were able to provide examples from the movie, and then relate it to their own life using the terminology we had used throughout our class sessions. I hope that this movie did provide some comfort as they were able to see the efforts that the producers went through to attempt to reverse the gender-based stereotyping related to soccer in Chile. I also think that my audience of students was very appropriate for this movie as I had many soccer players (male and female) and many Latinos that have seen and experienced this form of stereotyping and discrimination.

Taco Chronicles (March)

This is a documentary series that travels to multiple cities throughout Mexico looking for the best *taqueros* covering a variety of types of tacos (ie: carne asada, carnitas, barbacoa). A "*taquero*" is someone who makes tacos for a living. The creators meet with *taqueros* as well as the individuals raising the crops or animals that are the key ingredients of each taco. Throughout

the series viewers are introduced to culture from the creation of the taco to how it is consumed. I always warn, in a joking way, to my students at the beginning that they may leave my class hungry as a result of watching this show.

Student Responses to Taco Chronicles

Table 12.
Student Responses to End of Year Interest Inventory Question #9

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
Responses from students other than the 5 Main students that were highlighted	<p>I think that the activity that really stood out was taco chronicles because when we were watching it there was people asking questions about it and understanding how different foods from different places were made.</p> <p>What stood out for me was the Taco chronicles, cause i like food, and learning all types of food from different places, mainly in that topic, tacos was very interesting, cause i didn't really know that there is was more tacos i haven't heard of before, and it gave me an understanding that, what i know now, there is probably lots of more things i don't know yet. And it gets me interested in learning more about food all around the world.</p>

Taco Chronicles did not receive an official assignment that I was able to choose from, but I want to share a student response that came from the end of the year survey as well as an anecdote about a student experience that I wrote down in my research journal. The viewing of Taco Chronicles was something that I wanted students to enjoy and be able to discuss without having the stress of an assignment that followed or was to be completed during the show. I would regularly stop the film to ask the students questions and have them process the cultural practices that they were seeing as well as the products (tacos and taco making tools) they were viewing during the show. The show was completely in Spanish, and I would provide subtitles in English for the students to reference or read. One of the practices I wanted them to see in most of

the episodes involved the use of gloves while preparing and serving food. We would compare this to what is typically seen in restaurants in the US. It was fascinating to see how some students would call out the lack of gloves even before I would bring it up for discussion. This would also bring up one of one of my favorite statements, “just because it is different, doesn’t make it wrong”. I would also ask them how often they asked a family member to put on gloves when they went over to their house for a meal? Most of the students responded that they would never ask a family member or friend to “glove up” for a meal and that it would feel strange for them to wear gloves while they made their food. I would then ask them why? We would then discuss the trust that happens between family members and friends and that here in the US there is not as much trust for the people making our food whether that be because of the videos that come out on the internet of a fast-food restaurant worker spitting on food or taking a bath in an industrial sink in the back. It is also not as common to see someone work at a restaurant for years and years even if we are referring to the owner.

What we saw in Taco Chronicles involved a trust between the food preparer and the client and a desire to provide good service because of mutual care and respect for others. It would also be terrible business to have unsanitary practices that lead to sickness each time someone dines there. And in small and large communities that would be devastating to one’s livelihood and so you would do the best to care for your customers and community in general so as not to do harm to a neighbor.

In the end of the year review I shared a couple of the student comments from what activities they remembered the most and they chose Taco Chronicles. Each student shared how it was neat to learn about more tacos and also to learn about where the tacos come from. Taco Chronicles followed the tacos back to the business and individuals that raised the animals to

become the main component of the taco. They also followed the copper pots back to a business that has been around for generations that still makes giant copper pots by hand as they are the best way to prepare and cook the meat that ends up on a taco. One of the students also mentioned how it makes them want to learn more about foods from around the world. That final comment means a lot to me as I want students to be able to take concepts that we learn in class and apply them to their own lives. If students can take that curiosity for food and explore new restaurants in their area (eventually maybe leave the country), they can start to develop relationships with people from differing backgrounds. They can share cultures with one another and break down some potential stereotypes. These types of interactions can create ripples that could make our world a more welcoming place.

One of my favorite moments of the year came from watching Taco Chronicles as I saw one of my students that was mostly disengaged become interested in the show because it was filmed in his hometown. I have read articles about validating the lived experiences (Validation Theory) of your students and how important that can be to a student (Quiñonez & Olivas; 2020; Paris & Alim; 2014). Quiñonez & Olivas (2020) described validation as, “Validation involves creating classroom climate, activities, and assignments that demonstrate that Latinxs can be successful college students” (p.5). I had seen this play out in some other scenarios but never quite like how it changed this student's attitude and attention that day. This student had his head down most classes and even though Spanish was his first language, he mostly wanted nothing to do with my class or any other class that I was aware of. But when he saw his hometown pop up on the big screen, he immediately began to smile, pay attention and commented aloud (in Spanish) how that was his hometown and that he had eaten there before. For the remainder of that class period he was engaged in the show and also in participating as I asked questions of the

class. We already had a strong relationship because I was one of the few staff or faculty in the school that spoke Spanish, but after that moment we developed a stronger bond, and he began to trust me more and I saw a positive change in his behavior. I was amazed to see that quick of a turnaround in a student's attitude and I know I shouldn't have been surprised, but I was. This was one of those moments that I couldn't quite grasp because throughout much of my schooling I was able to see people and places that represented the cultures that I was a part of.

Another neat moment came from Taco Chronicles when a student came to me the next week and she shared with me how she had told her parents about the show and that they watched every episode over the weekend. She said that her parents were able to share with her some of the places that she had not visited but were in the state in Mexico where her parents had grown up. It was amazing to see how activities from class could then translate into an activity where a family could bond at home and share some of their heritage with the next generation.

Zootopia (June)

Zootopia is a movie produced by Disney that hoped to display diversity throughout the world by creating a fictional city full of diverse animals. The producers of Zootopia worked with the President and founder of the World Trust Organization, Shakti Butler, as their equity consultant and advisor. Shakti Butler created a documentary, *Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequality* (2012), that was foundational in my own personal journey with cultural consciousness. This partnership created a movie that was fun enough for kids to enjoy, but incorporated difficult topics of stereotypes, inequalities, and racism. Zootopia allows for discussion on stereotypes and discrimination in ways that can feel more welcoming and less threatening.

The movie follows the story of a young female bunny rabbit, Judy, from the country that

wants to become the first “bunny cop” in the big city of Zootopia. The story follows the fears instilled in her by her family based on stereotypes of predatory animals and all aspects of life that were unfamiliar to their family. Judy also confronts her own biases as she works to realize her dreams of becoming a police officer for the Zootopia Police Department. Throughout the movie the producers captured moments of inclusivity in how the city was designed architecturally as well as the different initiatives that were created for hiring processes throughout the city. The screen time given to positive ways to work with diverse populations as well as the time given to highlight stereotypes and discrimination was beautifully intertwined.

Guiding Questions for Zootopia

Table 13.

Guiding Questions for Zootopia

Questions:

1. What stereotypes did you see during the movie? (give 3 examples) ¿Cuáles estereotipos viste durante la película? (3 ejemplos)
2. How was inclusivity shown? Inclusivity is doing something to help others fit in. (3 examples) ¿Cómo demostró inclusividad? La inclusividad es hacer algo para que alguien se sienta más cómodo. (3 ejemplos)
3. Which character do you most identify with and why? (3 sentences)
¿Con cuál de los personajes te identificas más y por qué? (3 oraciones)
4. Who was the most culturally proficient character in the movie? Who was the least culturally proficient? Why? ¿Quién es el personaje que demostró proficiencia cultural y quien no demostró proficiencia cultural y por qué?
5. What can be done in the US to make life better for people of all backgrounds? (3 sentences)
¿Qué se puede hacer en los estados unidos para mejorar las vidas de personas de varias culturas, razas, creencias, etc.? (3 oraciones)

Zootopia is the movie that I have shown to my classes at the end of the year for three years prior to this year and it consistently received positive feedback. The first year that we watched this movie there were not as many students that had seen it already, but as the years

went on more and more students had already seen it and were a little less excited to watch it. The great thing about it was the fact that each year at the end of the movie the students could appreciate the new perspective on the film and were able to look deeper into the themes and messages created by the producers. The questions I created for the assignment at the end were constantly evolving and this year's grouping was my best. I wanted students to think deeply about the movie and how it relates to real life topics of stereotypes and discrimination. I also wanted them to see the positive plans and ideas people had to break these stereotypes and improve the lives of everyone in society.

Student Responses to Zootopia

This question [#1] did not necessarily draw any deep or profound responses, but it did give me a chance to see what they noticed in the movie. I was pleased to see that the students were able to identify the various stereotypes that were displayed throughout the movie. I didn't think that this would be a difficult task for students, but I also felt that it was important for them to put these down on paper and keep a list. I was also slightly surprised that the students said almost the exact same things and came up with the same stereotypes. There were plenty of other stereotypes displayed in the movie, but these were the most common examples that they decided to write down for this assignment.

Table 14.
Student Responses to Zootopia Question # 1

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
	What stereotypes did you see during the movie? (give 3 examples); ¿Cuáles estereotipos viste durante la película? (3 ejemplos)
Shannon	a. Bunnies cannot be police officers b. All foxes are predators c. Sloths are slow
Jerri	a. Bunnies can't be cops

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Foxes are dangerous c. She saw a fox and just thought danger
Stevie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bunny can't be cops b. Foxes are vicious and dangerous(Predators in general: lions and bears) c. Bunnies are dumb and weak
Ricki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bunnies cannot/shouldn't be cops b. Foxes are the worst animals c. Sloths are the slowest animals
Avery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bunnies can't be "protectors" because they're prey b. Sloths are super slow; Sloths can't be fast c. Elephants have great memory d. fox are liars e. predators are "savages"

The responses to this question [#2] were like the previous question as many students highlighted the obvious accommodations that had been created in Zootopia to be more inclusive to all animals. I had hoped that they would also recognize the "mammal initiative" that was created by the police department to have more representation of all animals in the police force and not just have representation of carnivores. In spite of the students not mentioning some of the "less obvious" inclusion initiatives in Zootopia, I was pleased that the students were able to recognize the physical ways that Zootopia made sure that in public animals of all shapes and sizes could feel welcome and able to participate in everyday activities like going out to eat or taking public transportation. This is a question I plan to use in the future, but I would ask for a little more depth as well. I plan to ask them how these accommodations have been seen or could be implemented into our current society. That type of question could bring their critical thinking to the next level.

Table 15.

Student Responses to Zootopia Question #2

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
	How was inclusivity shown? Inclusivity is doing something to help others fit in.(3 examples) <i>¿Cómo demostró inclusividad? La inclusividad es hacer algo para que alguien se sienta más cómodo. (3 ejemplos)</i>
Shannon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The hamster tubes ● The shop ● The little town for the little people
Jerri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Letting the bunny be a cop ● The way the train was made ● The train station
Stevie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There were doors on the train for animals of all sizes ● There was a pickup station for giraffes ● There was a small town dedicated to the small animals
Ricki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Different sizes of doors for people of any size ● Different machines to access smaller or for larger animals ● Door handles lower than they usually are
Avery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When Nick stood up for Judy when the chief tried to take her badge ● When Judy’s parents decided to dismiss their stereotypical mindset and ideas about foxes and work with Gideon

Stevie’s response to this question [#3] was clearly a high-level response based on the rubric. Stevie was able to connect Judy’s experience to their experience and as mentioned the experiences of People of Color as well. I am thankful that Stevie felt comfortable in sharing this experience and what they have seen in their community. It saddens me that this is a reality and that the identity landed with someone that was told they couldn’t do something because of their

race, and I wish that things could be better than that. I also liked how they felt inspired by the actions of the main character in the film, Judy, and that her character was well received.

Shannon’s response once again displayed their willingness to discuss how stereotypes have impacted them. I appreciated how they related to Nick Wild, the fox, and shared similar experiences of being negatively stereotyped based on their exterior. The response was a mid-level response overall, but this has been a common theme in Shannon’s responses throughout the varying shows that we have watched.

Table 16.
Student Responses to Zootopia Question #3

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
	Which character do you most identify with and why? (3 sentences) <i>¿Con cuál de los personajes te identificas más y por qué? (3 oraciones)</i>
Shannon	I most relate to Nick because in the movie Nick is judged by his appearance instead of an actual reason to be judged. The reason that I can relate to this is because in real life people will stereotype you if you look a certain way instead of treating you like everyone else.
Jerri	I don’t really know what character I identify with. I would say the fox. Bro just hustling trying to get his money.
Stevie	I think I most identify with Judy the most. Being black in America, being a POC (Person of Color) in general, there are so many people telling you what you can’t do or what you can’t be. Judy doing something out of the “ordinary” is something very inspiring and I can relate to that because she tries her best to do something out of the box similarly to me.
Ricki	Nandi (the elephant). I identify as this character because I feel as if I ignore everything if I don’t account for people. Everyone goes anonymous for me and I’m always in my own world. Always trying to focus on what I’m doing or what’s most important at that moment.
Avery	I think I most identify with the predators in general because how they were treated differently based on how they look and people were so scared of them because of how they look.

The funniest response to Question #3 was by Ricki as they mentioned that they most related to the “forgetful” elephant from the movie. I mostly found this funny because no one else had chosen this character to identify with, but when Ricki described more in depth why they chose the elephant, it made perfect sense as to why they would have chosen this character. I had never put that together for Ricki, but Ricki typically stayed to themselves, and even when there was chaos going on around them in the classroom and school, they were able to keep their eyes on the prize and not let the distractions sidetrack them. This response would rank as a high-level response as Ricki engaged with the movie and found a unique connection.

Table 17.

Student Responses to Zootopia Question #4

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
	Who was the most culturally proficient character in the movie? Who was the least culturally proficient? Why?
Shannon	I believe that clawhauser was the most culturally proficient. This is because when Judy was first hired most of the cops did not believe that a bunny had no idea being a cop but Clawhouse treated Judy like everyone else. Another fact about Clawhauser is that he was a big fan of Gazelle, which is a prey, but he didn't care because he just enjoyed her.
Jerri	None of them really were. They all had a little thought of stereotypical ways of the animals they think that are like this or like that. It was more of a movie to show how stereotypes push the world apart and together.
Stevie	Although Judy at first, due to her family had some stereotypes, she broke those stereotypes. So I believe she has shown the most cultural proficiency. She teamed up with Nick and understood the differences between her and Nick and made the best out of it. She did not stereotype him at the end of the day.
Ricki	The elephant working at the ice cream place was the least. He didn't want to have business with the fox because foxes are bad and mean.
Avery	I was going to say maybe Mr.Big or Nick, maybe even Yax, but I definitely think that Giselle was the most culturally proficient person throughout the entire movie. She was the one of the only people who never made stereotypical remarks and she never made any gestures or anything. Another thing that really made me say Gazelle was the most culturally proficient is because when she was

	on the news she talked about how Zootopia was supposed to be about diversity, and how the citizens shouldn't blindly accuse predators and stereotype them all as savages.
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For this question [#4] I wanted the students to be able to identify a character that displayed cultural proficiency in a positive way or to identify someone that was not as proficient. These answers were similar in a lot of ways, but I enjoyed the explanations provided by the students as they shared which character they chose and why. At this point in the year, I expected students to be able to pick out characters from the movie that exuded different levels of proficiency. This is a good way for me to see if they understand the idea of cultural proficiency as well. The results of this were interesting as students held some optimism for a better future in regard to lessening stereotypes and discrimination in the US, but there was an overwhelming feel of skepticism and a lack of hope for a better future from the student responses. They provided some good examples of what could be done to improve the situation in the US, but these were shared with not a lot of hope or conviction that they would work.

Stevie shared a high-level response to this question as they described how Judy, the main character, displayed the most cultural proficiency. Judy was probably the most obvious character for this ranking, but what I like is how Stevie discussed how Judy's family raised her to look at foxes as dangerous predators, but that in the end Judy ended up being his partner. At the beginning of the movie Judy's family tried to give her "fox spray", "fox repellent" and other products used for "fox protection". A couple times in the movie Judy's unconscious biases were displayed as she reached for her "fox spray" when she first saw Nick, the fox, walking into a store. The movie also did a great job of walking through Judy's journey of stereotypes, how they are developed, how they manifest themselves, and lastly, how they can be reversed.

The other answer to this question that stood out to me was Avery’s response. I had not thought about Gizelle, a character voiced by Shakira, as being the most culturally proficient, but after reading their response, I see where they came from. In real life, Shakira is a big advocate for human rights and for diversity. Shakira is a Colombian born singer that has hit the tops of music charts multiple times in her career and her song “Try Everything” from Zootopia was also an instant hit. Avery shared multiple examples from the movie about how Gizelle was trying to promote unity within Zootopia on the news and with her music. I think because Gizelle had less screen time than other characters, most students didn’t think about the positive impact that she was trying to make in the movie, but Avery certainly saw the efforts that were being made by this big-name celebrity.

Table 18.
Student Responses to Zootopia Question #5

Student	Question/Movie Student Response Below
	What can be done in the US to make life better for people of all backgrounds? (3 sentences) <i>¿Que se puede hacer en los estados unidos para mejorar las vidas de personas de varias culturas, razas, creencias, etc.? (3 oraciones)</i>
Shannon	The US can do better at advertising people of different backgrounds other than American and normalizing them as things like cops, firefighters, nurses etc. Another thing that America can do better is founding lower income families because most of them are from different backgrounds. This is because if you come from a lower income family most people do not dream as big so they adapt to what they see around them.
Jerri	Nothing can be done for people with differing backgrounds. Most people keep up that mindset for years or generations so most of the time it won’t be any type of way to help them all.
Stevie	I think at this point the only thing the US can do is to be understanding of people’s differences. The US is filled with people of different races/ethnicities, sexuality, gender, and even more. The world today is so stuck on stereotypes and I believe that needs to change. All it takes is understanding and change. For example, there are so many stereotypes and false accusations for people with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). Many people believe people with ASD are not

	able to do things a person without ASD can do , which is not true. To fix this people need to break these stereotypes and understand.
Avery	One thing that could happen to make life better for people of all backgrounds is to make people aware of what they are being taught and how it is keeping them in their little bubble of racist/prejudice xenophobia, <i>especially</i> older generations. For example, some common stereotypes I hear are: “Asian children are super smart”, “Anyone that even looks Muslims is “probably a terrorist”, “black people are dumb”, “Hispanic women are crazy”, “Africans are poor”, “Africans live in huts”, “Mexicans are taking all of the jobs”. The list could really go on. It is important that people realize the lies they’re being fed and re-educate themselves so that we can finally begin to actually grow from the divide of all ethnicities and ultimately live in unity, but like for real this time. I personally don’t think I’ll live to be actually be able to see a shift in the world though.

For this question [#5] each student shared rich and insightful answers that displayed their connections from the movie into real life scenarios. As I look at these responses from each student I am very encouraged by their honesty and willingness to discuss this topic and provide some examples and advice for how the US could potentially improve to make it a more welcoming nation to people from all backgrounds. Jerri shared a rather hopeless response and held the view that there could not be any change and that people are just going to keep on believing in the things that they have been for generations. I am not going to disagree with Jerri on this one as it does seem like a mountain that may be impossible to climb. Based on other responses and discussions from Jerri I can see where this viewpoint comes from. The encouraging part of this is that Jerri wants to view the world with open eyes and enjoys learning about other cultures. I am thankful that this negative outlook for the rest of the world isn’t seeping into their own desire to see the world with a fresh set of eyes.

I felt that Stevie’s response was at a very high level as they shared examples, terminology and even connected our learning to a topic of diversity that we did not openly discuss in class (Special Needs/Ability). I appreciated how Stevie brought up the autism

spectrum disorder and how stereotypes can harm people that identify as being on the autism spectrum. This type of analysis and comparison shows a deep level of thinking and connection that highlights where Stevie was thinking as they were processing this material.

Avery shared some strong examples of stereotypes that they have heard and how they can be harmful. I resonate with the connection that Avery made, and I was also impressed by how diverse they made the stereotypes and touched on multiple people groups. I appreciate how they thought about a wide variety of stereotypes and that they weren't just in reference to one group. They also shared some stereotypes that are seemingly positive, but then if someone from that group doesn't meet that stereotype, how that can be harmful to that individual. Avery shared a similar sentiment to Jerri as they both believe that they will not see this type of change (moving towards cultural proficiency) in their lifetime, but I believe that they will be able to be positive influences in their circles of influence.

End of Year Comments

Table 19.

Student Responses to End of Year Interest Inventory Question #9

<u>End of Year Interest Inventory Question:</u> Was there an activity relating to culture that really stood out from this year?
I think our recent activity Zootopia stood out from what we studied this year. Zootopia did an amazing job at showing stereotypes and cultural diversity, and it really opens people eyes to discrimination and the cruelty of people when they are biased against something.
Zootopia would be the activity related to culture that stood out to me the most because I had watched the movie before thinking it was just a movie, watching it again and knowing what I was looking for made me realize there are a lot of way to disrespect a culture, and the movie showed many ways of cultural destructiveness. But also cultural proficiency at the same time.

The responses above represent some of the responses from students through the end of

the year survey questions. Zootopia was the most popular movie to refer to when this question was asked of the 100 students that were asked this question, twenty-two of them responded with this movie as being the movie or activity that most stood out to them from the school year. The second most popular topics, Machu Picchu Unit and Cuba and the Cameraman, each received eleven mentions and came in for a tie of second most popular movie or activity. The responses above speak for themselves and it was encouraging to see that this was a meaningful way to end the year and all that we had been discussing in regard to culture.

Interest Inventories and Responses

End of Year Survey Questions and Responses

In addition to the reflection questions that came along with each film, three interest inventories were given during the school year (See appendix B). The initial interest inventory was given to the students during the first month of school (August), the second interest inventory was given at the end of the first semester (December) and the final interest inventory was assigned at the end of the school year (May). The questions were consistent across each inventory apart from some additional questions provided in the final interest inventory with the intent of hearing feedback from the students in summation of the school year. The questions were made with the intent of allowing the students to follow their cultural proficiency journey from the beginning of the year until the end and provide me with some data and checkpoints to help me understand what they were thinking and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. I just want to highlight a couple of the questions that were consistent across the three inventories to share some of the progression the class made from start to finish. In each of the inventories I asked the following question, “In regard to Race and Ethnicity, Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of race and

ethnicity? (racial and ethnic backgrounds/skin color/tone)”. With each question I provided some examples at the end if the students were confused by the terminology. (See Figure 5 below)

Figure 5.

Question #1 from Interest Inventory

Race and Ethnicity: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of race and ethnicity? (racial and ethnic backgrounds/skin color/tone) *

- 1 Cultural Destructiveness
- 2 Cultural Incapacity
- 3 Cultural Blindness
- 4 Cultural Precompetence
- 5 Cultural Competence
- 6 Cultural Proficiency

THE CULTURAL PROFICIENCY CONTINUUM: DEPICTING UNHEALTHY AND HEALTHY PRACTICES					
Cultural DESTRUCTIVENESS	Cultural INCAPACITY	Cultural BLINDNESS	Cultural PRECOMPETENCE	Cultural COMPETENCE	Cultural PROFICIENCY
COMPLIANCE-BASED TOLERANCE FOR DIVERSITY			TRANSFORMATION FOR EQUITY		
<p>Cultural destructiveness:</p> <p>Seeking to eliminate references to the culture of “others” in all aspects of the school and in relationship with their communities.</p>	<p>Cultural incapacity:</p> <p>Trivializing “other” communities and seeking to make them appear to be wrong.</p>	<p>Cultural blindness:</p> <p>Pretending not to see or acknowledge the status and culture of marginalized communities and choosing to ignore the experiences of such groups within the school and community.</p>	<p>Cultural precompetence:</p> <p>Increasingly aware of what you and the school don’t know about working with marginalized communities. It is at this key level of development that you and the school can move in a positive, constructive direction, or you can vacillate, stop, and possibly regress.</p>	<p>Cultural competence:</p> <p>Manifesting your personal values and behaviors and the school’s policies and practices in a manner that is inclusive with marginalized cultures and communities that are new or different from you and the school.</p>	<p>Cultural proficiency:</p> <p>Advocating for lifelong learning in order to be increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of the cultural groups served by the school. Holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy.</p>

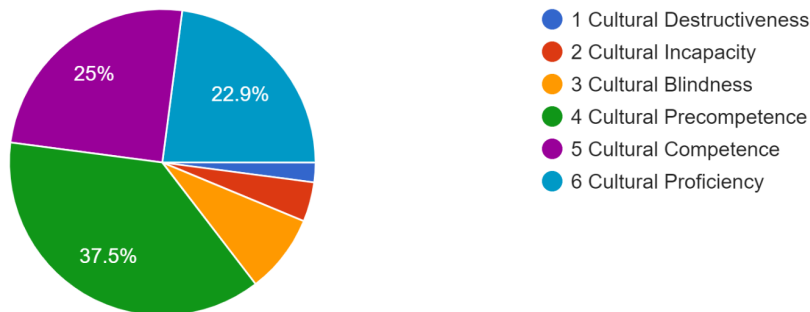
SOURCE: Adapted from Terrell & Lindsey, 2009.

In the initial interest inventory that was assigned at the beginning of the year, I saw results that I expected to see (See figure 6 below). I assumed that I would see representation from each category on the continuum and you can see in the pie chart below that each category received at least one selection. Roughly 15% of the students selected a level between 1 and 3 [1 Cultural Destructiveness, 2 Cultural Incapacity, 3 Cultural Blindness]. I was pleased to see that 85% of the students selected levels between 4 and 6 [4 Cultural Pre Competence, 5 Cultural Competence, 6 Cultural Proficiency]. I honestly thought that I would have seen more students within the lower three categories, but I am not complaining that this number was on the lower side. I looked at the 15% as my challenge and made a goal for myself to lower those numbers and see more students in the 4-6 range.

Figure 6.

Results from Question #1 on Initial Interest Inventory (August)

Race and Ethnicity: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of race and et...? (racial and ethnic backgrounds/skin color/tone)
96 responses



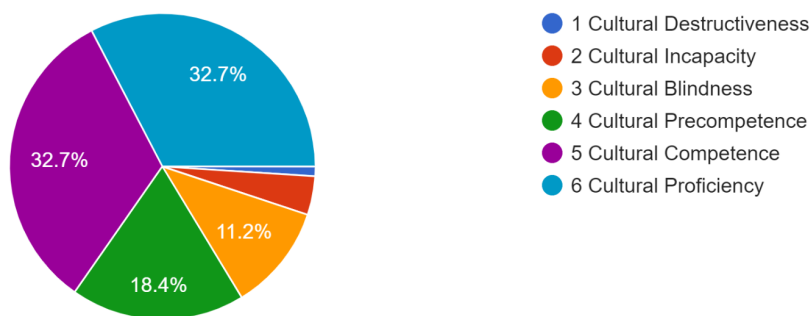
In the second interest inventory that was given in December you can see that the percentage of students identifying in levels 1-3 stayed fairly consistent at 16%, but that the number of students identifying in levels 5 and 6 did increase (See figure 8). In the first interest

inventory the biggest category at 37.5% was Cultural Pre-Competence and in the second one there was a tie between cultural competence and cultural proficiency with each of them having a percentage of 32.7%. Cultural Pre-Competence only represented 18.4% of the self-selections. The increase in students moving from Pre-Competence to Competence was not exactly what I had expected to see, but I am encouraged by this movement towards proficiency. Any movement along the spectrum towards a 6 is a welcome change and is an indicator to me that something was working in the curriculum that I was providing.

Figure 7.

Results from Question #1 Mid- Interest Inventory (December)

Race and Ethnicity: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of race and et...? (racial and ethnic backgrounds/skin color/tone)
98 responses



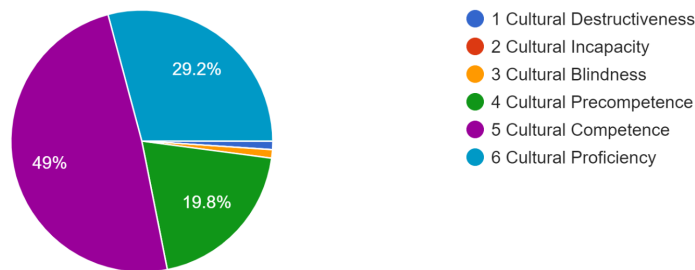
In the third and final interest inventory that was given in May I was able to see my goal achieved of lowering the number of students self-selecting within the first three levels of the continuum. 98% of the students self-identified their level of cultural proficiency in levels 4-6 which represent the highest levels of cultural proficiency. Only one student selected a level between 1-3 [One student that only speaks Spanish fluently accidentally selected 1 and I know

that this student does not identify their cultural proficiency as a 1]. I am thrilled by these results as the lowest level of cultural proficiency that was selected was a 3 [cultural blindness]. Roughly 50% of the students identified as being culturally competent and that is also a big encouragement and a percentage that I did not expect to see reach that level!

Figure 8.

Results from Question one on Post Interest Inventory (May)

Race and Ethnicity: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of race and et...? (racial and ethnic backgrounds/skin color/tone)
96 responses



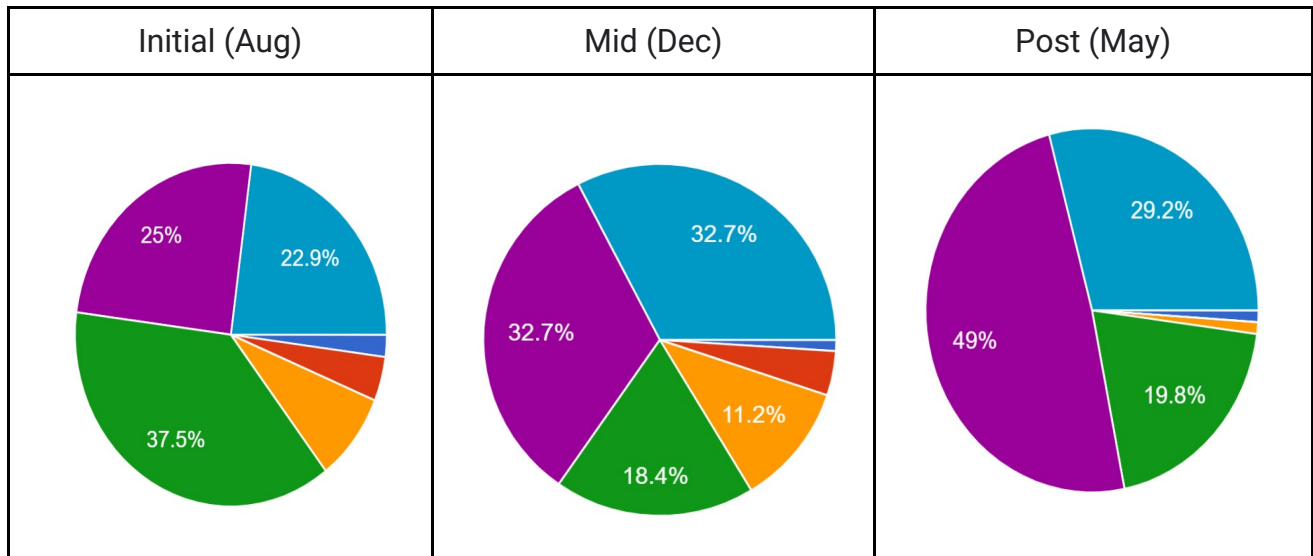
The chart below displays the overall results from all students surveyed during the initial interest inventory, the mid-way, and the end of year inventory. The charts are in reference to their self-assessment of their cultural proficiency in regard to race and ethnicity. I noticed that the students that identified as proficient (level 6) stayed consistent, but in the end I was very encouraged to see the amount of students that identified as culturally competent (level 5) at 49% of the students. In the first interest inventory only 25% of the students self-identified as being competent (level 5). I also noticed that in the first two interest inventories that a few students had identified as cultural destructiveness (level 1) or cultural incapacity (level 2) and in the final interest inventory no one identified as those two lowest categories and only a couple of students identified as being cultural blindness (level 3). It was encouraging to see this trend upwards in

the continuum and that students were able to in general maintain or improve their cultural proficiency throughout the year. Because race and ethnicity were a major focus in our movies and discussions, I wanted to highlight this question specifically as some of the other categories in the interest inventory (political views and religion) were not openly discussed or displayed throughout the class. I hope though that the goal of proficiency and the way to reach that can be seen in the other areas of diversity. If you can learn to respect someone’s cultural backgrounds, I also hope that you could learn to respect someone’s political viewpoints or religious beliefs. I know that those are two loaded topics, but that is also why I would love to see even more change in those historically polarizing topics.

Figure 9.

Comparison of the 3 Results of Question #1

- 1 Cultural Destructiveness
- 2 Cultural Incapacity
- 3 Cultural Blindness
- 4 Cultural Precompetence
- 5 Cultural Competence
- 6 Cultural Proficiency

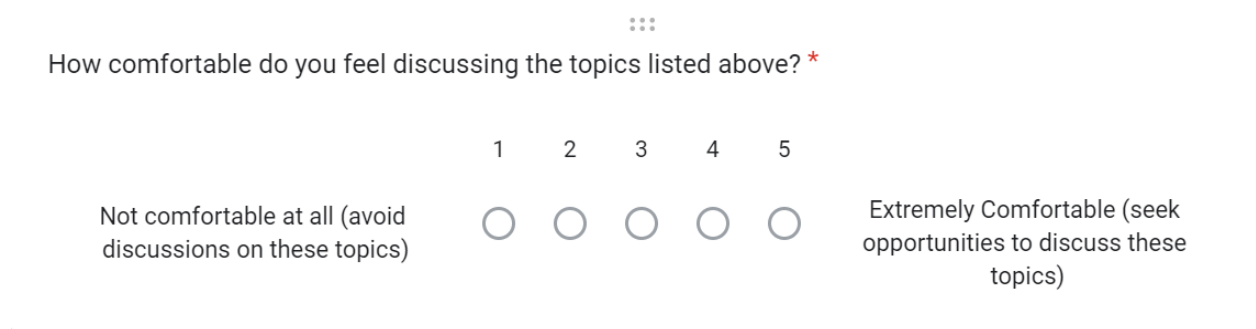


The second question that was asked in each of the inventories and I used as a gauge to evaluate the class on their progression towards cultural proficiency asked, “How comfortable do you feel discussing the topics relating to diversity listed above in the inventory (Race/Ethnicity, Language, Culture, Politics)?

In the initial interest inventory, 9 students shared that they were a 1 or a 2 and that they were not comfortable discussing any of the diverse topics [Race/Ethnicity, Cultural Differences, Languages, Politics and Sex/Gender] that had been addressed earlier in the interest inventory. I thought that more students would have shared that they were not comfortable in discussing these topics. One third of the students identified as a 3 which is in the middle and that they felt somewhat comfortable discussing these topics. The largest grouping [58%] of students fell in the 4 and 5 range sharing that they were comfortable or extremely comfortable discussing these topics. I was pleasantly surprised to see the biggest group of students identified as being comfortable talking about topics related to diversity.

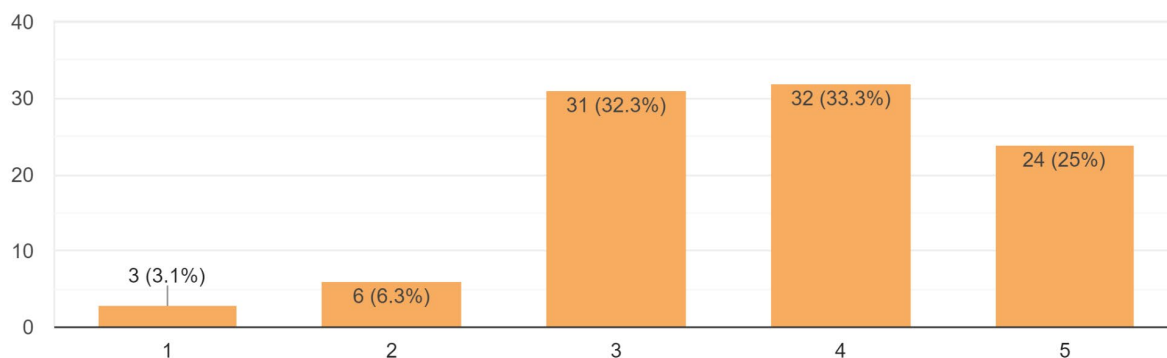
Figure 10.

Initial Interest Inventory Results from Final Question (August)



How comfortable do you feel discussing the topics listed above?

96 responses



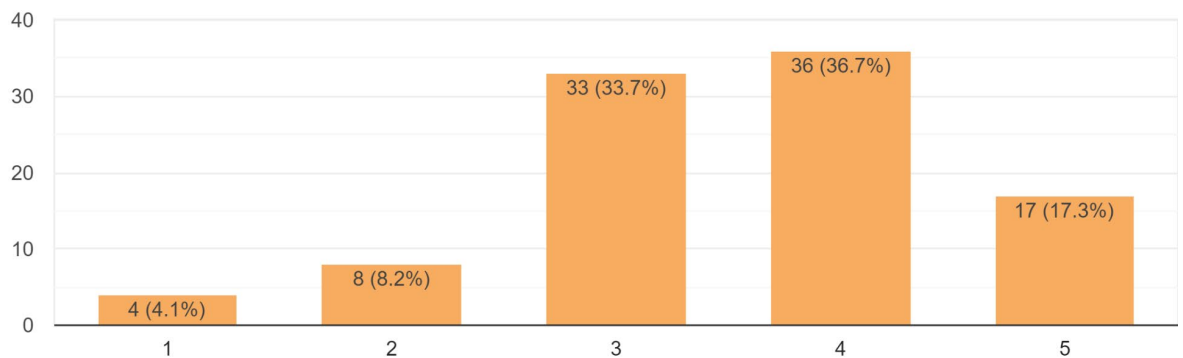
The second interest inventory that was given in December provided the following results (see figure 11). This was a little surprising to me as the numbers stayed pretty consistent from the initial survey, but the number of students that identified as being extremely confident in talking about diverse topics [5] dropped from 25% to 17%. I had mentioned earlier in this dissertation that it would be possible to see a digression in some categories as students learned more about cultural proficiency. I think that some students may have initially felt confident in their abilities to hold conversations about diverse topics, but the more we dove into the content they could have realized that they didn't know as much as they thought they had. To me, this is an encouraging digression as I translate this as them wrestling with the content and taking a deep look into their own skills and abilities. It would have been nice to see every student identify as a 5 in this second survey, but I do like that they students were taking this seriously and this digression helps me to see that.

Figure 11.

Mid Interest Inventory Results from Final Question (December)

How comfortable do you feel discussing the topics listed above?

98 responses

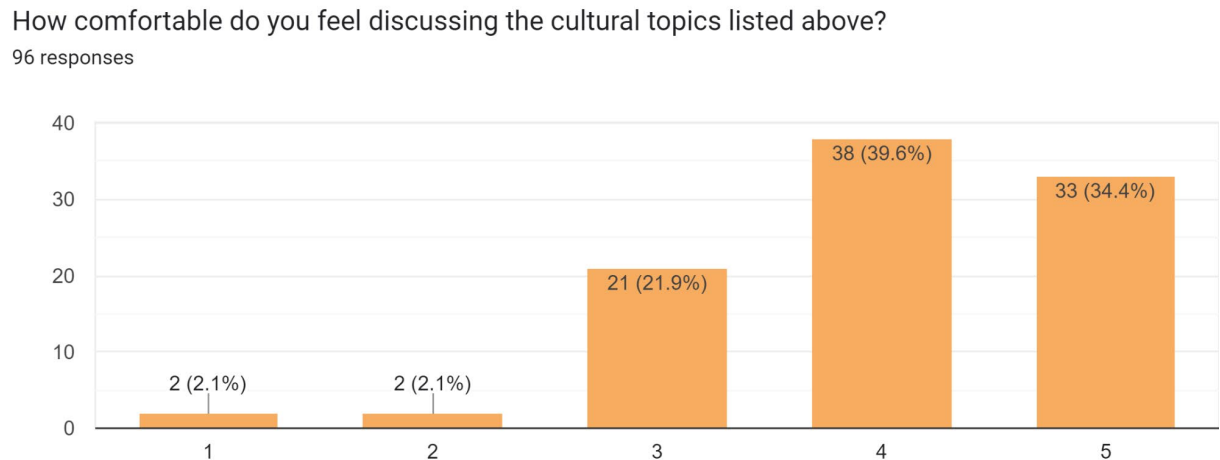


The third and final interest inventory represents what I had hoped to see from the students and the results from 2 semesters worth of work relating to cultural proficiency. The students that felt very uncomfortable were down to 4% of the total student population. That is a big encouragement to me to see that there were just a handful of students that still did not feel confident discussing cultural topics. It would have been interesting to have the opportunity to chat with those students and find out why they felt that way and see if there was anything that I could have done differently, but that may be something for future study. The part that most impressed me from the student responses was the jump in number of students that identified as a 5 and that they felt extremely comfortable discussing topics of diversity. In this final interest inventory 34% of students identified as a 5 and that is something that brought me a lot of joy. Roughly 40% of the students identified as a 4 and said that they were comfortable discussing topics of diversity. Three fourths [4's and 5's] of my students at the end of the year identified as being comfortable or extremely comfortable in having some of these historically difficult conversations. In seeing those numbers, I believe that the curriculum and materials that were

provided throughout the school year were beneficial and may help WL instructors help their students move closer to cultural proficiency.

Figure 12.

Final Interest Inventory Results from Final Question (May)



This final question is one that I find important to ask. It is one thing to have knowledge of diversity and differing viewpoints, but it is another thing to be able to have discussions related to these topics. I used a Likert scale designed question with 1 (not at all comfortable) and 5 (very comfortable) to ask students their comfort level in talking about topics of diversity. I understand that this is not as specific as some may like to see, and for future research I may get more specific to which area of diversity someone is comfortable or not in discussing, but I still think this helps display that by the end the majority of students were in Levels 5 (34%) and 4 (39%) which is roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the students felt a level of comfort in discussing these topics. Another highlight for me was seeing in the final survey that only 4% of the students (4 total students) identified in the first two levels where they do not feel comfortable talking about topics of

diversity. Although this final question is not a perfect one, I still believe that it shows positive progress towards cultural proficiency as a byproduct of the curriculum that was implemented this year.

Figure 13.

Comparison of Results from the Final Question in Interest Inventory



Summary of Themes

The Importance of Being Real

I was not completely surprised by the theme of appreciating the documentaries for being real. As a teacher in urban settings, I have learned over the years the importance of being real with my students. The students could sense if someone was being fake whether that was a teacher or another student. Because of that background with my students I figured that they would appreciate documentaries for showing real content and not just displaying the things that everyone would want you to see.

Table 20.

Student Responses Relating to Theme: Importance of Being Real

Student	Response
Shannon	The most surprising part about the movie for me is how good it is at expressing the setting and the culture of where the movie takes place. This is because although I don't mind watching movies from different places outside of America, this made me feel the culture of Chile. I also appreciate how it shows all parts of Chile and not just the rich/ "good" parts of Chile.
Avery	The thing I enjoyed most about this documentary was how nothing was sugar coated. Everything seemed very natural. To illustrate, there were people in the documentary who didn't want to be on camera, and it wasn't cut out of the documentary.
Shannon	I enjoyed the idea of catching up with the families and different strangers at different points of their lives no matter the situation they were in. The reason I enjoy that so much is because I feel like the story of Cuba at the time had a story inside of it, and that was the stories of these "strangers" lives and how they grew and fell as humans.

The World is Messed Up

Another aspect that came up regularly in my students' responses related to the state of our society. Time and time again the students referenced how things are not as they should be and how people need to learn to love one another and not be so judgmental. I knew this was an obvious theme, but my hope was that the more we talked about this in conjunction with some solutions and encouragement, that the students would seek to improve not only their situations but also help make a ripple effect to help those they encounter in life. I do believe that things have improved in regard to how we as a society approach diversity, but there is still a lot of room to grow.

Table 21.

Student Responses Relating to Theme: The World is Messed Up

Student	Response
Avery	I personally don't think I'll live to be actually be able to see a shift in the world though.
Jerri	Nothing can be done for people with differing backgrounds. Most people keep up that mindset for years or generations so most of the time it won't be any type of way to help them all.
General Responses (Students other than the 5 selected)	To be honest even if anything changes it wouldn't because people are always going to be judged from different cultures, beliefs and more.

Student Connections to Being Stereotyped

As an individual that has represented the majority cultures in most areas of my life, I cannot say that I connected with the documentaries because of facing stereotypes. I have faced stereotypes and continue to do so, but they have not impacted me in ways that I have lost out on job or schooling opportunities to improve my life situation. For many of my students the stereotypes have hurt opportunities for them and for their family members and so this connection with the characters that had missed out on chances to better their lives is much stronger. It is sad that this has been a major portion of their lives and I hope that through education and talking about what injustices have occurred in the US and abroad that they can start to create a better future for themselves and the generations to come. Awareness can be a powerful tool and I hope to continue to talk through some of these hard topics with my students.

Other themes arose as I looked across the data, but these were the ones that stood out to me the most (eg. desire to learn, desire to improve the world, and the importance of being open

to new ideas). I am once again encouraged by the results and what the students were willing to share with me throughout the school year.

Table 22.

Student Responses Relating to Theme: Stereotypes

Student	Response
Avery	I think I most identify with the predators in general because how they were treated differently based on how they look and people were so scared of them because of how they look.
Shannon	I most relate to Nick because in the movie Nick is judged by his appearance instead of an actual reason to be judged. The reason that I can relate to this is because in real life people will stereotype you if you look a certain way instead of treating you like everyone else.
General Responses (Students other than the 5 selected)	<p>I relate to Nick because he has been discriminated against his whole life because of what he was so he felt the need that if people see you like that there is no need to change but he had a good heart ,, I relate to this because folks like to go against you because what color you are or gender and he didn't let it get to him any more and neither do I.</p> <p>I guess Nick because at times when people see me for the first time is this scary figure. At times I'd say people judge me before they get to know me because I can tell it in their tone of voice. How they look at me is evidence enough they've made up their minds.</p> <p>I most relate to Nick because in the movie Nick is judged by his appearance instead of an actual reason to be judged. The reason that I can relate to this is because in real life people will stereotype you if you look a certain way instead of treating you like everyone else.</p>
Stevie	I think I most identify with Judy the most. Being black in America, being a POC (Person of Color) in general, there are so many people telling you what you can't do or what you can't be. Judy doing something out of the "ordinary" is something very inspiring and I can relate to that because she tries her best to do something out of the box similarly to me.
Shannon	Tito, but this is not because of the issues he has with his father, people in real life make a substitution for the role of Tito's father in my case. The reason being is when people see my size, or even my race they would stereotype me in way they would expect me to act. The reason this is connected to Tito is because his father

	expects him to play soccer when he wants to learn, while shooting down Tito's sisters dream of being a pro soccer player because of her gender.
Ricki	Yo creo que yo y Gloria somos similares porque todos piensan que nomas eres niña y juegas futbol, que no eres buena. Desde los tres años he jugado fútbol y todos me critican porque no debo jugar un juego de niños. La cosa de que hay cosas en las que una niña y un niño no pueden jugar un deporte para mí no es justo. Todos tenemos derecho a practicar el deporte de nuestra preferencia. <i>(I think that I and Gloria are similar because everyone thinks that you're just a girl and you play soccer, that you're no good. I've been playing soccer since I was three years old and everyone criticizes me because I shouldn't play a child's game. The thing that there are things that a girl and a boy cannot play a sport for me is not fair. We all have the right to practice the sport of our choice.)</i>

Conclusion

In this fifth chapter I shared an overview of each of the movies and documentaries that were shown throughout the school year. I also shared the responses to the reflection questions from a select group of four students that demonstrated in depth engagement with the material presented in the class. As I poured over the data, I couldn't help but be encouraged by the work that was turned in by the students. I often forgot that the work was completed by fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds and felt like I was working with an older group of students with more maturity. The students were able to digest the topics covered in class and then relate them to their own lives in encouraging but often heartbreaking contexts. The end of this chapter I discussed the end of year survey that asked some specific questions about the student experience in my class. The results and responses from the students were overwhelmingly positive and was a great encouragement in knowing that they were able to share in my vision for the class of increasing the cultural proficiency of each student.

Chapter 6: Implications and Concluding Remarks

What a journey this has been! It is hard to believe that this journey started back in 2011 as I was first introduced to the idea of cultural proficiency. This then led to an action research study with residence hall advisors at the university I was working at for my master's degree. I continued to work with residence hall advisors for the next five years and trained them using what I had learned during my research study. As I returned to teaching Spanish in 2018, I wanted to continue to incorporate what I had learned about cultural proficiency in my classroom and the conversations I had with students and fellow faculty members. This instruction was going well, and I believe that the cultural proficiency framework provided me with a lens to teach my students and incorporate its principals into the coursework without "naming" it as such.

When it came time to decide on a topic for my dissertation, I was having a hard time deciding what direction I wanted to go. I pondered the idea of doing a study on the movements, and interactions of ESL students within their school day with a multimodal discourse analysis study, but then Covid hit and completely wiped that idea out of the realm of possibility. I then began to think about what was important to me and what topics I was passionate about. I came back around to the idea of using the Cultural Proficiency Continuum in my Spanish classroom as something that I would teach in conjunction with the cultural units we were already doing.

The IRB journey began at that point as I planned far in advance for the research that I was going to complete. I had some difficult experiences with IRB in the past, but thankfully with the help of Dr. Wohlwend and a computerized system that helps expedite communication, I was able to complete this in time to get my research started at the beginning of the school year. I don't think that I have ever had to prepare for something that far in advance, but I knew that it

would be my final year at that school and that I needed to gather all of my data before I moved on to my next role.

Implications for Revising My Classroom Practice

As I look back on the data gathered and the implementation of the curriculum into my classroom content, I am pleased with the results that I have seen and analyzed. This study displayed the results I had hoped to see in my students and their progress towards becoming culturally proficient. There are certainly aspects that I would have done differently if I were to do it all over again, but those little details did not detract from the overall positive end results I witnessed. One thing that I would change would be to have coordinated all my reflection questions and made them tie together in a better way. If I had looked at all of the questions as a whole at the beginning (like a curriculum map), I think that I could have added a few more meaningful questions that could have tied them all together. I would have used a question that was consistent across each of the movies regarding their cultural proficiency as they watched the movie. I also would have added a question at the end of the final movie that asked students to compare and contrast the movies that we watched throughout the year. If I were to have had my questions laid out in front of me from each of the movies at the start of the unit, I could have come up with a better consistency to the questions. I think I relied too heavily on my end of year survey to accomplish that, which it did, but I still could have created a better continuity of questions.

I also wish that classroom interactions could have been richer and that those could have created more intraclass dialogue. Masks and social distancing certainly influenced this, but I am sure that I could have come up with a better way of getting my students to talk. I know that in my prior study with college resident advisors the discussions were deep and engaging and added so

much to what we were studying. If there would have been a way to have recreated this, I know that it would have been helpful. Another aspect that would have been great to have added would have been some focus groups outside class or some lunchtime discussion circles. Had I been able to have these discussions, I think that I could have gone a little deeper with some of the students and gained a little more insight.

Moving beyond the things that I would change, there are other potential implications from this study. I know that the cultural proficiency continuum framework could be applied to a group of college residence hall advisors based on my previous work, but I also want to look at some other areas where this framework and a similar curriculum structure could also be beneficial. In the following paragraphs I hope to share how I see this type of work as adding a benefit in the areas of High School World Language Instructors, Collegiate World Language Instructors, WL Teacher Preparation Programs, Study Abroad Programs, Mission Trips or other Cross Cultural Aid Programs.

Implications for High School WL Classrooms

The first and most obvious way that this study could be used and modeled would be in other high school WL classrooms. The results, structure, and curriculum for this study could be transferred to other languages, schools and levels. I think that the biggest thing for other teachers to find this as being the most beneficial would be to find movies and other documentaries that could be viewed in the classroom. The movies and documentaries, except for Zootopia, were specific to my Spanish language classroom. The cultural proficiency framework provides flexibility and adaptability as it can be applied to all cultures and languages. Once the movies and documentaries have been selected and the reflection questions have been created to those specific films, I would say that a big part of the incorporation of this framework has been met. I

know that oversimplifies this concept, but the reality is that the documentaries and films did the majority of the “heavy lifting” in what was accomplished in the classroom.

What I believe to be the most difficult aspect in incorporating this framework into other classroom contexts would be the training of the teachers to adequately instruct and incorporate this topic into their classroom. Not only will this require “buy in” from the instructor, but it will also require some additional training. By additional training, I can see this being accomplished through a one- or two-day workshop, summer reading club, or during a teacher education program course. I began to learn this material as a master’s student in a program titled Curriculum and Instruction in Multicultural Contexts. Through that class I met a professor that had worked with the Cultural Proficiency Continuum who then introduced me to one of the authors of a CPCF book. These connections helped me learn about the framework and that is also when I really started to begin to look at my own life and how the framework could help me become a more culturally proficient individual. I know that my experience cannot be recreated for every future educator but in the next section I share how this could be applied to more WL instructors during their training courses.

Implications for WL Teacher Education Coursework

This section involves some big dreams as well as some realistic possibilities. My big dream would be to see the addition of the CPCF into WL instructor preparation textbooks that are used by many universities. I look at this as a big dream because I am not sure how to go about that and I also wonder if Lindsey and Lindsey had already tried this avenue or not. If a chapter could be added to WL instructor preparation textbooks, I believe that this could be an invaluable resource for future educators in how to apply cultural learning to their students that goes beyond the memorization of cultural facts. As I shared earlier in this dissertation, many WL

instructors do not feel prepared to teach culture in their classes, and I think that this addition to textbooks could be valuable.

The more practical incorporation and the ways that I can see myself being involved in this would be in the addition of the CPCF into a unit during a WL teacher preparation course. This is a course I hope to teach in the future, and I know that I will incorporate this into my curriculum and that it will receive one unit's worth of material at the very least. I can also see myself leading a professional workshop at a conference that would be open to current and future educators. I think that by presenting this dissertation at a WL instructor conference, I could share the positive aspects from this study and some practical ways of bringing it into their lives and then into their classrooms.

Implications for Collegiate World Language Instructors

This may seem obvious, but I wanted to mention that this material could be added into the WL curriculum in collegiate courses as well. I find it interesting how divided the high school scene can be from the collegiate world, but there are many similarities and now that I have spent time in both, I can see how certain themes (classroom management, incentives, discipline) would not translate as well but other themes (coursework, learning styles, best teaching practices) can translate into both areas. I have been surprised by the positive feedback I have been receiving from my college students this year about my teaching style. They have appreciated how I have incorporated a lot of the pedagogies I learned and used as a high school teacher into the college realm which is oftentimes bombarded by a lecture only style of instruction.

Collegiate language instructors are tied a little less to the standards of the 5 C's but yet they should still be attempting to achieve the same goals and that is how I can see this translate into the collegiate world. I had a hard time incorporating as much of the CPCF into my college

courses this year as they were very grammar heavy courses with not as much time to dive into culture. I also think that this struggle was because it was my first year and I was trying to figure out what I should be doing and so in the future I think that I will be able to do this better. I felt very tied into the textbooks that were selected for the classes that I was teaching, and I felt the need to keep up with the other professors that were teaching the same course but in different sections. I still taught my material with the CPCF as my lens, but I did not openly discuss the continuum and share with them how that can help improve their cultural proficiency.

Implications for Study Abroad Experiences

Another area where I can see this study being a benefit would be in a study abroad program. I could also see myself doing another action research study with college students as they are preparing, undergoing, and then reflecting upon their study abroad experiences. Learning about cultural proficiency could be a great benefit to students that are studying in another country and learning about their culture. Having studied abroad myself in Buenos Aires, I know that I could have used a little more training as I prepared to step into a different world. My college did provide a pre and post study abroad class that was beneficial and it did help me get in the right mindset to enter another culture. I am honestly surprised that I had as positive an attitude towards all the differences I saw as I had not had any other cross-cultural experiences leading up to that point. I cannot say that I remember anything from the pre or post class that stood out to me and I could point out to say that it had helped me in a big way as I adjusted to a new culture. I do know that when I arrived in college, I made a personal goal of trying to like all foods. I know that sounds silly, but I was a very picky eater and had not tried a lot of different things. But I tried to apply this goal of liking all foods to the cultural aspects and practices of Argentina (along with the food) and I think this made a big difference in my willingness to try

new things and value differences. The hardest thing for me as a young college athlete was to wait for dinner which was typically served by my host mom at around 9:00 PM! I also know that other students I was with that were studying abroad had a difficult time adjusting to the culture and often looked at the cultural practices they were observing were foolish or wrong. This is probably where my mantra, “Just because it is different doesn’t make it wrong” started to come into my consciousness.

If study abroad programs could incorporate the CPCF into their training programs, I think that there could be positive results for the students in their experiences as well as with the individuals they encounter while abroad. Maybe this could help break the negative stereotype that many Americans perpetuate as they spend time traveling and studying abroad? I hope to get more into the study abroad trips (long and short term) at the university where I am currently teaching. As I get the chance to help lead and prepare students for these trips, I plan to incorporate the CPCF and also do a study with my students. For this study I would be able to have focus groups and more conversations to draw data from. This study would look very similar to my study with resident advisors in the curriculum that I would use and the format in which I would teach it.

Implications for Mission Trips/Cross Cultural Experiences

The University where I teach sends out many students on short term mission trips throughout the school year and during Summer. These mission trips are typically sent out into countries and locations that are new cultural experiences for the students. I know that these trips have an aspect of cultural awareness and that they do prepare the students for these experiences to the best of their ability. I think that by implementing the CPCF that it could only add some extra benefit to the students that are going on these trips. I think that being able to name where

you are on the continuum as a good step towards self-awareness and that is a key factor to having effective communication with those that are from other cultures. It would be important to hold meetings with the students before, during and after their out-of-country experiences and spend time checking in with them regarding what they are experiencing. What I am sharing is not new, but it could provide a new way to look at preparing students for these trips.

Implications for Personal Travel

People are traveling more than ever as the world continues to become more and more accessible. The ability to look up information about most nations in the world and book flights, bus rides, hotels etc. using a smartphone has made travel easier than ever. This could be a simple online course offering that tourists could take for a low cost. As I see all of the language offerings that exist (Babbel, Duolingo, Rosetta Stone), I can see the possibility of partnering with one of those companies to help broaden the language learning community. I would love to see this as a standalone course, but I think it would be best partnered with a well-known app that already has the type of crowd that I would market to.

I could also see this as being a TedTalk or a master course that people could choose to watch. This has been a popular way of learning that is free and accessible to anyone with internet access. This seems like a realistic way of getting this material out to more people and in a simplistic way.

Reflection on Research Questions

As I bring this dissertation to a close, I want to look back again on the Research Questions that drove this project.

1. What are the benefits and limitations of teaching the Cultural Proficiency Framework in conjunction with the Spanish standards (5 C's) in a High School Spanish Classroom?
2. In what ways do my teaching practices engage student's developing cultural proficiency?

In looking at the first research question I see a far greater number of benefits than limitations and I have a hard time finding limitations to incorporating cultural proficiency into WL classrooms. The only limitations that I can envision with this involve the class time it takes to teach this idea as well as the preparation time that it could take for a WL teacher to familiarize themselves with this concept. There are some programs that have extremely rigid timelines and may experience difficulties adding additional content, but the benefits that this can bring to the cultural content [which should be included in their curriculum] are worth it. It is also important for teachers to be lifelong learners that are continually looking to improve their practices. Because this is a teaching attribute that is encouraged, I believe that teachers could be instructed by Professional Development how to incorporate cultural proficiency into their cultural lessons that they are already giving.

The main benefit I saw from this study was providing students the terminology to discuss cultural topics. Students were able to identify different stages of cultural proficiency in their own lives as well as identifying cultural proficiency stages of individuals in the films that we watched. This ability helped students engage with culture at a deeper level and helped them explain why they were personally at a certain level or describe someone from a show and their level of cultural proficiency.

Another benefit that I observed was by sharing with the students what our goal was in studying culture that it better prepared them for class assignments and also allowed them to look at their own personal lives and how this could and does impact them. I saw this in one of Jerri's responses as they discussed how while we were watching *Mi Amigo Alexis*, they were able to better prepare for a Quinceañera that they were a part of in the coming months. A Quinceañera is the coming-of-age party for 15-year-old girls in some Spanish speaking countries. Jerri is not from a Spanish speaking background and so the learning that was happening in the classroom directly related to their cross-cultural experiences. Jerri and I also had multiple conversations during and after class related to culture and the experiences that they were having inside and outside of class.

The second research question was answered by a variety of activities that I incorporated throughout the school year to engage them in thinking about cultures. Watching movies and shows was one of the main ways that I was able to introduce them to other cultures in a way that was interesting to them. Content producers like Netflix are creating new documentaries at a stunning pace and are making them easily available. When I was in school it was much more difficult to obtain a VHS or DVD copy of a documentary, rent a tv and VCR to then watch the program, and more often than not the documentary was out of date. With the frequency of documentaries and movies coming available, it is easier to find ones that will keep the interest of the students. These films were mentioned as the highlights of the school year by many students in the end of year interest inventory.

I was also able to incorporate readings and news articles that engaged students in the topic of culture in our country. These readings were another way to relate our course content to what was happening around them and throughout the nation. I did not want the materials in class

to seem foreign or irrelevant to their lives. In order to find these materials, I needed to stay current on what was happening in our nation and decide what could be used in class.

The final way that I tried to incorporate culture in the class was by sharing my own personal experiences and even bringing in some foods for them to try. The picture at the beginning of this dissertation shows a student trying Inka Kola [A popular Peruvian soda]. On the big screen I shared a picture of my travels to Machu Picchu, and I wanted them to get a little tast of the soda that I drank while I was there. This simple activity of bringing a drink that very few students had tried allowed them to try something different and to realize that they can try out new foods and drinks with a little bit of extra effort. This activity allowed me to share a new drink with them and encourage them to go out and try new things in their own lives. Being in an urban environment, my students had easy access to supermarkets that provided products from a variety of countries. Students often drove past these locations without realizing the wealth of cultural products they possessed. I hoped that by sharing this with my students it would open up an opportunity to meet new people and try new foods. This is a practice that I keep up in my own life and try to model for my children.

Importance of Creating a Culture of Comfort and Care Within the Classroom

This study may not have achieved the same results if it were not for the creation of a safe environment for the students. This environment began on the first day of class as I greeted the students, learned how to pronounce their names, and shared with them some aspects of my life. Being able to accurately pronounce their names and know each of my 150 students by name by the end of the second week helped set a tone for the classroom that facilitated the work cultural proficiency material that I planned to teach.

Earning the respect of my students started on that first day of class and was something that I needed to maintain. My personal journey through the cultural proficiency continuum and looking at my students from a strengths-based perspective, helped create an environment for this study that was a catalyst for the implementation of this study and the positive results that were discovered (Moll et al., 1992). Students need to see that the teacher is willing to engage in the diverse topics discussed in class and see that it is also being lived out in the classroom. Students can see that it is being lived out by the films, readings, and discussions that are implemented in the class. I made sure to choose topics and materials that would not only be engaging, but that were relevant and validating to the lived experiences of my students (Quiñonez & Olivas; 2020; Paris & Alim; 2014). If this work is to be successful, it is up to the teachers to get to know their students and find ways to connect the material to their lives. This step will show that you care and that you are taking their unique situations into account as you are planning for this class. It is also important to learn from the students as they are full of cultural knowledge. I have learned more than I ever expected from my students during my time as a teacher and I hope to keep learning.

Conclusion

This has been quite the wild ride from the planning stages of this project until now. I am very thankful that this project has come to an end, but I do not see myself ceasing to share this information and striving to make people more culturally proficient. If more people could become culturally proficient, we should see less hate in our communities. I look at this project as having been a success. I think that the feedback from the students and the depth of their answers show that this was a project that was worth undertaking. I do hope to continue this work and complete

more research but on a smaller scale. By smaller scale I mean that I would do this with less students and write an article rather than a full dissertation.

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Appendices

Appendix A (Assent Form)

Hello!

My name is Josh Wood and I the 9th grade Spanish teacher. I am also a student at Indiana University pursuing a Doctorate in Education (Language Culture and Literacy). Within that program I am doing research on teaching methods and material that I use in my classroom. In order to best research what is happening I am planning to video or audio record some of our class discussions throughout the year that talk about "Cultural Proficiency". I am writing this to inform you that everything we are doing in the classroom is typical material. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to email me at jwood@chschoools.org. We can either discuss this over email or we can line up a time to talk over the phone.

Thank you for your time and I am excited to work with your students!

Sincerely,

Josh Wood Ma.Ed

Spanish Teacher

Appendix B: (Interest Inventory)

Cultural Proficiency Self-Evaluation (Interest Inventory)

[Link to Google Form](#)

This form is meant to gather your thoughts/feelings on your comfort in talking about various topics in relation to Culture. Spanish Courses have 5 main standards: (5 C's) Communication, Connections, Comparisons, Communities, and Cultures. In order to benefit the most from these discussions I believe it is important to know where you personally feel about discussing topics of cultural diversity. Cultural Diversity encompasses a lot of topics and you might feel more comfortable discussing topics that you are more familiar with as opposed to topics you are less familiar with. I hope that this year we learn to hold healthy, respectful discussions in this class that can prepare you for what is happening around you today and what you will encounter in the future!

Name: _____

Gender: _____

Race/Ethnicity: _____

1. Race and Ethnicity: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of race and ethnicity? (racial and ethnic backgrounds/skin color/tone)

2. Linguistic Diversity: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of Linguistic Diversity? (speaking different languages)

3. Socioeconomic Status: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of socioeconomic status diversity? (wealthy, middle class, poor, poverty)

4. Religious Diversity: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of religious diversity? (atheism, Catholicism, etc)

5. Political Diversity: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of political diversity? (republican, democrat, socialist, communist)

6. Cultural Practices: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of cultural practices? (celebrations, holidays, cultural activities)

7. Gender Diversity: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of gender diversity? (machismo, sexism etc.)

Open Ended Questions

8. Why do you think you have the worldview (beliefs) that you have? What/who has influenced your worldview?

9. How comfortable do you feel discussing the topics listed above?

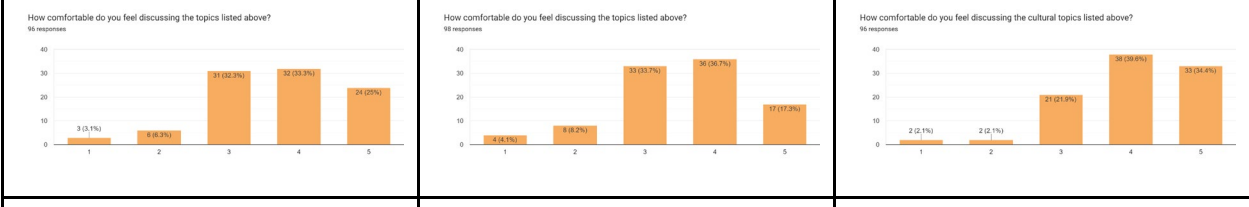
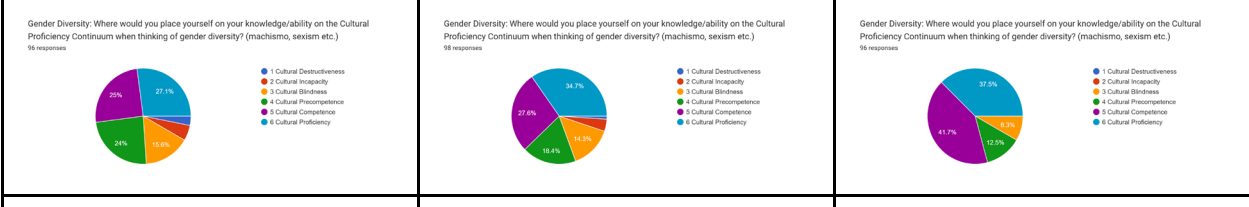
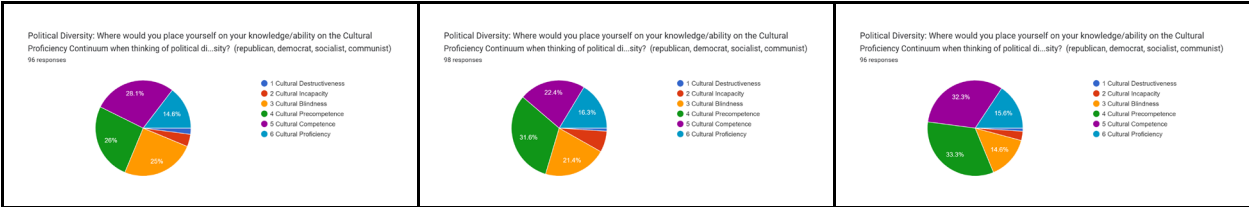
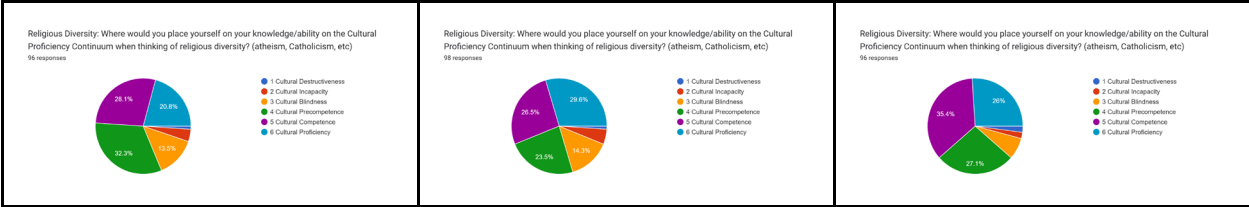
1: Not comfortable at all (avoid discussions on these topics)

5: Extremely Comfortable (seek opportunities to discuss these topics)

10. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Appendix C: (Quantitative Data from Interest Inventory)

Initial (Aug)	Mid (Dec)	Post (May)																																										
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Appendix D (Qualitative Data from Interest Inventory)

(Responses from the initial interest inventory: Students were given the opportunity to share anything else they wanted me to know.)

- *learning spanish is very important to me because my nephew is half hispanic and is going to be bilingual and i want to be able to speak spanish to him as well as english*
- *I am partly Honduran and Mexican, my mom is Honduran and my dad is Mexican. At the moment, I am trying to understand both cultures, as well Japanese and Chinese culture. After I understand more about those, I like to understand Middle Eastern culture.*
- *I'm happy to be in the class and would like to learn more about Hispanic heritage and others beliefs and others heritage.*

Appendix E (IRB Approval)

PROTOCOLS Ψ INDIANA UNIVERSITY Wood, ...

#11623 - Cultural Proficiency in the High School Spanish Classroom

Protocol Information

Review Type	Status	Approval Date	Continuing Review Date
Exempt	Exempt	Sep 27, 2021	Jul 27, 2022
Expiration Date	Initial Approval Date	Initial Review Type	
--	Jul 27, 2021	Exempt	



Feedback

Approval Comment

Amendment A001

This research is exempt under the following category:

Appendix F (Citi Research Certification)



Completion Date 25-Feb-2020
Expiration Date 24-Feb-2023
Record ID 35322751

This is to certify that:

Joshua Wood

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Human Research
(Curriculum Group)
Social/Behavioral Researchers
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Stage 1
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Indiana University/IU Health

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w686d315c-7968-4e76-970f-915bee310bcd-35322751

Appendix G (Initial Interest Inventory)

12/12/22, 8:59 AM Cultural Proficiency Initial Self-Evaluation

Cultural Proficiency Initial Self-Evaluation

This form is meant to gather your thoughts/feelings on your comfort in talking about various topics in relation to Culture. Spanish Courses have 5 main standards: (5 Cs) Communication, Connections, Comparisons, Communities, and Cultures. In order to benefit the most from these discussions I believe it is important to know where you personally feel about discussing topics of cultural diversity. Cultural Diversity encompasses a lot of topics and you might feel more comfortable discussing topics that you are more familiar with as opposed to topics you are less familiar with. I hope that this year we learn to hold healthy, respectful discussions in this class that can prepare you for what is happening around you today and what you will encounter in the future!

* Required

1. Email *
2. Name
3. Gender
4. Race/Ethnicity

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1S6aKuJNkYdOVLkOeKdIm2bn0CJMLPBURV6g9/edit> 1/1

Cultural Proficiency Continuum

THE CULTURAL PROFICIENCY CONTINUUM: DEPICTING UNHEALTHY AND HEALTHY PRACTICES					
Cultural Destructiveness	Cultural Incapacity	Cultural Blindness	Cultural Precompetence	Cultural Competence	Cultural Proficiency
COMPLIANCE-BASED TOLERANCE FOR DIVERSITY			TRANSFORMATION FOR EQUITY		
Cultural destructiveness: Seeking to eliminate references to the culture of "others" in all aspects of the school and in relationship with their communities.	Cultural incapacity: Trivializing "other" communities and seeking to make them appear to be wrong.	Cultural blindness: Pretending not to see or acknowledge the status and culture of marginalized communities and choosing to ignore the experiences of such groups within the school and community.	Cultural precompetence: Increasingly aware of what you and the school don't know about working with marginalized communities, is at this key level of development that you and the school can move in a positive, constructive direction, or you can vacillate, stop, and possibly regress.	Cultural competence: Manifesting your personal values and behaviors and the school's policies and practices in a manner that is inclusive with marginalized cultures and communities that are new or different from you and the school.	Cultural proficiency: Advocating for lifelong learning in order to be increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of the cultural groups served by the school. Holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy.

SOURCE: Adapted from Tenill & Lindsey, 2009.

5. Race and Ethnicity: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of race and ethnicity? (racial and ethnic backgrounds/skin color/tone)

Mark only one oval.

- 1 Cultural Destructiveness
- 2 Cultural Incapacity
- 3 Cultural Blindness
- 4 Cultural Precompetence
- 5 Cultural Competence
- 6 Cultural Proficiency

Cultural Proficiency Continuum

THE CULTURAL PROFICIENCY CONTINUUM: DEPICTING UNHEALTHY AND HEALTHY PRACTICES					
Cultural Destructiveness	Cultural Incapacity	Cultural Blindness	Cultural Precompetence	Cultural Competence	Cultural Proficiency
COMPLIANCE-BASED TOLERANCE FOR DIVERSITY			TRANSFORMATION FOR EQUITY		
Cultural destructiveness: Seeking to eliminate references to the culture of "others" in all aspects of the school and in relationship with their communities.	Cultural incapacity: Trivializing "other" communities and seeking to make them appear to be wrong.	Cultural blindness: Pretending not to see or acknowledge the status and culture of marginalized communities and choosing to ignore the experiences of such groups within the school and community.	Cultural precompetence: Increasingly aware of what you and the school don't know about working with marginalized communities, is at this key level of development that you and the school can move in a positive, constructive direction, or you can vacillate, stop, and possibly regress.	Cultural competence: Manifesting your personal values and behaviors and the school's policies and practices in a manner that is inclusive with marginalized cultures and communities that are new or different from you and the school.	Cultural proficiency: Advocating for lifelong learning in order to be increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of the cultural groups served by the school. Holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a socially just democracy.

SOURCE: Adapted from Tenill & Lindsey, 2009.

9. Political Diversity: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of political diversity? (republican, democrat, socialist, communist)

Mark only one oval.

- 1 Cultural Destructiveness
- 2 Cultural Incapacity
- 3 Cultural Blindness
- 4 Cultural Precompetence
- 5 Cultural Competence
- 6 Cultural Proficiency

Cultural Proficiency Continuum

THE CULTURAL PROFICIENCY CONTINUUM, DEPICTING UNHEALTHY AND HEALTHY PRACTICES					
Cultural Destructiveness	Cultural Incapacity	Cultural Blindness	Cultural Precompetence	Cultural Competence	Cultural Proficiency
COMPLIANCE-BASED TOLERANCE FOR DIVERSITY			TRANSFORMATIONAL SOLIDARITY		
<p>Cultural destructiveness: Seeking to eliminate references to the culture of "others" in all aspects of the school and in relationship with their communities.</p>	<p>Cultural incapacity: Trivializing "other" communities and seeking to make them appear to be wrong.</p>	<p>Cultural blindness: Pretending not to see or acknowledge the status and culture of marginalized communities and choosing to ignore the experiences of such groups within the school and community.</p>	<p>Cultural precompetence: Increasingly aware of what you and the school don't know about working with marginalized communities. It is at this key level that you and the school can move in a positive, constructive direction, or you can vacillate, stop, and possibly regress.</p>	<p>Cultural competence: Manifesting your personal values and behaviors and the school's policies and practices in a manner that is inclusive with marginalized cultures and communities that are new or different from you and the school.</p>	<p>Cultural proficiency: Advocating for lifelong learning in order to be increasingly effective in serving the educational needs of the cultural groups served by the school. Holding the vision that you and the school are instruments for creating a society just democracy.</p>

SOURCE: Adapted from Tenill & Lindsey, 2009.

10. Cultural Practices: Where would you place yourself on your knowledge/ability on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum when thinking of cultural practices? (celebrations, holidays, cultural activities)

Mark only one oval.

- 1 Cultural Destructiveness
- 2 Cultural Incapacity
- 3 Cultural Blindness
- 4 Cultural Precompetence
- 5 Cultural Competence
- 6 Cultural Proficiency

12. Why do you think you have the worldview (beliefs) that you have? What/who has influenced your worldview?

13. How comfortable do you feel discussing the topics listed above? *

Mark only one oval.

Not comfortable at all (avoid discussions on these topics)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Extremely Comfortable (seek opportunities to discuss these topics)

14. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

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Google Forms

Appendix H: (ZootopiaAssignment)

Instructions: Please answer the following questions while watching the movie Zootopia. (10 points mastery)

1. What stereotypes did you see during the movie? (give 3 examples)

¿Cuales estereotipos viste durante la película? (3 ejemplos)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. How was inclusivity shown? Inclusivity is doing something to help others fit in. (3 examples)

¿Cómo demostró inclusividad? Inclusividad es hacer algo para que alguien se sienta mas cómodo. (3 ejemplos)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. Which character do you most identify with and why? (3 sentences)

¿Con cuál de los personajes te identificas más y por qué? (3 oraciones)

4. Who is your least favorite character and why? (3 sentences)

¿Quién es el personaje que más desagrada y por qué? (3 oraciones)

5. What can be done in the US to make life better for people of all backgrounds? (3 sentences)
¿Que se puede hacer en los estados unidos para mejorar las vidas de personas de varias culturas,
razaz, creencias, etc.? (3 oraciones)

Appendix I: Cuba and the Cameraman Assignment

Cuba and the Cameraman Written Questions (___/18)

Instructions: Choose 6 of the following questions related to Cuba and the Cameraman. Please answer with 3 complete sentences to get full credit and with at least one reference to the movie for each question. You may answer these on a separate sheet of paper if needed.

1. What is rationing? Why is it used? Positive or Negative?

2. Why don't more 80-year olds look and act like the Borregos brothers?

3. Should criminals have an "unwritten rule" that states who they should and shouldn't steal from? Why? What would your rule be?

4. What do you think about the ideas of free health care, housing, and schooling? How is it positive? How is it negative?

5. Should everyone receive equal pay regardless of what job they have? Why or why not?

6. Would you have wanted to stay in Cuba when Castro took over? Or would you have wanted to leave Cuba? Why or why not?

7. Which family (Borregos Bros, Caridad and her kids, or Luis Amores) did you most relate to? Why?

8. What did you enjoy most about this documentary? Why?

9. What was the most surprising part about Cuba that you learned from the documentary? Why?

10. Why were the Cuban people so divided on Fidel Castro? What reasons did people have to support or oppose him?

11. Wilder said that, "Tourists are more valued than Cubans". What do you think about that statement? Why would he feel that way?

Appendix J: Mi Amigo Alexis Assignment

Mi Amigo Alexis Discussion Questions

Instructions/Instrucciones: Choose **6** questions to answer, then answer each question with **3-5 complete** sentences in English or in Spanish. **Elige 6** preguntas para contestar, contestando las con **3-5 oraciones/frases** completas en Inglés o en Español.

Cultural Destruction- Eliminate differences	Cultural Incapacity- Makes fun of differences	Cultural Blindness- Ignores cultures	Cultural Pre-Competence- Beginning to learn about other cultures	Cultural Competence -Learning about and valuing other cultures	Cultural Proficiency- Strong knowledge of other cultures and willing to advocate for the oppressed
---	---	--	--	--	--

1. What level of “Cultural Proficiency” would you say the dad displayed? Why? ¿Qué nivel de proficiencia cultural demostró el papa? ¿Por qué?

2. As you were watching the movie, where would you rate yourself on the cultural proficiency continuum? Why? ¿Mientras veías la película qué nivel de proficiencia cultural tuviste? ¿Por qué?

3. When does bragging about your child go too far or is that never a bad thing? Why? ¿Cuándo cambia a demasiado cuando un pariente dice todas las cosas buenas (jactarse) de su hijo/a? ¿Por qué?

4. What was most surprising to you about the movie? Why? ¿Qué te sorprendió más de la película? ¿Por qué?

5. Which character did you relate to/ identify with the most? Why? ¿Con cuál de los protagonistas de la película más te identificas o ves similitudes? ¿Por qué?

6. ¿Si tú te volvieras famoso/a, pero empezaste tu vida pobre, como te acordarías de donde viniste? If you were to become famous, but started off poor, how would you remember where you came from?

7. What can be done help fight against sexism or machismo? ¿Qué se puede hacer para combatir/evitar sexismo o machismo?

8. ¿Si tú fueras el Papá de Gloria y Tito, que hubieras hecho diferente? If you were the father to Tito and Gloria, what would you have done differently?

9. If you were Gloria or Tito, what would you have wanted to do with your future? Pro soccer? School? ¿Si tu fueras Gloria o Tito, que hubieras querido hacer en tu futuro? Fútbol Profesional? Escuela?

10. ¿En el futuro, te gustaría visitar Chile? ¿Por qué? Would you like to visit Chile some day? Why?

Appendix K: Encanto Final Question

How do you feel Disney did in representing Colombian/Latinx Culture? Were they culturally proficient?

Why? ¿Piensas que Disney demostró la cultura colombiana/latina en una buena manera? ¿Por qué?

Appendix L: Qualifying Examination Questions

1. For many years cultural topics have been treated as secondary to linguistic and grammatical topics in World Language courses in US high schools. This subordinate treatment of cultural topics can be seen in practice, textbooks, and teacher preparation programs. Why is this a problem and how does it impact students' cultural proficiency? What can World Language teachers do in their classrooms to make their teaching more culturally relevant?

2. Many different cultures exist throughout the world and there are increasingly more opportunities for individuals to interact with people from differing backgrounds on a daily basis thanks to technology and travel. How can culturally-oriented teaching in a World Language classroom prepare students for multilingual environments? In other words, how can the cultural lessons taught in a Spanish classroom be applied in a scenario where French (or insert any other world language) is the dominant language? What strategies and resources can be used to incorporate cultural skills in a variety of contexts in World Language classrooms?

Josh Wood Curriculum Vitae

Education

- December 2023 Indiana University Bloomington, IN
Doctor of Education in Literacy, Culture and Language Education
- December 2013 Azusa Pacific University Azusa, CA
Master of Education: Curriculum and Instruction in Multicultural Contexts
- May 2011 Azusa Pacific University Azusa, CA
Fifth Year 2042 Clear Credential Program
- May 2007 Grace College Winona Lake, IN
Bachelor of Arts in Spanish Education
- May 2005-December 2005 Universidad de Belgrano Buenos Aires, Argentina
Study Abroad Program

Teaching Experience

- 2022-Current** Taylor University Upland, IN
- Elementary Spanish 101/102
 - Intermediate Spanish 201/202
- 2018-2022** Christel House at Manual High School Indianapolis, IN
- Spanish I-IV
- Spring 2016-2018** Colorado Christian University Lakewood, CO
- Elementary Spanish 111
 - Conversational Spanish 101
 - Conversational Spanish 102
- Fall 2014-2018** Colorado Christian University Lakewood, CO
- INT 101: First Year Integration
- Fall 2011- Fall 2014** Azusa Pacific University Azusa, CA
- PE 105: Outdoor Experience
- 2009- 2011** Gertz-Ressler High School Los Angeles, CA
- 9th grade Advanced Physical Education Teacher

- 2007 – 2009** **Gertz-Ressler High School** **Los Angeles, CA**
- Spanish II (Native Speakers) as a full-time faculty member
 - Spanish II (Non-Native Speakers) as a full-time faculty member

Work Experience

- 2022-Current** **Taylor University** **Upland, IN**
- Visiting Instructor of Spanish

- 2018-2022** **Christel House at Manual High School** **Indianapolis, IN**
- Spanish Teacher

- Fall 2014-2018** **Colorado Christian University** **Lakewood, CO**
- Full-Time Residence Director
 - Adjunct Professor
 - INT 101: First Year Integration
 - Elementary Spanish 111

- 2011-Fall 2014** **Azusa Pacific University** **Azusa, CA**
- Full-Time Residence Director
 - Adjunct Professor (PE 105: Outdoor Experience)

- 2007-2011** **Gertz-Ressler High School** **Los Angeles, CA**
- Full-Time Spanish Teacher (2007-2009)
 - Full-Time Athletic Director/ PE teacher (2009-2011)

Presentations

Spring 2015 **American Educational Research Association(AERA)** Chicago, IL
What are the benefits of ongoing diversity training on race/ethnicity, sexual orientation/identity, and religious background, in building cultural proficiency and increasing efficacy for Resident Advisors?

Summer 2015 **Association for Christians in Student Development** Chicago, IL
Building Cultural Proficiency and Increasing the Efficacy of University Resident Advisors Through Diversity Training on Race/Ethnicity, Sexual Identity/Orientation, and Religious Differences

2014 **Christians on Diversity in the Academy (CDA)** San Dimas, CA
Building Cultural Proficiency and Increasing the Efficacy of University Resident Advisors Through Diversity Training on Race/Ethnicity, Sexual Identity/Orientation, and Religious Differences

