

SUSTAINING THE EMPODERAMIENTO OF SPANISH HERITAGE LEARNERS AT THE
SECONDARY LEVEL THROUGH CRITICAL SOCIOCULTURAL PEDAGOGIES

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Para “Ma-Pá”

Gracias por su amor y apoyo incondicional durante toda mi vida. Me han enseñado tener fe, esperanza, valentía, y la tenacidad necesaria para “averiguar,” luchar y salir adelante.

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Abstract

SUSTAINING THE EMPODERAMIENTO OF SPANISH HERITAGE LEARNERS AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL THROUGH CRITICAL SOCIOCULTURAL PEDAGOGIES

Spanish is the second most spoken language in the US and thus it comes to no surprise that schools across the country have Spanish heritage language learners across all grades and at different level of proficiency. Many of these students come to the World Language Spanish classroom with funds of knowledge from different cultures, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds since the group of learners is as far as being a monolith as the diversity within Latinx identities. Although their presence in our classrooms is statistically expected, World Language education and teacher preparation is primarily geared towards second language (L2) education rather than the reality of mixed (L2 and heritage) language learners. Engaging in research that places heritage language learners in the center thus becomes an act of resistance and a question of social justice within the field. Although there have been studies that focus on Spanish heritage language learners (SHLLs), there is a call for more studies in different contexts that show practical applications of asset-based pedagogies and critical language awareness within a multiliteracies framework.

This dissertation is a practitioner researcher qualitative case study of students enrolled in a dual-enrollment Spanish writing course. Data includes observations, lesson notes, student and teacher generated reflections, and student artifacts to better understand how SHLLs in an upper-level secondary course generate and conduct their own inquiry projects in response to learned topics that focus on multilingual identity, activism within US Latinxs, climate issues, and social-emotional health and well-being. Beyond building awareness in students, this study focuses on

how students and their teacher engage in critical literacy practices for students to see themselves as agents of change and how this in turn sustains their multilingual identities.

Keywords: Spanish heritage language learners, asset-based pedagogies, critical language awareness, multiliteracies, practitioner research, teachers as researchers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Statement of the problem

World Language programs, particularly in the US, tend to focus on second language acquisition. We can see the evidence of this in language teacher preparation, language program pathways (elementary through college), and materials available, such as textbooks and online resources. Ironically, second language (L2) learners will ideally interact with and support Spanish speakers in the US context and yet US Hispanic/ Latinx learners are not at the center of Spanish language education. As immigration trends evolve, Spanish heritage language learners (SHLLs) are no longer found in predictable geographies but in districts across the map (Potowski, 2005.) Therefore, although I am situated in a particular context in the northeast, I am responding to a larger issue nationwide.

L2 learners differ from SHLLs linguistically, affectively, and academically (Potowski, 2019.) Definitions vary regarding heritage language learners since it depends on what is being evaluated, such as ethnic membership and/or the level of proficiency. Because my work takes place in a context where SHLLs are identified through both ethnic membership and their proficiency, I am using the term heritage language learner as defined by Guadalupe Valdés (2000). She defines this learner as an individual “raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken. The students may speak or merely understand the heritage language and be, to some degree, bilingual in English and the heritage language” (cited by Beaudrie, et al., 2014, p. 12). Although it does not allow for a broad definition, a heritage learner is usually referred to as a heritage speaker that has a personal experience with the heritage language and this has led to some amount of language proficiency on a biliteracy continuum (Polinsky, 2014; Zyzik, 2016). Linguistically, second language learners acquire a prestigious monolingual variety of Spanish,

learn metalinguistic terminology, are exposed to reading and writing in the language, and tend to learn the language in school. Meanwhile, heritage speakers typically develop their oral input and output, have a larger vocabulary in contexts exposed to at home, and have a closer to native pronunciation. SHLLs have an organic and affective connection to the language that comes from home life, while L2 acquire knowledge at school.

Heritage language learners also require different approaches to learning and language that need to be addressed in both heritage and mixed classrooms (Carriera & Potowski, 2011). As seen in the resources available through the National Heritage Language Resource Center, there has been a tremendous effort to pair research and teaching to reveal and recognize heritage language learners as an essential part of a World Language (rather than foreign language) model in order to develop instructional practices that respond to these needs. Several universities are currently developing programs and certificates for heritage language instruction, and online volunteer communities, such as the interest groups offered by the American Council of Foreign Language (ACTFL) and professional development offered by the University of Texas-Austin and HLXchange to name a few, are providing accessible means to Spanish heritage teaching resources. However, most heritage programs, especially those outside of the collegiate level, are still implemented by individuals that volunteer to offer these courses. The goals moving forward need to include a comprehensive and institutionalized heritage language pedagogy and the integration of heritage language education within other disciplines (Carreira & Kagan, 2018). Thus, my work responds to the need for practical implementation of Spanish heritage pedagogy at a systematic level in the context of a specific school district.

Spanish heritage language courses offer a great opportunity and responsibility for teachers to learn alongside students and respond to their immediate communities. Having a

separate language course for heritage learners opens the door for these students to move from the periphery to the center of Spanish language and culture studies that generally have the second language learner in mind. However, separate courses are not always possible and even these are filled with good intentions that can still mistakenly reify uncontested power dynamics within language, culture, and perceived academics. Failing to address these dynamics can leave students accepting their “less than” monolingual selves and avoid language and culture maintenance and propagation. Students and teachers need to reflect on these negotiations in real-world contexts in order to foment “knowledge creation, instead of transmission” (Hogg & Volman, 2020, p. 871). As seen within critiques of multiculturalism (Flores, 2016), bilingual or heritage programs can still reproduce rather than disrupt stigmatized identities. For this reason, identity has always been central to heritage language research (Leeman, et.al, 2011). I turn to the field of ethnolinguistics to refer to identity as one’s concept of linguistic self and community belonging that exists in a dynamic, hybrid form, constantly in construction and negotiation in relation to others (Cummins, 2001; Crawshaw, Callen & Tusting, 2001; Parra, 2016; Showstack, 2017). Sociocultural dimensions also entail a “co-construction” of ethno-identity which can be understood through these exchanges (He, 2010; Tse, 2000). Furthermore, I look at this relationship between identity and language as fluid, ever evolving, extremely contextual; it is “becoming rather than being” (Hall, 1996 in Parra, 2016, p. 179). In order to foster empowerment and agency, curricular activities can allow space for students to reclaim who they are and who they want to be in society. Linking activities to student identities makes work for class contextual on a global and local level (Medina & Wohlwend, 2016) and uses meaning making with the intention to include more learners, further develop learner’s evolving agency, and offer a way to uncover societal and personal injustice to create changemakers. Literacy that

focuses on how identity interacts with a wide range of texts (Haiven & Khasnabish, 2010) supports identity development “not to control the identities that students produce, construct, form, or enact but to avoid controlling identities” (Moje & Luke, 2009, p.433 in Perry, 2012). Instruction centered on developing ever-evolving identities allows students to enter a dynamic understanding of self precisely through interaction with others, fluidly in and out of the classroom to offer true opportunities of empowerment in real-world, rather than hypothetical, actions. Ultimately, there exists a need for heritage language education to not only preserve who students are but also, and more importantly, allow for SHLLs’ own transformative and actionable applications in the Spanish classroom to foster agency.

Problem in context

“Dear Ms. Adán,

I didn't finish because I always get afraid or run away when it comes to doing any type of Spanish assignment since I don't want to fail and damage my family's pride of being Hispanic.”

I received this note from a student in 2016 during my second year of teaching at the secondary level where I currently work. Not only did I keep this note and still hold onto it today, but I used it as motivation to better serve students like this one. This note was a pivotal point in my career where I decided that I needed to advocate for Spanish heritage learners in my professional context, without taking lightly the responsibility I felt as a heritage learner myself. None of my pedagogy classes were centered on heritage learners, but I read all I could about the topic to first understand myself and my own learning--what I could have had in my own educational experience in the US. My experience fell short to my interests. I struggled like all new teachers do with different behaviors and gave this student some time to reflect after he told me that he

would be willing to explain why he was not attempting work in class. The class he was in was a mixed (SHLL and L2) Spanish III class with a second language learner majority and L2 pedagogical focus. Even though I redirected phrases like, “aren’t you supposed to know this?” or “I thought you were Puerto Rican” the damage was done. Spanish class to some of my heritage students was a reminder of what they did not know. I was struggling to provide a balanced classroom where heritage students were central to the curriculum and claiming their relationship to their culture. This particular student was a second-generation Puerto Rican with a strong sense of where he “should be” with his Spanish but struggled with his output, even though he understood and could get by in real-life situations better than most of his peers in the class. However, the course did not celebrate that or offer him ways to connect and shine through the curriculum. We had great conversations about this topic aside from class time, but the truth is, I was not able to fulfill what he deserved as his Spanish teacher.

This was the beginning of a long journey to where I am today. I delved deeply into researching how to differentiate for my heritage learners while still growing as an educator, second language teacher, and curriculum (re)-writer. Ironically that year, I also began a new course, a dual-enrollment Spanish course through the University of Connecticut. It was a natural transition for me since I was new to the secondary setting after being a teaching assistant at a university previously. Slightly over half of this class were heritage learners, but the student from the anecdotal letter did not fill a seat. The following year, it had flipped--the majority of students were second language learners and the few heritage learners commented on being out of place. As students went through the Spanish program, many heritage students lost interest and did not continue taking Spanish through their senior year. Two years later, in 2018, as I started working on my doctorate, I also proposed a heritage pathway that has now developed into two levels of

Spanish heritage speakers that eventually feeds into dual-enrollment courses. Since the magnet district has 5 high schools, the heritage courses are in the process of implementation at two other schools. Therefore, my investment in this work is a form of practitioner research, which is founded upon inquiry as stance, which “involves a continual process of making current arrangements problematic, questioning the ways of knowledge and practice are constructed, evaluated and used; and assuming that part of the work of practitioners individually and collectively is to participate in educational and social change” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p.121). In a sense my work mirrors my students who are in a state of growth and evolution. This dissertation, like my research, is a living document by an educator that is privileged to be an insider, but with the eyes of a learner and observer to capture and promote the sustaining of Spanish heritage learners within our school systems.

My research context is directly related to my professional work at a public magnet district in the state of Connecticut. Within the larger district, the school I work at as a Spanish high school teacher is part of a K-12 vision, but my building and World Language department consists of grades 6-12. Our World Language offerings at the school only consist of Spanish courses. Chinese and French are offered in other schools in the district but are on the decline. Typical of many magnet schools, our school follows a STEM theme and brings children from a vast area in comparison to neighborhood schools. In our case, students come from 36 different towns. Although our state is small, there is great disparity between the schools of these towns. In efforts to desegregate schools in the capital area the district accepts students on a lottery and quota-based system while maintaining 51% from our capital city. Eventhough the district has achieved a diverse student body (over 70% identify as Students of Color, close to 40% of these are Latinos, and less than 20% as White), it is constantly evaluating the organization’s achievement

of integration as well as academic results (See Table 1 below). Unfortunately, the demographic percentages still do not reflect the important “success markers” equally for all students regardless of background such as GPA, graduation, and college attendance.

Table 1

School, District and State Demographics 2021

Demographics	School % of Total	District % of Total	State % of Total
Female	38.3	51.2	48.4
Male	61.7	N/A	51.5
American Indian or Alaska Native	N/A	0.2	0.3
Asian	8.8	5.6	5.2
Black or African American	32.6	29.9	12.7
Hispanic or Latino of any race	39.2	40.2	27.8
Pacific Islander	0	0.1	0.1
Two or More Races	N/A	5.2	4.0
White	16.1	18.7	49.9

My research is situated within this larger picture of providing for all students through culturally responsive and sustaining pedagogy to increase motivation and meet socio-emotional needs to achieve equitable academic success. Overall, I have observed a discrepancy with how we, as a school and Spanish department, have addressed the academics, language, and culture of our Latinx population (which consists of over a quarter of the school) while simultaneously promoting the vision of equity and social justice as a lottery-based magnet district. I see this as an opportunity to improve the Spanish program to meet the potential that SHLLs possess. These learners come into language courses with the advantage of cultural experience and identity that should be honored in the academic setting. Within my teaching context, I also recognize the affordances at my reach to complete this research in a setting in which my work as a teacher has been valued, where my requests to run Spanish heritage courses has been granted and supported,

and where students traditionally conduct their own research in upper-level courses to fulfill a capstone project as a graduation requirement.

Purpose and Significance of Study

Above anything else, heritage language education is a matter of social justice. As famously quoted by Gloria Anzaldúa (2012), “if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity - I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself.” Since language and identity are intertwined, so are issues of power and access imbalances that have further branched out from the social justice umbrella into linguistic and raciolinguistic justice (Randolph & Johnson, 2017; Flores & Rosa, 2017; Baker-Bell, 2020.) Understanding this leads to supporting the existence, creation, and growth of Spanish heritage courses as an essential part of US (often misquoted as American) education, but this is only a portion of this mission. Once the need for the courses is established in support of bilingual education, it still exists within a monolingual school system. The tension between the power of languages is not unique to the US (Canagarajah & Ashraf, 2013), but I situate my project within the efforts to work within the spaces available within our educational system and create the necessary “cracks” that can empower heritage students, within their communities and context, to further create, develop, and take ownership of their cultures and languages.

My research is important to me personally as it directly affects my own students. I proposed a Spanish heritage program that created a pathway ending in offering college credit through a dual-enrollment program. As I create and share an evolving curriculum that is structured around identity, I hope to guide other teachers and colleagues that received most of their professional training for second language learners. However, I primarily want to better the

experience of heritage learners in my classroom and my district, which is driven by social justice. Focusing on Spanish heritage learners in a school with a large Latinx population is a true necessity to promote a vision of equity, inclusion, and asset-based learning within antiracist education. These learners come into language courses with the advantage of cultural experience and identity that should be honored in the academic setting.

Therefore, my work contributes to the field of heritage education by taking on the task of applying the established benefits of asset-based pedagogies within a critical lens in my own courses of Spanish for Heritage Speakers I and II, as well as in a high school- college dual enrollment year-long course named Intermediate Spanish Composition & Spanish Conversation-Cultural Topics. I will shed light on how students perceive social justice issues in relation to their own evolving ethno-identities through their own reflections, project design, and production of identity texts. As defined by Cummins & Early (2011), identity texts are artifacts produced by students with teacher guidance in a variety of modes, such as written or spoken word, audio, video, image, or in a dramatic representation. These storytelling artifacts as well as students' reflections from interactions within and beyond the classroom will embody their identity development or evolution throughout each unit during the academic year. The implementation of this project at the secondary level can offer a practical way to move theory into practice.

Research questions

This dissertation prioritizes the goal of heritage language education to provide a learning environment where positive attitudes toward both the heritage language and various dialects of the language and its culture are obtained, as well as the development of cultural language awareness (Valdés 1995; Aparicio 1997; Beauderie, et al., 2014; Beauderie, 2020; Beauderie, et al, 2021). Moreover, it is in Spanish heritage language learners' interest to provide them inquiry

opportunities to facilitate the learning process (Beauderie, 2020). Thus, I focus on SHLLs' process through inquiry as I document my own practitioner (re)-designs of curriculum to best fit these needs through the following questions:

In what ways do Spanish heritage language learners and their teacher engage with diverse experiences centered on social justice themes that affect Latinx communities?

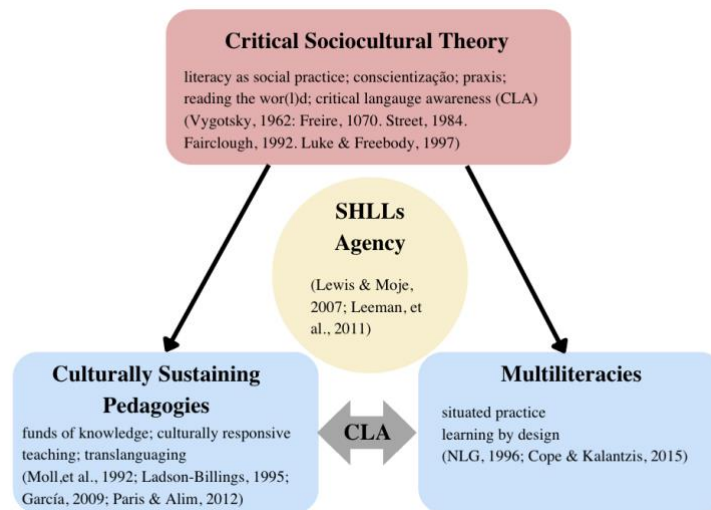
- a. How does a Spanish heritage language teacher use a reflective practitioner stance to deepen students' critical awareness?
- b. How do students' own storytelling reveal their socio-critical awareness developed within the classroom?
- c. What happens when the process of learning is emphasized over its product in the classroom?

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is the structure, frame, or blueprint that informs the lens of the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Grant & Osanloo, 2014). In order to understand SHLL's ways of knowing in the Spanish language classroom, I turn to a critical sociocultural theoretical framework. In the Figure 1 below, this lens is the overarching theory that guided me to both culturally sustaining pedagogies and multiliteracies and the dynamic exchanges between them, where critical language awareness (CLA) plays a mediating role in these exchanges to bring consciousness to action.

Figure 1

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework



The figure also includes key theorists and concepts that will be expounded upon in this section and will inform my organization of pertinent literature. At the center of this figure lies the byproduct and *raison d'être* of the framework itself: SHLL's agency, sustained by the theories that surround it. Agency is defined within the critical sociocultural perspective by Lewis & Moje (2007) as "the strategic making and remaking of selves, identities, activities, relationships, cultural tools and resources, and histories, as embedded within relations of power" (p.18). Agency is not created by instructors, but rather supported through critical awareness and action or ways of doing that respond to the impact of power in communities. The exchange and coexistence of the theories are represented in a dynamic fashion in order to respond to students' agency, which exists in a negotiated and dynamic space.

Critical sociocultural literacy

Built upon both sociocultural and social constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1962), the sociocultural approach to literacy emphasizes literacy in context and in practice within a globalized society. Influenced by social constructivism, a sociocultural understanding of literacy, recognizes the individual's construction of knowledge without ignoring the process of knowledge construction which takes place in a sociocultural context and is thus socially constructed (Reagan & Osborn, 2021, p.147). The sociocultural approach is also characterized by becoming the foundation needed to expand what constitutes as part of literacy, which has become even more important within the use of multimodalities and the digital age (Kress, 2005). Sociocultural theory emphasizes and validates literacy practices both within and between communities (Mills, 2016). With broadening the definition of literacy also comes the widening of what is considered valued information and constitutes as a text, which entails grounding learning in students' context. Literacy practices thus are seen as not just contextual but also constructed and negotiated within communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Street, 1984; NLG, 1996). As defined by Gee (1989), literacy entails the use of discourses (primary and secondary) that are ideological and in opposition to what or who is being marginalized. For this reason, individuals speak and express themselves within historical and social contexts.

Sociocultural literacy is fundamental to honor students' situated literacy practices and create environments that engage students through their lived experiences (Perry, 2012; Gee, 2005, 2015; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Street, 2003). Especially for heritage learners, situated learning needs to take place for students to see their language and cultural knowledge in the academic space that usually excludes this type of knowledge and inadvertently excluding home knowledge as "non-academic." Situated learning is important for this population since their

language experience has a situated purpose during communication with others, especially family members. As described within the “social turn” of New Literacy Studies (Gee, 2005), learning is not primarily an individual task or motivation as much as a social dynamic. Individual knowledge and consciousness then are situated within a social context. However, if individual and social ways of knowing are not critically examined by starting a process of reflection and awakening in the educational space, our classrooms contribute to a form of oppression through the erasure implied in assimilation (Freire, et al. 2018). Under this perspective, language classrooms should instead foster transculturation (Ortiz, 1978) where social exchange and interaction brings forth new dispositions in both an additive and innovative sense.

As established at this point, the relationship between language and heritage language learners is sociocultural by nature. There is a constant coexistence in heritage courses as students, from different communities, interact with those both inside and outside of the classroom and carry the varied experiences of these interactions (as well as the variety of languages themselves) into the Spanish classroom. These exchanges are active and always in development, thus the production of identity in relation to language is always in development and evolution throughout these exchanges.

Sociocultural research can take on an expanded view or a critical turn when the coexistence of ways of knowing is seen through the relevance of power (Lewis & Moje, 2007; Mills, 2016). Starting from critical pedagogy (Freire, et al., 2018), critical literacy uncovers how ideology, access, and patterns of oppression impact learners. In a critical sociocultural framework, critical literacy continues to examine the plurality of the ways of knowing while calling attention to the at times covert element of power within this plurality (Randolph, 2017). This approach developed from and intertwined with the sociocultural approach, as the

“situatedness” of literacy began to recognize power relations within negotiation and coexistence by understanding the word in its world (Freire & Macedo, 2005). Education in Freirean terms renounces learning through the “banking model” (Freire, 2018) in which teachers fill students with knowledge and instead calls for a critical dialogue in between teachers and students that connects the word to the social world which they inhabit (Freire & Macedo, 2005). Through conscientization, instructors and students develop critical awareness of their realities and use this knowledge to change realities (the world) by identifying problems and applying actionable solutions through what Freire refers to as praxis (Freire, et al., 2018). Reflection leads to problem posing and action work, especially in the case of heritage language learners who experience the realities of their languages through all areas of their life beyond the hypothetical and demarcated school walls.

Critical language awareness

The process of conscientization when applied to language and in the context of SHLLs, requires an understanding and expanded awareness of self through the role of power within the use of language. Recent work in the SHLL field looks to critical language awareness (CLA) to undo the status quo of language that reinforces the dominant monolingual standard of either Spanish or English and impacts the sustainability of their bilingualism (Loza & Beaudrie, 2022). CLA is defined by Fairclough (1992) as “not a branch of language study, but an orientation towards language. It highlights how language conventions and language practices are invested with power relations and ideological processes which people are often unaware of” (7). CLA as a byproduct of sociolinguistics, encompasses pedagogies that “encourage students to question taken-for-granted assumptions about language and to analyze how such assumptions are tied to inequality and injustice, with the ultimate goal of promoting positive social change” (Leeman,

2018, p.345). The critical sociocultural foundation of this theory contributes to a vision that education should both recognize the learner but also empower them to create social change while gaining social access. There exists a marked difference between CLA and mere reflection by emphasizing a need for the critical element of language awareness that otherwise reinforces the same.

Critical language awareness is a necessary orientation for Spanish heritage language programs, (Beauderie, et.al, 2021; Leeman, 2018; Holguín Mendoza, 2018; Martínez, 2003) that can lead to culturally sustaining the minority language and culture within a monolingual dominant educational system and society. This work begins with the stance of teachers themselves and not just a lack of linguistic knowledge that needs to be applied (Randolph, 2017). Through this lens, links between language and identity and its effects on how they affect students' self and social perception as heritage learners become evident. Although the transformation in learners is many times internal, they can be observed in the learners through their interactions and reflections about language use. CLA allows me to question and observe how the revealing of power dynamics in which languages exist, heightens identity investment of the learner. The reluctance to speak, for instance, is often found in a power imbalance (Norton, 1995, in Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 89). If these imbalances that usually go undetected are made evident, learners realize the agency they have in reversing language attrition.

Critical language awareness reveals the existence of language ideologies in the understanding of the ways of knowing in heritage language education since they impact the maintenance and development of heritage languages and cultures. Leeman (2012) defines language ideologies as "consisting of values and belief systems regarding language generally, specific language or language varieties, or particular language practices and ways of using

language" (p.43). Language ideology directly informs the attitudes expressed by students and thus impacting their concept of self and the use of their language repertoires (Showstack, 2017; Showstack, 2012; Parra, 2016; Pomerantz, 2002). Since ideology is grounded in the contexts of interactions and thus social practices (Kroskrity, 2004), the World Language classroom is a setting in which language ideologies are challenged, perpetuated, or rewritten. However, SHLLs enter the classroom with insecurities about their language and the effect this has on their identity (Montgomery, et.al, 2018; Morales & Blau, 2009). Without constantly developing actionable ways of producing an asset-based mindset in students, in addition to their instructors, the language ideologies that exclude Spanish heritage language learners (SHLLs) continue to grow through a monolingual norm. What is conceived as "academic," "appropriate," or "standard" portrays language as if it were static and objective, something obtained rather than actively in use (Beaudrie, et.al, 2021; Loza, 2017; Rosa & Flores, 2017; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Leeman, 2012; Showstack, 2012; Leeman, 2005). Leeman (2005) states that appropriateness, for instance, "fails to recognize linguistic subordination" and "pretends to be neutral" (p.38). These normative approaches value the prestige variety of language and fail to recognize the evolution of language as a history of relative power and colonialism in what is perceived as "educated." Because SHLLs often internalize much of the stigmatization that they have encountered in different contexts related to their language, culture, and overall identity (Rosa & Flores, 2015), this internalization goes largely undetected and poses a threat to the maintenance and expansion of multilingualism. Instead, learners should have access to voicing their own experiences, recognizing how and where they have faced stigmatization, and feeling empowered to change the course of future experiences for themselves and others who might have different perspectives.

Simply revealing language ideologies can yield minor results, and not contribute to the undoing of language and culture attrition, even well-intentioned measures are still supported by a deficit-minded perspective. Critical language awareness calls for more than the recognition of language registers and varieties; it demands an asset-based approach with critical underpinnings, which effectively shifts marginalized varieties (and those who use them) from the periphery to the center of Spanish heritage pedagogy. Instead of stopping at recognizing language varieties through a sociocultural and sociolinguistic lens, instructors are called to question the “seemingly common sense and taken-for-granted notions about language that are complicit in the reproduction of social hierarchies” (Leeman, 2012, p. 44). The danger of not taking this extra leap into the critical lens, falls short of creating social change and thus it is still possible to challenge standard notions of language and still reproduce them (Loza, 2017).

A critical sociocultural perspective provides me with the guiding prospective to support SHLL agency through a process of language destigmatization that aids in supporting SHLL agency through their empowerment and action, rooted in the maintenance and development of the multilingual person in society. As seen through this section, the critical sociocultural framework supports the call for research on how students’ literacy can be supported rather than imposed by first including their situated and community practices (Street, 1984; 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991), empowering through the conscientization (Freire, et al., 2018) of language through its link to culture, and by supporting acts of problem and solution posing generated by SHLLs. Under the umbrella of critical sociocultural literacies, I next turn to asset-based pedagogies having establish the role of consciousness before action to complement how different ways of knowing can be valued in an academic context and support students’ agency within their communities, actively working against the current of assimilation through monolingualism.

Asset-based pedagogies: funds of knowledge and culturally sustaining pedagogies

Asset-based pedagogical approaches extend from a sociocultural theoretical lens by honoring the lived experience and knowledge that students, their families, and their communities possess (Moll et al., 1992). Asset-based pedagogies give ways of accomplishing the task of changing the course of minority language and cultural maintenance in the US setting. Funds of knowledge as a concept offers a sociocultural framing where literacy is not limited to the academic context, separate from the home/ community setting.

Funds of knowledge

Instruction centered on funds of knowledge takes on a critical turn when actively dismantling deficit pedagogies that either perceive students' home knowledge incongruent to academics or view students as "blank slates." Much like the current research on decolonizing (Domínguez, 2017) and antiracist education (Au, 2014; Lacorte & Magro, 2022), schools are either disrupting the status quo of assimilation or contributing to it: "Schooling involves adding on a second culture and language or subtracting one's original culture and language. An additive outcome would be fully vested bilingualism and biculturalism" (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 339). Funds of knowledge can revolutionize positions of power in the educational system (González et al., 1995). Instead of perpetuating educators as the authoritative figures that need to "save" children and families, funds of knowledge tear down this hierarchy by honoring what children's communities bring to the schools. Putting the learner at the center created the shift from the framework of funds of knowledge to include funds of identity. Funds of identity, although still found within the umbrella of funds of knowledge, "involves learning about individual students, rather than assumptions or stereotypes related to their group membership, also including family membership" (Hogg & Volman, 2020, p.864). While funds of knowledge focus on what the

family brings to a child's knowledge base, funds of identity focus on what the child has internalized, molded, and adjusted from all areas of their life. Also aligning with a sociocultural perspective, funds of identity "is seen as both a social product and personal experiences; identity is constructed in social interaction and participation in one's local settings, which in turn are informed by broader cultures and narratives; and identity is a source of motivation for action" (Hogg & Volman, 2020, p.869). Specifically, in the SHLL classroom, this type of research can reveal the *sustainable* curricular aspects that reinforce or counteract language and culture attrition within the educational system. Acknowledging the funds of identity in students has the potential to *sustain* the ties between communities by centering the evolution of students' identities, without essentializing their experiences. Culture draws on intergenerational traditions, beliefs, and ways of being, but are constantly negotiated (Gutiérrez & Johnson, 2017). As students develop consciousness of their identities both in and out of the classroom, it allows students to bring their whole self as they "develop socio-political consciousness" and create their own meaning-making and knowledge (Hogg & Volman, 2020, 871).

Culturally sustaining pedagogies

Within the umbrella of culturally responsive and relevant approaches, Paris and Alim (2017) define culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP) as ones that seek "to perpetuate and foster linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation" (p.1.) "CSP takes dynamic cultural and linguistic dexterity as a necessary good, and sees the outcome of learning as additive, rather than subtractive..." (Paris & Alim, 2017, p.2-3.) The authors point out that prior to work aligned with Moll et.al. (1992), there was a deficit rather than asset mindset when it came to addressing the underperformance of minority students in schools. CSP is not about changing children as it is about changing the oppressive systems they are in

(p.3). The precursors of CSP, culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000; 2002), fall short of finding ways to make an impact that ripples into the future of students. Rather than offering a formula, CSP exemplifies cultural sustaining through supporting a full repertoire of cultural and linguistic practices, facilitating students' access to the language and culture of institutional power, and by guiding students to critically scrutinize and challenge social inequality or exclusion that they themselves employ and/or encounter in their everyday lives (Bucholtz, et.al., 2017, p. 46.) The purpose of these skills, rather than reaching an end in the here and now, is to offer ways to critically examine and change the valorization of norms that have been perpetuated in the past through the present. CSP aligns with a critical sociocultural lens through which to analyze SHLL education over other culturally responsive approaches precisely because of its goal of sustainability and long-term effect on learners. The success marker of critical learning should be its support of lasting change. In the case of SHLLs in the Spanish classroom, the marker of success should not stop at acquiring transferable skills in English, among other goals (Valdés, 1995; Aparicio, 1997) but also provide the lasting support to maintain and develop, in my case, the diverse Spanish language in a society where it is seen as “other” and unassimilated. With the recognition and extension of knowledge, students become activists that continue to foster the value and respect for underrepresented people, causes, and literacies. More than relevant or responsive, culturally sustaining pedagogy “requires that they support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence” (Paris, 2012).

Multiliteracies: diverse ways of doing

Starting with the canonical work of New London Group (1996), multiliteracies allowed for two fundamental aspects needed for this research: (1) the acceptance of new forms of literacy, beyond print texts and (2) the evolving ways to express and *create* new knowledge. The core purpose of multiliteracies is tied to critical literacy as it is to create a more equitable and accessible education through the implementation of the design process of meaning-making. Design consists of available designs, designing, and redesigning. Therefore, students, educators, and communities are working together on the same plane and in uncharted territory that is individualized. Multiliteracies approaches “were born in part out of sensitivity to the multiplicity of rhetorical and biographical experiences that learners were bringing to the classroom” (Samaniego & Warner, 2016, p.199). NLG (1996) highlights the need to invert the supposed gaps of knowledge: “the idea that what seems to be a problem--the multiplicity of cultures, experiences, ways of making meaning, and ways of thinking--can be harnessed as an asset” (p. 67.) Instead of leveling the playing field, they emphasize needing to transform it, which aligns with critical literacy (Lewis, et al., 2007; Paris & Alim, 2017). Teaching practices that stem from multiliteracies find value in a situated experience and promote learning as an extension to this interest. Janks (2000), however, warns educators that this process requires a fine balance in its execution: “If we provide students with access to dominant forms, this contributes to maintaining their dominance. If, on the other hand, we deny students access, we perpetuate their marginalisation” (Janks, 2000, p. 176.) This conundrum calls instructors to design meaning-making processes that can open the possibilities for change while still equipping students and their circles of influence to access social capital and upward social mobility. Thus, an important challenge, in the case of heritage language teaching, is “to enable learners to develop those

‘secondary discourse’ genres (Gee 2002) learned in the education system and practice in more formal encounters without inadvertently devaluing or degrading nonstandard and vernacular varieties” (Leeman, 2005 in Samaniego & Warner, 2016, p. 191). Especially in heritage language courses, where students come with socially marked differences in language use, multilingualism should not only refer to a minority language, but also how the different varieties and registers of language are used in different spaces (Torres, et al, 2017, p. 273). Multiliteracy allows for critical thinking and personal connections between students and texts to be natural and personalized (Samaniego & Warner, 2016; Randolph, 2022).

As Zapata (2017) points out, multiliteracies pedagogy works to achieve instructional materials for heritage language learners as a means of individualization and differentiation (21). In a globalized and interconnected world, students should gain awareness of the affordances that languages and their varieties offer them and thus give students the choice to move beyond what is perceived as “academic” and instead redefine “appropriateness” (Fairclough, 1992; Flores & Rosa, 2015) as the application of using language in empowered decision making that considers the audience and setting. Zapata (2017) states that the mission to utilize multiliteracies in the Spanish heritage classroom is to

“develop the traditional literacy skills expected in the academic environment in socially and linguistically framed dynamic ways, while, at the same time, promoting the development of those multiliteracies that will result in the understanding and production of other kinds of multimodal forms of expression through which learners can express their individual and community identities in Spanish” (Zapata, 2017, p.20-21).

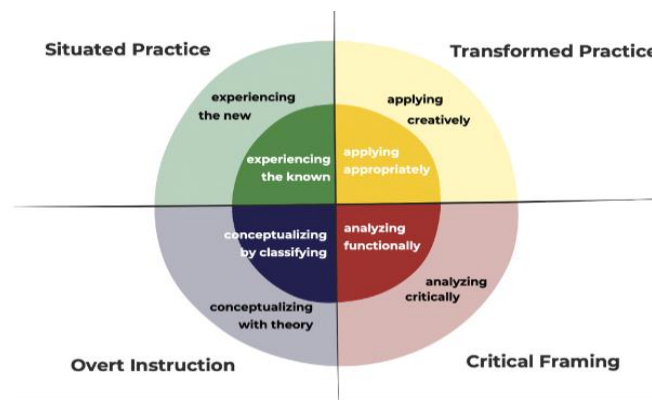
The multiliteracy approach therefore allows for the coexistence of various modes of literacy while still providing the space to analyze critically how literacies are ever evolving and why some literacies might be deemed academic or appropriate. This analysis and overall stance towards literacy allows students both the access to a variety of modes and literacies as well as the

agency to change societal perceptions, which do not have to be mutually exclusive. Within the critical approach to heritage language education, multiliteracies framework has been used to analyze diverse types of literacies within different modes of texts, such as those read in social media, film, and public spaces (Parra, 2016; Lacorte & Magro, 2022).

As suggested by Zapata (2017), multiliteracies pedagogy and heritage education is a “match made in heaven” as they intersect in their goals of blurring the lines between formal and informal education as well providing individualized materials for heritage language learners (20-21). Multiliteracies pedagogy is applicable to heritage language education due to the previous success of Learning by Design in an Australian educational context of teaching language to minority learners and its emphasis on serving individual needs by linking experiential and academic learning (Zapata, 2017, p.84). More importantly, this framework offers a way to “strengthen students’ ethnolinguistic identity and commitment to language maintenance” (Warner & Dupuy, 2018, p.123). To reach this goal and purpose, Cope and Kalantzis (2015) refer to knowledge processes as four pedagogical moves that form Learning by Design as actions that are part of what a learner “does to know.” The four knowledge processes have culminated in experiencing the known and the new; conceptualizing by naming to theory; analyzing functionally to critically; and applying appropriate to creatively (Cope and Kalantzis, 2015). These processes, as seen in Figure 2 below, are presented by the researchers as a circle in quadrants that need not be read linearly rather as entry points so that teachers can use at different moments of the learning process for different students or contexts (p.16).

Figure 2

Learning by Design (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015)



To properly support and achieve student-directed learning through development and growth, I turn to the Learning by Design processes within the conceptual framework as a guide towards redesigning action. Experiencing from the known to new can be understood through the evolving agency of heritage language learners and their instructor that is never static. The bridge between language and culture requires an area of conceptualizing based on experience and the metacognition/ awareness prompted and guided by the instructor. The analysis of texts moves away from discrete multimodal representations to questioning critically “human intentions and interests” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015, p. 20), which provides the bridge between empowerment and ultimately the preparation for application or action. Cope and Kalantzis (2015) refer to the transformational aspect of applying both in the expected context or in the appropriate way and then in a creative way that exceeds predictable designs. It is this “applying” process in the creative sense that creates a space of choice for students through multiliteracies and under this

umbrella, multimodality. Without choosing between didactic and authentic pedagogy, Cope and Kalantzis (2015) choose a combination of both that they refer to as reflexive pedagogy, which provides the access, diversity, and design developed by Janks (2000) in response to NLG (1996).

Concluding Intersections

To summarize, these three asset-based theoretical approaches (specifically, culturally sustaining pedagogies, critical language awareness, and multiliteracies) provide the necessary links to apply a critical sociocultural framework in for SHLL in World Language programs and mixed SHLL-L2 classroom. The three approaches work together to support students' funds of knowledge and continuous ways of knowing in the dynamic exchange between home/ community and school, legitimizing students' experience within the prestigious academic setting. Student knowledge is not just recognized but valued in such a way to continue building knowledge in an organic way that always starts from experience and has the capability to end in new and creative responses or solutions (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). Since language, culture, and agency are intricately connected, these approaches require consciousness of the role power has played in students' lived experiences as a prerequisite to further develop, maintain, and support the necessary mind shift transformation to fight against the status quo of homogeneity and monolingualism at micro and macro levels. Also, by expanding what is considered literacy and "academic," these approaches work together to respond to the ever-evolving ways of knowing and learning while also granting students access to prestigious or standard literacies to become agents of change. Students can feel better connected to their diverse communities while also understanding that they carry the knowledge to impact the world around them.

Background, Positionality, and Role of the Researcher

Background and positionality

I have been in school nearly all my life and that is not really a surprise to me as I reflect on my upbringing. As a child, my main job at home was to do well in school. Education was everything to my parents and they often stressed how it was the key to life and that maintaining and developing my Spanish was crucial to my success. My parents immigrated to the United States from Cuba as political refugees in the 1970s, but I was born and raised in New Jersey. I, like most children of immigrants, have heard the amazing story of bravery and resilience that immigrant stories reveal. The motifs of turmoil, separation, language barriers, segmented education, multiple jobs, and uncertainty are not unique, but I hold those details as if they were an emotional inheritance. I have heard the stories so many times that I feel like I lived them, but the truth is I continue to live an easy life thanks to those struggles. My family has accomplished the coveted “American dream.” They fled their country with no possessions to their name for a land of opportunity, were accepted with arms wide open by the US, and have succeeded in financial security. This opportunity has been uncontested in their traditional and conservative mindset--you work hard, keep the faith--you reap benefits, end of story. This would be a mindset that was also ingrained in me during my forming years that I have revisited often. I have further complicated and had to re-write, without necessarily erasing, this mindset for myself; and quite honestly, I am not finished writing.

I have no siblings but grew up close to my cousins around the same age and my grandparents, as well as my great-aunt who I called *Abuelita*. Like many first-generation children in the US, I was bilingual. My parents used English at work, but home life took place in Spanish. The news channels, *novelas*, phone calls, oral stories, and conversations were Spanish dominant.

If I ever tried to retell stories in English to share with my parents, they would quickly remind me that Spanish was our home language even though my reading and writing was almost always in English. I also quickly learned how useful knowing two languages was. From a young age, I remember translating for my *Abuelo* and *Abuelita* at the pharmacy or at the supermarket.

I developed pride in my linguistic ability and my parents promised me that my language was the port to my culture and that whatever job I had in the future, I would want to say proudly that I knew two languages. Being bilingual is like being worth two people because you can do double is something my dad would remind me. “*No se puede separar el idioma de la cultura*” was ingrained in me, and even though I could not explain what that meant--I felt it. I had very little formal education in Spanish, but I can still close my eyes and imagine practicing the sounds of letters with strong and weak vowels con abuela Irma, my maternal grandmother. She drew a set of lines under a-e-o over i-u and connected them “*como un barco.*” I practiced writing some sentences and reading aloud took me much longer than in English. The lessons filled only a few pages in my notebook, but I still hold on to them. These pages recite the *Padre Nuestro* prayer written out in my childlike handwriting and perhaps the first paragraph I ever wrote about myself in Spanish that describes my name, my family, and how I was named Marta “*por mi bisabuela*” (after my great-grandmother) and the middle name María after “*la Virgen María*” (which I misspelled with a “y” instead of an “i”). Abuela Irma was a teacher with a doctoral degree in Cuba who later became a Spanish teacher in New Jersey, where she taught the first wave of Spanish heritage courses at a parochial high school. Somewhere between my moving to and from the Midwest for my first graduate degree, I misplaced a small, lime green textbook that read *Español para hispanohablantes* that she gifted me from the 1970s. No amount of google searches have helped me locate this out-of-print book. I wish I still had it as a relic, however not

because I need it to explain to me “anglicisms” and “barbarisms” in its condescending tone. Abuela, like this book, made sure to correct all of us in a lighthearted way if we used the calque “*te llamo pa’ trá*” instead of “*te devuelvo la llamada*” with all its syllables intact or if we said any other “*disparate*.” Even before I wanted to become a teacher, I wanted to know as much as she did about grammar in both of my languages. However, she was also the person to instill in me a language ideology¹ that I would have to unravel and rewrite. Born in 1924, she was progressive in her time, everyone who knew her would say that, but she continues to help me reflect on how far the field of heritage language pedagogy has come without taking for granted how it is still affected by the historical roots of education.

I had some extended family in New Jersey, but nearly every summer we went to Miami, Florida to visit the true extension of *primos y tíos*. One summer I even spent a whole month with Abuelita, my great-aunt, visiting Miami from one family’s house to the next. Although I lived in a very diverse area of NJ where many different languages were spoken, going to Miami was in a way a completely different cultural experience. Without ever returning to Cuba for political reasons, my parents would point out the flora and climate that they claimed was almost like the land they had left behind. Miami was always the answer to my question, “What was Cuba like?” When I went to the supermarkets, it was as if my ears could understand Spanish with much more ease because of the Spanish marked by the primarily Cuban accent I was used to hearing only at home. Through culture and language, I felt at home even though I never resided there. I never responded when asked that I was Cuban but that my parents were from there, and I took much

¹ I refer to language ideology, through the lens of raciolinguistics, when referencing *feelings* developed and sustained through practices and institutions that can either reinforce or dismantle loci of power in language use (Leeman 2012; Flores & Rosa, 2017). Students themselves may be reinforcing language ideologies that limit their self-confidence and feelings of belonging. Language ideologies are also at the forefront of language registers and hierarchical language prestige, as well as the power imposed by one language over another in multilingual communities.

pride in elders commenting on the cadence of my spoken Spanish. In Miami, no one looked at me and assumed I did not know Spanish like in New Jersey. I looked like most people there and discovered that what I thought were family nuances were really part of a larger community. I treasured my visits but in retrospect I value the fact that I lived in an area where my parents and I had to intentionally decide to maintain our culture. I was marked by the value they placed on bilingualism as my way to be most connected to my cultural identity.

Much of my research is impacted by my deep experience of maintaining and further developing my own cultural and linguistic identities as a Spanish heritage learner. When I started school, my kindergarten teacher suggested I go to speech class. I had to work on my pronunciation for some English words and would occasionally speak to her in Spanish first. Most of the adults in my life, that I saw on the daily, were Spanish speakers. In fact, I believed that when my first-generation friends and I were as old as our mothers, we would flip a magical switch and speak Spanish. The naivete of this thought process also reveals how early I began reflecting on multilingualism. Growing up, I never questioned that my home knowledge was not necessarily valued or represented in my formal education, but I knew I wanted to have access to a Latin American education. I imagined what I would have read, learned, and discussed if my parents never emigrated and how I could possibly obtain this knowledge within the US.

Starting at the secondary level, I began to have access to Spanish courses, but I quickly realized that these courses were focused on second language learners and did not open more doors for me-- at least not with intention or purpose. In High School, I was placed in Spanish level I after not passing the entrance exam with pictures of winter sports, which was not part of my Spanish Caribbean based vocabulary. However, I was one of the lucky ones, at a higher proficiency level and with my sense of ethno-linguistic pride, I remained motivated to learn why

I spoke the way that I did. I needed to represent my culture even if it meant staring at the New Jersey parkway exit as I repeated basic vocabulary I already knew. I became interested in the metalinguistics of different tenses and made the necessary adjustments to my vocabulary when practicing with my peers as to not confuse them using my language variety. I would blush when accidentally calling my teachers or later my professors by the informal “*tú*” that I used at home with all adults. By junior year, after completing tutoring hours, I knew I wanted to become a Spanish Education major. I turned to Spanish literature to gain the history and background I never learned and quite frankly I should have had access to, and yet my yearning for more which led me to my graduate studies. My educational journey is largely marked by the search for my ethno-identity in the academic sphere. If I valued these two areas of my life so much--how could they not be connected? My career and research are fueled by my personal experiences and passion about providing more opportunities for Spanish heritage language education by widening the definition of “school acceptable” or academic literacy (such as with the inclusion of popular culture) and valuing student voice in the process for their benefit and that of their communities.

Role of the Researcher

My identity as a researcher is linked to both being a practitioner and a Spanish heritage learner myself. I am a life-longer learner invested in Spanish heritage education to widen the opportunities for multilingualism in an often-monolingual educational setting and beyond the classroom, which includes my personal maintenance of my languages and cultures. My role of researcher takes on the responsibility to provide a better learning environment for Spanish heritage learners in World Language programs, like the one that once I belonged to as a student as well. However, I am also aware that my experiences do not encompass all of my students’ unique experiences, and this requires me need to step back and listen in order to learn and

respond to an ever-change and diverse world of Latinx students in the US. As a practitioner researcher, my prerogative is to use my own research to guide my pedagogical practice and document my decision- making process as well as how my students reflect on the content and how it applies to their present selves within the larger picture of an imagined, improved future for the Latinx population in the US. Ultimately, teaching and learning should be about centering empowerment (*empoderamiento*) to establish a relationship of trust where students can explore and create alternatives to their own experiences with the status quo.

In this study, I take on an inquiry, qualitative case study of my own students enrolled in a dual-enrollment Spanish writing course. I gathered observations, lesson notes, student and teacher generated reflections, and student artifacts to better understand how SHLLs in an upper-level secondary course generate and conduct their own inquiry projects in response to learned topics that focus on multilingual identity, activism within US Latinxs, climate issues, and social and health well-being. Beyond building awareness in students, I aim to focus on how students begin to see themselves as agents of change and how this in turn sustains their multilingual identities.

Chapter 2: A Review of the Literature

Spanish heritage language learners (SHLLs) are found in all content areas of our schools and universities. Since my study will take place in my own World Language classroom, the focus for this literature review is to first establish the role of critical pedagogies in World Language education and then specifically in the SHLL and mixed SHLL and L2 (second language learner) classrooms. Then, I will highlight the urgent need for these critical pedagogies to move from theory into practice, in different learning contexts, to first help teachers shift their mindset in order to ultimately open opportunities for SHLL agency in Spanish language

classrooms. These pedagogies stem from the critical socio-cultural umbrella, detailed in the previous chapter. These interconnected theories of culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP), critical language awareness (CLA), and multiliteracies complement each other to empower and further develop students' use of their agency within their communities. Although the literature reveals applications of all three of these theories into critical pedagogies, more work needs to be done to reimagine the role of both teachers and students. By applying these critical asset-based pedagogies, instructors use these theoretical frameworks to directly respond to their contexts in unique ways that need to be reapplied but not replicated to best individualize the educational process which subconsciously aims to homogenize the learning experience and success markers.

A Matter of social justice: Critical pedagogies in the World Language classroom

Critical pedagogy and social justice are difficult to define and in addition to do so in relation to one another. Reagan & Osborn (2021) highlight this difficulty in their definition of critical pedagogy by instead proposing that although different interpretations exist, “At its heart, critical pedagogy seeks ‘to empower the powerless and transform existing social inequalities and injustices’” (McLaren, 2003, p.186 in Reagan & Osborn, 2021). Furthermore, they support that critical pedagogy is never objective. Many researchers agree that since language is not neutral, a proficiency-based classroom needs to also exist within its political context (Reagan & Osborn, 2021; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Osborn, 2006; Reagan & Osborn, 2021; Leeman, 2005), thus critical pedagogies respond to the local in a way that cannot be defined as one replicable pedagogy. Critical pedagogies and social justice are closely related as the goal of critical pedagogy is to achieve social justice by questioning the normalized, hierarchical, and intersecting features of oppression, among others (Bell, 2016). In the case of the World Language classroom, Randolph & Johnson (2017) refer to social justice approaches as language

classroom practices through which participants (students, teachers, and other stakeholders) gain understanding or make progress in social equity. These social justice approaches “employ critical pedagogy in order to reach social justice learning outcomes for students” (Randolph & Johnson, 2017, p. 108). Glynn et al. (2018) propose that there is an organic connection between teaching languages and cultures through the teaching of social justice. They note this particularly through the 3 P’s of culture (products, practices, and perspectives), which also need to include the analysis of power structures in each (Glynn et al., 2018; Glynn & Spenader, 2020). Examining these aspects of culture through this critical lens ultimately promotes Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which allows students to “communicate across cultural boundaries” (Byram, 1997) and have successful interactions with users of the language (Caballero-García, 2018).

Social justice approaches, under this umbrella of critical pedagogies, are currently receiving more attention from professional language organizations, such as ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Language), affecting both professional development and research. In *Words and Actions: Teaching Languages through the Lens of Social Justice*, Glynn, et al. (2018) offer “points of entry” into units for World Language courses to work from existing curriculum and make adjustments for greater social awareness, competency, and action through language proficiency. Using traditionally included topics such as family and food through a lens of inclusion and social justice allow instructors to plan for social justice to become the center of language learning instead of an add on (Glynn & Spenader, 2020; Glynn et al., 2018; Caballero-García, 2018; Randolph & Johnson, 2017). Efforts such as this text and offering on-going webinars on implementing critical pedagogies to work towards social justice exist in efforts to fill the gap between theory and practice, especially in achieving action and social change. In a

recent webinar series, “Linking Proficiency Outcomes with the Social Justice Standards” (Randolph & Wang, 2022), the presenters link the World-Readiness Standards (2015) to the Social Justice Standards provided by Learning for Justice. The World- Readiness Standards, known as the 5 C’s (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) allow learners to “investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and practices with the perspectives of the cultures studied” (ACTFL, 2015). By incorporating the social justice standards of Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Action with the 5 C’s, the community standards can be accomplished while making World Language less foreign and centralize the Spanish-speaking world locally and globally while learners also learn more about themselves through language learning.

In Caballero-García’s (2018) study, ACTFL standards and 21st Century Skills are used to create and use Spanish curriculum at the university through a social justice lens. The units or modules foster a learner's social consciousness, empathy, collaboration, diversity appreciation, civic engagement, personal responsibility, and leadership through different social topics. The results from the study were measured according to the four components for social justice education defined by Glynn, Wesely & Wassell (2014) as (1) “challenges, confronts and disrupts misconceptions, untruths, and stereotypes”, (2) “provides all students with the resources necessary to learn to their full potential, including both material and emotional resources”, (3) draws “talents and strengths that students bring to their education”, and (4) “creates a learning environment that promotes critical thinking and agency for social change” (Glynn, et al, 2014, p.1, as cited in Caballero-García, 2018). Using written responses in English and instructor reflections, the study highlights how students noticed a change in their perception, felt at ease in their class community, used their Spanish skills in a real-life context, and were inspired to write

letters to politicians or join in efforts as volunteers. This study, which aligns with World Language national and social justice standards, prioritizes the effect on the learner rather than the language use alone.

Similarly, in Glynn and Spenader's (2020) study, they explore how World Language teachers use content to teach for social justice in four cases that lead to student agency yet leave room for both teacher and student growth in achieving action. Through video of lessons and interview data provided by four teachers in middle school through high school and in a range of suburban and rural settings, the researchers find that instruction based on content but through a critical lens has the potential to engage learners not just with the language, but the real issues addressed (Glynn & Spenader, 2020, p.76). All the teachers in the study were able to adapt everyday topics (such as travel and clothing) into critical ones by using authentic and international material to provide various perspectives. Although SHLLs are not mentioned, they suggest that students encounter critical topics at all levels of instruction and not limit them to upper-level courses so that students develop critical thinking through language proficiency gains and feel connected to the material. This connection between the curriculum and the self allows for students to gain agency in responding to real-world issues that affect them and the larger society beyond the classroom. Glynn and Spenader (2020) warn that it is easier to include the first three of Sensoy & DiAngelo's (2017) four tenants, which are: (1) the way in which structures at both micro and macro levels are affected by unequal social power; (2) our positionality and roles in these structures containing unequal social power; (3) the importance of thinking critically about information and knowledge; and (4) the action necessary to obtain justice (as cited in Glynn & Spenader, 2020, p. 74). In most of the cases analyzed, the teachers can prepare students for future action, and one is able to have the students act through the

making of awareness videos. This reinforces that there is room for more research in bringing learning into action. For instance, various approaches, such as youth participatory action research (YPAR) and project based learning (PBL) have been implemented in World Language classrooms in order to facilitate critical pedagogies that individualize learning where students are engaging in their own research through inquiry based learning and thus co-creating knowing with instructors to gain understanding of target cultures in their communities and abroad (Borden, 2022; Buck Institute, 2019; Randolph & Johnson, 2017; Glynn, et al., 2018; Bocci, 2016). Although PBL does not usually require a literature review as does YPAR, both approaches require problem posing, analysis of information, and presentation of a product that responds to this problem (Stoller, 2006, cited in Bocci, 2016). Notably, more studies are needed that implement inquiry-based practices, especially prior to the collegiate level. Studies like Belpoliti & Fairclough (2016) integrate inquiry-based learning throughout an entire curriculum at different proficiency levels, which shows promise for applications with different age groups even though their study takes place in Spanish heritage courses at the university level.

Action itself needs to be supported by awareness, which the Glynn & Spenader (2020) study addresses by emphasizing the importance of reflexivity (Kubota, 2016) where teachers are engaging in ongoing reflection (Glynn & Spenader, 2020, p.89). Much like this application of reflexivity, Correa (2011; 2018) advocates for using critical pedagogy in heritage language courses specifically. She highlights how critical reflection is an on-going activity for the critical heritage language instructor and requires constant reflection at each stage of instruction. This reflection starts with the teacher who then employs sociolinguistic practices to empower students. This teacher and student empowerment results in SHLL's language and ethnic maintenance and development by unraveling their negative linguistic attitudes about the use of

language varieties (Tse, 1998, cited in Correa, 2011; Leeman, 2005). Besides advocating for instruction rooted in critical pedagogy (Freire, et al., 2018; Freire & Macedo, 2005), where students co-create with other students, teachers, and even community members, Correa (2011) suggests activities like ethnographic observation, linguistic autobiographies (Leeman, 2005), and service-learning activities that link to the ACTFL's community standards. However, these studies reveal a need to expand types of knowledge and make them central to the curriculum. More than creating activities, instructors need to allow for critical personal projects that can both honor students' funds of knowledge and transform themselves and the world around them.

Situating heritage language learners within World Language education

Understanding the difference between heritage and second language learners is not always prioritized in teacher programs and is crucial since most HLL will be in mixed classrooms. Textbooks and teachers focus on L2 learners because they might compose the majority of the classroom, but also because they are much more homogenous than HLLs. World Language teacher preparation programs are not systematically geared to respond to HLLs and are often growing on a volunteer basis or as an afterthought since there is a need for more teacher training in HLL teaching, especially in the K-12 context (Carriera & Kagan, 2018). Although survey studies highlight the expansion of Spanish heritage programs at both the secondary and post-secondary levels (Bateman & Wilkinson, 2010; Beaudrie, 2011), they also reveal how instructors are lacking training to teach SHLLs (Beaudrie, 2020; Carreira, 2017). For example, in Gironzetti & Belpoliti's (2021) mixed quantitative and qualitative study, they focus on SHLL instructors' backgrounds and experiences. Their analysis of survey and interview data highlights the challenges these educators face with limited education (about half believed their previous education prepared them to teach SHLLs). The researchers call attention to the greater need for

an integrated Spanish teacher preparation model as well as professional development that includes SHLLs. Furthermore, in Randolph's (2017) qualitative study, he conducted interviews and observations of non-native Spanish teachers to better understand how the teachers perceived their SHLLs in mixed (SHLL and L2) classes. The study reveals language ideologies and instructional practices of these teachers at the secondary level. Although their teaching philosophy viewed SHLLs through an additive lens, their practices revealed a deficit mindset in a variety of ways. At times teachers accepted nonstandard forms of language from SHLLs, but set different limitations on this acceptance, such as allowing for nonstandard speaking but not writing (Randolph, 2017, p.279). Overall teachers were intimidated by their SHLLs and maintained authority through the standard dialect, causing tension between teachers and students. Even though studies confirm that SHLLs benefit from having a sociolinguistic understanding of language and power to build healthy linguistic identities, teachers in the study and at large are either lacking this knowledge or how to maintain critical self-reflection (Randolph, 2017, p. 283).

Students also have internalized ideologies that affect their concept of self as multilingual learners. Torres & Turner's (2017) study focuses on how the perception of ethnic identity impacts the SHLLs' motivation to use and maintain their Spanish. They confirm that language still plays a role in their identities as Latinx, but these students also reveal their anxieties and uncertainties in their Spanish language abilities (Torres & Turner, 2017, p. 842.) All the students in the study were motivated to become more proficient in Spanish and linked this motivation to the desire to communicate within their family or community and the pride they felt regarding their ethnic identity. Although this study critiques offering one level of heritage course that would intimidate the least proficient in language output (Torres & Turner, 2017, p.851), the

reality is that teachers and programs often must work within these constraints. The majority of Spanish classes are mixed classrooms where SHLL and L2 learners may have more points in common according to their language profile, but still have different affective needs (Carriera, 2018). In Leeman & Serafini's (2020) study, they analyze both SHLL and L2 students' perceptions of themselves and others in upper-level mixed courses at the university level, as well as their language ideologies and learner identities. Through the data collected from focus groups, each type of learner viewed the other as different. For instance, SHLLs viewed the language used by L2 to be more formal but also lacking in pronunciation and fluency, while L2 students viewed SHLLs as knowing more "slang" (Leeman & Serafini, 2020, p. 8). However, L2 learners viewed themselves as having more grammatical knowledge and helping SHLLs, which was not mentioned by SHLLs themselves. Regarding fairness, L2 students had more complaints than their counterparts, believing SHLLs had an advantage that required less effort. On the other hand, SHLLs believed they were held to a higher standard by their professors and thus felt a lack of fairness as well. In the end both groups reproduced and resisted dominant discourses, which is in line with previous studies. However, in this case, SHLLs expressed themselves to reject the deficit perspective and instead viewed themselves as guides for the L2 peers. Leeman & Serafini (2020) recommend continuing to use critical pedagogies to develop both student groups' critical translingual competence through the incorporation of sociolinguistic concepts (such as language variation and multilingualism) in both SHLL and L2 classes to challenge the status quo (Leeman & Serafini, 2020; Leeman & Serafini, 2016). More practices that affect SHLLs in both positive and negative ways in the World Language classroom need to be better understood to inform practice. For instance, Goulette (2020)'s ethnographic study looks at classroom discourse

between SHLLs and L2 learners in the same middle school classroom that reveals how proficiency grouping affects students' sense of self, offering both affordances and constraints.

Spanish Heritage and Mixed Classrooms

Carreira (2018) stresses that HLL and L2 have different needs regarding language, group-membership, and learning. However, Carreira (2018) is more optimistic about mixed classes where HLL and L2L can complement each other. Potowski (2018; 2002) believes HLL courses remain the ideal since the different approaches and experiences with language are so great, although separate courses are not always attainable. Even when differentiation in instruction, process, and outcome is achieved, the differences in strengths between students can result in a situation of intimidation (Potowski 2018). However, it is still not realistic for all programs to offer multiple SHLL courses. Therefore, Carreira & Chik (2017), suggest four instructional strategies to help differentiate in mixed classrooms: flexible grouping, homogenous mini-lessons, exit cards, and agendas (to be used during mini-lessons and for pacing.) When planned properly, students can learn from each other. Part of this plan is careful pairing of SHLL and L2 students. Some studies suggest matching dyads SHLL-SHLL and L2- L2 within a class since they are more prone to collaborating (Wall, 2018), others suggest pairing SHLL- L2 students of similar language proficiencies in which SHLL student have found confidence assisting their peers (Henshaw, 2015). Nevertheless, intimidation can still happen to either group whether it is the pressure to perform one's ethnolinguistic identity for heritage students (Pascual y Cabo, et al., 2020; Fernández Dobao, 2020) or the lack of confidence in their output of language for L2 learners (Burgo, 2017b; Bowles, et al., 2014). In Bowles's (2011) study, HLL and L2 learners equally benefited from each other when each had something to offer the other in their exchange through complementary knowledge or skill. After both types of students, but of similar

proficiency levels, have different “entry points” to the material, they can then come together with complementary tasks that allow each learner to improve in their greatest area of need (HL-writing and L2-speaking.) Bowles (2018) also highlights previous linguistic studies that focus on the outcomes of instruction, comparing HL and L2 language gains. These studies support that language instruction or interventions have different outcomes for these two types of learners because of different experiences in acquiring language (Correa, 2011; Potowski, et al., 2009). SHLLs may have an implicit advantage compared to L2s that have an explicit advantage with language that responds to targeted grammar interventions (Correa, 2011), but also have different affective needs than their L2 counterparts (Carriera & Potowski, 2004). Language gains in SHLLs then must work in tandem with more personal or individualized instruction that views the whole student and their motivations, attitudes, and identity (Bowles, 2018). Besides focusing on the skills, Carreira’s (2018) points to group-membership as being tied to identity and how HL and L2 learners could also benefit from separate conversations and then come together and learn different perspectives from each other, something that is reasonably possible in a mixed classroom. There is room in the research to determine how to achieve this without essentializing heritage students in the classroom, particularly if the class is disproportionate. This is an important gap since essentialization can contribute to damaging self-esteem, empowerment, and agency (Potowski, 2012, p.191).

The differences between second language learners and heritage language learners warrant a different entry approach (Carriera & Chik, 2018). HLLs need to see the “macro” which begins with experience (and thus is perceived as authentic) before the “micro,” that focuses on discrete aspects of language, vocabulary, and metacognitive grammar concepts. The “macro,” I argue, is more than an entry point, it is also the core of the HLL classroom. Although the belief to place

student experiences and identities in the heart of the heritage classroom is unanimous in the field (Leeman, 2011), there is still a need to see how this work can lead, in practical ways, to an increase of language and culture preservation, particularly in various grade levels, not just the post-secondary setting. Learning happens in what students can perceive as authentic contexts in which their experiences as individuals and as a class are represented and central to the class's goals (Correa, 2018; Lynch, 2003; Samaniego and Pino, 2000). Student learning can be understood through three realms: "autocultural" (about themselves), "intracultural" (about other groups in the US or other countries), and "intercultural" (the relationship between US races and ethnicities) (Aparicio, 1997). Because this type of knowledge is not uniform, the classroom becomes a space of identification with what is learned through self-reflection and exchange. Beneath the established distinction between HLL and L2 learners and providing for both types of learners, is how the field World Language and its subfield of heritage language education has responded to providing access for all learners through critical pedagogy. In essence the larger World Language field, including heritage language education, provides the path for future studies by aligning in the quest for social justice through its connection to critical pedagogies and culturally responsive teaching to achieve the development of critical consciousness and transformation for students (Dover, 2013; Glynn & Spenader, 2020). Beauderie (2015) proposes a classification of current classroom approaches in the heritage language classroom that range from traditional to most currently aligned with the critical approach. These critical approaches are informed by sociolinguistics and critical pedagogy and call for an examination of power in terms of language and its varieties (Leeman, 2005; Martínez, 2003), as I will review in more depth through critical language awareness in a later section. The goal of a teacher working within

the critical framework “is to provide students with analytic tools to identify the power relations encoded in the messages we receive ” (Parra, 2016, p.169).

Burgo’s (2017) essay on the role of culture in heritage instruction highlights how culture (both in its known and new forms) needs to be at the core of SHLL courses and thus culture should also be assessed through critical thinking and reflection. She suggests activities such as oral history interviews, autobiographies, use of pop culture, open discussions, critical debates, and scaffolding ethnographic research projects, similar to Correa (2011). Course goals and instruction that focuses on inquiry and creativity, such as the previously mentioned activities are at the center of SHLL agency especially because it connects learners to their cultural awareness and immediate communities in *real* ways (Beauderie, 2020). These activities would help implement a curriculum that emphasizes the cultural study of various Latino groups in the U.S. which matters most to SHLLs according to Potowski (2012; 2018). Linking activities to student identities makes work for the class contextual and uses meaning-making with the intention to include more learners, further develop evolving identities, and offer a way to uncover societal and personal injustice to create changemakers. As Beaudrie’s (2020) survey revealed, successful heritage programs allow students themselves to identify problems and then design solutions to meet those needs (p.426), much like Freire’s problem tree (as drawn in Walsh, 2018). The author also included pedagogical approaches, such as critical service learning (Lowther Pereira, 2015; 2022), the analysis of social structures in language (Leeman 2005), and use of technology for individualization (Henshaw, 2016), among others. Although best practices that connect SHLL’s to their communities has been established, more empirical research is needed to make these practices that prioritize culture over linguistic learning (Burgo, 2017a) without excluding mixed

classrooms (Randolph, 2022; Goulette, 2020), and within their larger program, applicable to teachers in different contexts (Beaudrie, 2020).

World Language Standards

Prioritizing cultures, communities, and the connections between them aligns with the research thus far and also allows students to gain agency through a critical approach in which diversity is also questioned and seen through a lens of power (Parra, 2020). These priorities are also found within the national standards for World Language from ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language, revised in 2015), which combine Common Core State Standards, College and Career Readiness, and the 21st Century Skills. Researchers that apply these standards, especially in mixed (SHLL-L2) classrooms (Randolph, 2017, 2022; Glynn, et al., 2014) use these standards, also known as the Five C's (communication, cultures, comparisons, community, and connections) to apply to all students, including heritage and ELLs (English language learners) in World Language courses. Although there are no SHLL only standards, the goals for heritage language instruction have been outlined and updated through the years (Valdés, 1995; Aparicio, 1997) that include: language maintenance, acquisition or development of a prestige language variety, expansion of bilingual range, transfer of literacy skills, acquisition or development of academic skills in the heritage language, positive attitudes toward both the heritage language and various dialects of the language, and its culture, and acquisition or development of cultural awareness (as cited in Beaudrie, et al., 2014, p.69). Without proposing new standards, Trujillo (2009) adds Freire's conscientização as an additional "C" and Carriera & Potowski (2004) add addressing linguistic insecurities (affective needs), dialectal differences and hybrid varieties (social needs). Instead of focusing on ACTFL's proficiency markers as standards (under the "C" of communication), Carriera & Potowski (2004)

suggest using ACTFL's Five C's and English Language Arts (ELA) standards, which aid in strengthening transferable literacy skills. In more recent work, Leeman & Serafini (2020) still suggest using ACTFL Standards that now mention heritage speakers but admit that the proficiency levels do not align well with many heritage speakers' nuanced profiles as defined by (Valdés, 1995; Zyzik, 2016). Potowski, et al. (2008) also notes the utility of College Board's Advanced Placement standards to guide spiraling content throughout students' pathways through the curriculum and WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment), which is more applicable to the K-8 bilingual education context since they are meant for native Spanish language arts. Overall, World Language classrooms exist within the paradigms and standards from ACTFL and thus World Language teachers start at this point and then, following research in World Language education, add on or adjust the standards they use to fit their students and include a social justice lens. For instance, Randolph (2017) compares the language of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (2006) to the World- Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (2015) as proof of a necessary evolution of the culture and community standards to go further into intercultural communicative competence, which Randolph (2017) links explicitly to critical pedagogies and social justice goals of language instruction. However, consensus has not been reached to determine what markers should indicate a heritage learner's proficiency (Potowski & Carreira, 2004; Beaudrie, et al., 2009; Valdés & Parra, 2018; Leeman & Serafini, 2020). Although there is an effort to address additive learning in HLL courses through these adjustments, more research is needed to normalize SHLL standards, while still permitting course goals to respect the uniqueness of specific (and not hypothetical) populations or geographies (MacGregor-Mendoza, 2020).

Bridging language and culture through culturally sustaining pedagogies

Language and culture are inseparable and in the case of heritage learners, they are also the vehicle needed to understand the self within a dynamic space (Tse, 2000; Norton, 2019; Kramersch, 1993; Trueba, 1993). The foundation of this relationship between language and culture is seen through critical sociocultural literacies, which progressively highlight inequities and the shifts in power that affect Spanish heritage students' multilingualism. In order to start from a place of student empowerment that can lead to action and change, a necessary precursor is for students to become aware and understand the urgency and loss of heritage languages in their context across a variety of social topics that matter to them. Building on their *funds of identity* (Poole, 2016; Hogg & Volman, 2020) within a *culturally sustaining* environment (Paris & Alim, 2017), students can become aware and explicitly voice the otherwise invisible societal norms that include language ideologies, which affect their development as multilingual and multicultural beings. By becoming aware and directly making creative decisions based on this awareness, students gain the agency to preserve and maintain as well as to reverse their language and culture attrition within a dominant culture of monolingualism.

Going beyond asset-based into sustaining

Although CSP can be traced back to asset-based theories that inform it, such as funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) and culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995), CSP sets itself apart from its predecessors by moving beyond the asset-based mindset by creating a space of transformation for students and their impact on their own communities (Paris & Alim, 2014). The transformation by and for students is an essential piece that cannot be overlooked in order to be considered a sustaining pedagogy. Paris & Alim (2014) refer to good intentioned goals at sustaining as “half-step asset-based pedagogies” (95). The warning of “half-stepping” is

foregrounded in subsequent CSP research. For instance, Rosa & Flores (2017) make sure that CSP is applied beyond the asset-based mindset and offer a raciolinguistic perspective as the asset-based classroom can only honor students' funds of knowledge "insofar as they contribute to the learning of 'academic language'" (175). In 2015, these researchers coined the term raciolinguistic ideologies and defined it as "the value of standard variation... which conflate certain racialized bodies with linguistic deficiency unrelated to any objective linguistic practices" (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 150). Therefore, even if racialized speakers ascribe to normative language, they are still seen as "linguistically deviant" by whites. Building on the effects of the white gaze, these authors work along with Paris & Alim (2014) who question what CSP looks like for youth of color if the goal of education is not simply to see how close students of color can perform White middle-class norms (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p.151). They identify that having a language arts focused curriculum, as supported by the standards, could still fall short of destabilizing the standard language and its link to power and whiteness. Teachers find themselves in a contradiction, which Rosa & Flores (2017) identify as both embracing an asset-based approach where HLL build upon their proficiencies developed outside of class and mastering the language that has been deemed appropriate in an academic setting (p.184). Similar to Rosa & Flores (2017) that offer raciolinguistics as a means to sustaining language, other studies, such as Dominguez (2017), employ the concept of decolonializing coloniality to better prepare pre-service teachers to effectively achieve CSP. Dominguez (2017) uses the term ontological distance, to "describe the dehumanizing distancing between subjects that emerges from uninterrogated coloniality," and questions how schooling through CSRP (culturally sustaining/ revitalizing pedagogy) can reignite "community wisdom" in how educators value evolving identities (p.225). Dominguez (2017) warns not to stop at simply promoting claims of

justice and equity through content. His essay focuses on ways to change teacher education to change these systems. The iterations of CSP add a much more critical perspective to the sociocultural approach where heritage language learners are still ultimately thought of metaphorically as Swiss cheese with holes in their knowledge (comparison taken from Carreira & Kagan, 2015; Carreira 2018). The contradiction of valuing students' experiences and knowledge while adding to them is a challenge that is necessary to dismantle the racialized hierarchy of language by also focusing on the listener and not just the speaker of the language (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p.186). It is only through this shift from educating the speaker to the listener that one can address the "gap" that also exists among students and communities that discriminate against others and perceive them as deficient due to using a stigmatized variation rather than the standard (Orellana, 2016). In a recent webinar, Flores (2022) explained that applying these empowering language pedagogies does not mean that "anything goes" and that those are misinterpretations of the research. Therefore, in the mixed and heritage Spanish classroom, CSP can be used to reignite marginalized, non-standard ways of knowing. When it comes to language use, students should be able to make informed and conscious choices knowing both valued and currently non-standard uses of language so that instead of replacing the non-standard with the prestigious one, they have the ability to choose (Flores, 2022; Loza, 2017; Martínez, 2003).

The role of translanguaging in sustaining language and culture

I turn to culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP) in order to prioritize students' identities and communities by creating the space necessary to allow students to develop and transform the systems they are in. This transformation promotes evolving ways of being Latinx rather than an imposition by what is systematically deemed as accurately or appropriately accepted as such. It

is this power shift that allows for critical sociocultural pedagogies to amplify new voices and perspectives that are often stigmatized if heard at all (Potowski, 2019; Rosa and Nelson, 2017; Valdés, 2015.) Studies that have used CSP as a framework in multilingual settings often widen the perception of language itself by referring to the person’s linguistic repertoire (Emerick, et al., 2020; Bucholtz, et al., 2017; Otheguy, et al, 2015) instead of separate languages that lack interaction. This view of language, the act of translanguaging, is understood as an action, the dynamic use of multiple languages. García (2009) states that translanguaging comes from the concept of transglossia that breaks with a separatist view of languages. Although she uses the example of dual language classrooms, all language classrooms in the US tend to operate within a monolingual aesthetic, even those in which students know more than one language. This is always true in the second language classroom, and thus it is perceived as most appropriate to spend the greatest amount of time in the target language. In the Spanish heritage classroom, similar to the dual language context mentioned, the language to be used is made clear to be Spanish, at times limiting how HLLs can express themselves in different settings deemed “appropriate and academic” (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Ironically though, the heritage classroom is a context that has the potential to allow translanguaging to take place: “It is important to understand that translanguaging is nurtured within instructional spaces that most often respond to separate language arrangements” (García, 2009, p.148). It is important to look at translanguaging, as the gerund suggests, as an active tool in the multilingual toolbox that responds to its context rather than the codification of being “academic”, “appropriate,” or not (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Allowing SHLL students to address both of their languages (their linguistic repertoires), in this case Spanish and English, creates a destigmatized space for their linguistic abilities to exist and prosper.

Studies that approach language and culture through CSP and within this critical framework, see translanguaging as “a skill not a mistake” (Bucholtz, et al., 2017, p.53). It is “the employment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages” (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015, p.283, in Bucholtz, et al., 2017). Through this definition, it can be seen as a tool of resistance. “Spanglish” or US Spanish is valued as an advanced bilingual ability to accomplish community goals.

In Bucholtz, et al.’s (2017) study, CSP is paired with action research in order to have post-secondary students see the fluid mixing of Spanish and English as an “advanced bilingual ability” as well as the interpreting or brokering that students do to translate for others in such contexts such as medical offices. The study focuses on two Latinx high school students in a university-community partnership program that guided students to acknowledge their entire repertoires of cultural and linguistic practices and understand how they can challenge the inequities around them. By the end of the program, the two students were transformed into activists and presented at the end of the year with a research team on bilingualism and multiliteracies, while standing up to hegemonic monolingualism. In Rosa & Flores (2017), two long-term English learners and Spanish heritage post-secondary students are interviewed and reveal the missed opportunities their instructors had to use CSP in practice. The authors push back against settling for a limited asset-based mindset and rather question what curriculum would look like if everyday language use from Latinx communities were incorporated and central to the learning process (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p.185.) The idea is making heritage learners' home language not just an asset, but essential and legitimate. The solution of marginalized language is not just adding to linguistic repertoires but instead to dismantle the

racialized hierarchy of U.S. society (186.) CSP engages in dynamic linguistic practices of language-minoritized Latinx students and raises questions about issues of language and power. Without the long-term effect, CSP would not truly be sustained, and this emphasis demonstrates the importance of deconstruction followed by transformation to create long-lasting change and accessibility. CSP is thus necessary in the SHLL classroom to prevent and rewrite the current status of language and culture loss as it also implies creating systemic changes within pedagogy that allow for sustainability, not just quick remedies that may not be lasting. In both the Bucholtz, et al. (2017) and Rosa & Flores (2017), university students use translanguaging in new areas such as a student-created translation club and in a graduation speech. In the case of the translation club, its existence lived on beyond the semester as well as the graduation speech in Spanish since a university policy had to change to allow this. These students created their own action projects that promoted change within their context and communities. In this process, students gain cultural capital in addition to impacting the structures that once limited them.

García-Mateus & Palmer's (2017) study of translanguaging in the dual language bilingual classroom further emphasizes the need for this linguistic third space to benefit students' identity development since identity is co-constructed through linguistic interactions and strengthening both language and identity can lead to school success. The study takes place at the elementary level for emerging bilinguals during language arts and social studies classes where students were exploring critical multicultural children's literature to foster critical discussions. Through thematic and discourse analysis, the researchers reveal how translanguaging in this context impacted students' "critical metalinguistic awareness as well as their identities" (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). The conversations stemmed from pair and group work that purposely paired students of different "native" languages and led to activities where students, for instance,

imagined and co-wrote alternative endings to the text, creating new texts that ended up using both languages to do so. Having students co-create through their entire linguistic knowledge supported the enactment of students' agencies in a way that purposeful pairing can in a World Language classroom between SHLL and L2 learners (Henshaw, 2022; Henshaw, 2015; Bowles, 2011).

In related qualitative studies, students had to become aware of language issues regarding access and its hierarchies to challenge and resist language practices and create new hybrid spaces. Prada (2019) reveals a double action whereby translanguaging challenges linguistic attitudes and ideologies, as it creates normalization and inclusion in a context that has traditionally been closed to such practices. These attitudes and ideologies related to language and thus culture and identity, require critical and explicit reflection. Flores & García's (2013) study analyzes two case studies in which two bilingual English teachers, with different proficiencies, use translanguaging between Spanish and English to create an alternative linguistic third space. Even in bilingual classrooms, this study proves that creating a third space goes against monolingual tendencies that separate languages from coexisting. Critical scholars, thus aim at breaking down the "nationalist/colonial language ideology" that we still feel remnants of today, even in classrooms such as bilingual schools or in my own context of SHLL education (Flores & García, 2013, p. 245). In Flores & García (2013)'s case study, where the English teacher was fluent in Spanish, she was able to include resources, such as songs centered around the same social justice topic in both languages and allow students to use their full linguistic repertoires, which the authors describe as fluid language practices, as they interacted. Although questions were posed in English about a Spanish song for instance, because the song was in Spanish, both languages were used to refer to the lyrics. The teacher with less proficiency, from a non-Spanish

speaking background, was able to incorporate planned instances of Spanish. However, students still influenced by “monoglossic language ideologies” did not see her as a Spanish speaker nor consider themselves legitimate English speakers (Flores & García, 2013, p.254). This study thus proves a need for critical awareness that includes instructors and students even (or especially) in bilingual settings, such as Spanish heritage or mixed classrooms.

The empowering role of critical language awareness

Critical language awareness (CLA) is “both a theoretical and pedagogical framework with the potential to correct the social injustices that SHLL scholars have long observed” (Beauderie & Loza, 2022). CLA came to add the critical aspect to language awareness, which is tied to the critical sociocultural approach that guides this literature review. With each layer between the sociocultural and critical frameworks, language and cultural awareness becomes more critical in depth with each iteration. Studies go from the recognitions of different standard variations of language to accepting language varieties without denying the access to “formal” or “appropriate” language (Martínez, 2003), to finally calling for the undoing of the varieties of prestige through CLA that can lead to empowerment, action, and thus sustained change. CLA accomplishes this by examining “how ideologies, politics, and social hierarchies are embodied, reproduced, and naturalized through language” (Leeman & Serafini, 2016). Thus, CLA is vital in World Language classrooms, particularly those that include heritage language learners, in effort to begin a process of conscientização that connects language with the society in which it exists. Developing consciousness of the status quo is essential in order to allow educators and students to gain agency and make informed actions. For this reason, I place CLA as the intermediary between culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP) and multiliteracies, informing curricular approaches to also transform students’ internalized interpretations of the status quo that causes

seemingly invisible limitations. My own research study seeks to contribute to the growing need of studies that address SHLLs (particularly involving young adults) and how both their language and cultural awareness can lead to an emancipatory education that positively impacts learners and their communities. It is through the dismantling of the systems that construct SHLLs as marginal that dynamic languages and cultures can be maintained and sustained.

Instructors should be aware that they “can assist students in deconstructing such essentializations and finding positive connections between their variety of Spanish and a healthy sense of ethnolinguistic identity” (Potowski, 2012, p.191). Beaudrie, et al. (2015) affirm that teachers need to understand the sociolinguistic perspective of language to equip students to be agents of change in society. A prescriptive notion of grammar cannot accomplish this since it reestablishes the power of the standard dialect, without the inclusion of non-standard dialects and its users, which is obtained through a descriptive grammar approach (Beaudrie, et al., 2015). In order to design courses for SHLLs to be successful, educators need to recognize their specific learners’ abilities and learning goals in order to do so, while also understanding their own internal linguistic biases. In practice, there is still much room to grow in the classroom.

Román, et al. (2019) conducted a survey of bilingual, heritage teachers by playing audio recordings of linguistic features found in the U.S. Spanish varieties (p.6). The negative reactions towards features such as code-switching indicate that critical implications still need to be instilled in teacher education as pre-service and continuing education focuses mainly on second language learners, who are taught the standard, dominant variant. In another study, Loza (2017) finds that even instructors that are more accepting of non-standard language varieties, have a more difficult time accepting these in the mode of writing. These studies indicate how there is more work needed to ultimately inform teaching resources, curriculum, and professional

development available to Spanish instructors that teach heritage students to make both mind shifts as well as changes of practice that affect students' development, in terms of identity, language ideologies, and most importantly, lead to greater Spanish heritage language maintenance.

The CLA explicitly built into the examples of translanguaging in the previous section point to a necessary step for sustaining SHLLs development that goes beyond an instructor's mind shift and approach to center the students' critical language awareness (CLA) (Leeman, 2018; Holguín Mendoza, 2018; Martínez, 2003). Bucholtz, et al. (2017) and Rosa & Flores (2017) describe a necessary critical language awareness component in the context of Spanish heritage courses. Students had to become aware of the inequities hidden in language use and cultural representation before they could then see ways in which their awareness could lead to not just a changed perspective but a call to active change that bolstered students' agency within their multicultural communities. Since identity is at the center of the crosswords between language and culture, there is a need to begin with the student in mind. It is the student in this context that can generate new third spaces for the future that have not been allowed by the status quo-abiding spaces in which they find themselves. This framework encompasses pedagogies that "encourage students to question taken-for-granted assumptions about language and to analyze how such assumptions are tied to inequality and injustice, with the ultimate goal of promoting positive social change" (Leeman, 2018, p.345). The critical socio-cultural foundation between these theories, CLA and translanguaging, contribute to a similar vision that education should both recognize learners' ways of knowing and empower the learner to create social change.

Understanding different contexts in which students are critically informed and ultimately transformed in ways that sustain SHLLs' agency is a current task and opportunity in the field to

grow. Showstack's (2012) study uses critical discourse analysis to examine how SHLLs in university Spanish language courses for bilingual students at the intermediate level in the southwest. The study reveals not only students' references to dominant language ideologies but more importantly how these play into how they describe themselves as speakers of Spanish, especially within the language classroom context. In a later study, Showstack (2017) examines layers of interaction between SHLLs in the language classroom. She draws upon linguistic notions of language ideologies and sociolinguistic approaches to examine stance, which she explains as the ideological perspective that SHLLs have towards language value and their language expertise. Both studies examine the development of students' discourse to identify the transformation of said stance, which is the overarching goal of critical socio-cultural work. Although Showstack (2012; 2017) adds qualitative studies to the field, future research is needed to examine implemented methodologies that allow students' perception of themselves and others as legitimate Spanish speakers in the US to evolve. Her use of stance and ideology intersects with critical language awareness (CLA), where CLA moves forward with not just identifying and revealing instructors and students' language ideologies, but explicitly teaching about them and allowing for critical reflection to transform them.

Following Leeman & Serafini's (2016) call to incorporate sociolinguistics within a critical approach to heritage language instruction, Holguín Mendoza (2018) establishes that CLA needs to be incorporated into the entire heritage curriculum to see its long-term effects. Her mixed-methods study incorporates CLA into six courses at the post-secondary level and uses both quantitative and qualitative data to measure its effectiveness. Most students did become more accepting of non-standard Spanish and even displayed acts of resilience and agency in the qualitative data by confirming that non-standard forms were used in their communities (Holguín

Mendoza, 2018, p. 75). As a first and exploratory attempt at applying CLA in a systematic way, Beauderie, et al. (2021) continue these efforts developing four modules that incorporate CLA throughout a semester of fourteen weeks. The final projects for each module move beyond informing to providing space for student agency for social change that ultimately allow students to make “their own decisions about language use and bilingualism” (Beauderie, et al., 2021, p. 65), such as creating bilingual poetry and conducting their own community-based research. Although the study mainly used a test-posttest methodology, some open-ended questions were also analyzed through open coding and revealed that students, like in the Holguín-Mendoza (2018) study, became more accepting of bilingual varieties, which have been proven to promote heritage language maintenance in the US (Bills, 2005; Silva-Corvalán, 2001 in Beaudrie, 2021, p.77). The modules are founded upon the precondition of consciousness to contribute to emancipatory discourse practice (Fairclough, 1992 in Beaudrie, et al., 2021, p. 65). Both the Holguín-Mendoza (2018) and Beaudrie, et al. (2021) studies pave the way for more studies that implement CLA in different contexts and analyze the implementation of methodologies as well as the discourse produced by students in the classroom in a variety of modes.

Critical awareness leading to action

Caraballo (2017)'s study employs critical meta- awareness to achieve a culturally sustaining curriculum, pedagogy, and research. Through narrative analysis, this case study examines how English language arts students in an urban middle school internalize or resist curriculum in writing portfolios, school documents, student focus groups, and semi-structured student and teacher interviews. Students and teachers tended to have clashing ideas of fostering motivation and agency. For instance, where students did not see true choice in free writing, teachers did. Caraballo (2017) ultimately argues for students to be recognized for their shifting,

dynamic, and multiple identities to be recognized in the school setting, which will enable the activation of both teacher and student critical consciousness that can then lead to action. Rooted in critical literacy's goal of creating citizens that analyze and change existing societal issues (Caraballo, 2017, p.601), the author suggests using YPAR (Youth Participatory Action Research) to accomplish the task of culturally sustaining pedagogy. More studies are needed then in fulfilling this task in different educational contexts, such as in the SHLL/ mixed classroom within World Language education. The study shows how these community-based concepts do not live in isolation and are united under the umbrella of critical language pedagogies that not only examine the role of power in existing monolingual structures but also foster student agency to undo the effects of the status quo.

In essence critical reflection leads to action as students embark on their own inquiry during the learning process. Borden (2022) addresses inquiry in stages she refers to as “guided inquiry” in the Spanish, intermediate proficiency classroom. Although SHLLs are not mentioned in the article, her approach is appropriate for most SHLLs at this proficiency level. By modeling these stages through a unit on Guatemalan culture and history, she shows how texts and activities are used to guide students towards reflection and development of their own questions. Borden (2022) cites Kuhlthau, et al. (2012) to present the inquiry stages: open, Immerse, Explore, Identify, Gather, Create, Share, and Evaluate (Borden, 2022, p. 144). At the “gather” stage, students can investigate their own resources and use the culmination of all the stages to create their own product, ranging from essays, short documentaries, news reports, articles, etc. Walsh (2018) and Irizarry (2017) use both YPAR and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy as frameworks for their studies. In both instances professors enter the secondary level to teach using this type of research for a semester and then work with students to put their learning into practice

in individualized ways. Irizarry (2017) also highlights how students used translanguaging in their process of using African American vernacular (AAVE) and Spanish as they began to view themselves as researchers. Both studies fall under critical pedagogies as they implement the critical praxis process, developed by Duncan-Andrade & Morrell (2008), where students go from identifying a problem to developing and enacting a plan of action that they later evaluate. This student driven inquiry incorporates Freirean problem posing and critical dialogue. The fact that students were only given this experience in both studies through the collaboration of both collegiate and secondary institutions indicates a trend of uniting these two contexts. These studies pave the way for CSP to be accessible for secondary educators and students by implementing this type of inquiry with younger SHLLs so that they can feel connected to their academics by making an impact on their communities as they continue to develop their own agency in the process.

At the secondary level, Mirra et al. (2015) use YPAR in an English classroom, allowing students to follow through a yearlong project as the class coursed through thematic units. The students interacted with texts in class while they also generated their own questions that required the instructor to respond with articles and theories that aided students' inquiry in developing research questions, reviewing literature, and proposing a data collection plan during the first semester. By the end of the year, students had completed their own surveys, interviews, and reflections that were then analyzed and presented. This study supports how research can become humanizing for students and enhance student agency in making their work personal and authentic. This framework also aligns with social justice teaching in World Language as supported through the national ACTFL World Readiness standards (Borden, 2022; Bocci, 2016). Bocci's (2016) study brings YPAR specifically to the World Language classroom and is able to

track students' progress in proficiency, following these national standards, and notes how YPAR is also best practice for SHLLs since it is learner-centered, cooperative, and responsive to students interests and needs (Bocci, 2016, p.459).

Ultimately, through critical pedagogies, youth involved in action research results in critical agency, which is defined as “the recognition of one’s ability to act, together with purposeful action or activity” (Leeman, et al., 2011, p.484). Furthermore, critical agency involves one’s own ability to take action, measuring its possible implications in one’s context (p.485). Exercising one’s agency to sustain communities is the goal for critical pedagogies and should be the lasting effect of education. Besides YPAR, Beaudrie, et al. (2021) also suggests there is a need for critical service learning (Lowther Pereira, 2022; Parra 2013; Leeman, et al., 2011) and other local and experiential learning where students can develop and negotiate their CLA. Leeman, et al. (2011)’s study presents action through critical service-learning that stresses identity and social activism in heritage language education. By responding to societal issues outside of the classroom, students establish a reciprocal relationship with the language community. The critical lens is essential in critical service learning to avoid a charity-based paradigm of service-learning (Leeman, et al., 2011; Lowther-Pereira, 2015; 2022). The project resulted from discussing the history of Spanish language activism itself, such as the Chicano student movements and the Bilingual Education Act in 1968 (p.486) to build consciousness. The critical underpinnings of this type of service-learning allow for students to gain expert and activist identities without resulting in an unethical consumption of the local community, which would result in stereotypes (Leeman, et al., 2011, p. 485). In this study, students were able to run an afterschool Spanish class for SHLL at a local elementary school. The authors highlight how students gained agency from feeling connected to their language use in the community as seen

later in other studies (Pascual y Cabo, et al., 2017; MacGregor-Mendoza & Moreno, 2016; Parra; 2013). Similarly, Lowther-Pereira's (2015) study continues this work with university SHLLs who participate within local community partnerships. Student reflections throughout the process revealed how students felt qualified and connected with and through their Spanish use and some noted the language variation between Spanish speakers they interacted with as well as the acceptance and usefulness of translanguaging. Other studies related to service learning (MacGregor-Mendoza & Moreno, 2016; Pascual y Cabo, et al., 2017; Parra, 2013) find a positive correlation between critical service learning and SHLLs' use of and confidence in their linguistic repertoires. It is important to note that all forms of community-based efforts, including action research and critical service learning, are connected through the value placed on breaking the barrier between types of knowledge (home vs. school; academics vs. community, etc). They focus on students' critical thinking, reflection, and transformation through content authenticity and solidarity development to benefit students and their diverse communities (Ruggiero, 2018; Lowther-Pereira, 2022). Admittedly, the logistics and relationship building between institutions and community partners is difficult (Parra, 2013; MacGregor-Mendoza & Moreno, 2016), but regardless of limitations, CLA, critical service learning, and YPAR add to community based critical pedagogies that empower students to sustain their state of reflection, action, and transformation.

Multiliteracies as means of action

As students become aware of the central role of their funds of knowledge, a culturally *sustaining* classroom environment (Paris & Alim, 2017) can provide ways for students to analyze and create new knowledge that adds to who they are without subtracting (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; NLG, 1996). To examine and develop this learning process, in this section, I turn to

Learning by Design as a Multiliteracies pedagogy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). The connections between heritage language education and second language acquisition is undeniable and this research is in debt to scholars before me (Samaniego & Warner, 2016; Zapata & Lacorte, 2017; Warner & Dupuy, 2018; Parra, 2021). In the section that follows, I first examine how multiliteracies has been used in the heritage classroom and how these recent studies call for more research in this area at the secondary level, highlighting methodologies and learning processes for both instructors and their students within a critical sociocultural framework. I also emphasize how multiliteracies connect to imaginative learning practices in order to allow students to use creativity in the preservation and maintenance of their languages and cultures, against dominant monolingualism.

Studies of multiliteracies pedagogy in the heritage classroom

Multiliteracies pedagogy was born in part out of sensitivity to the multiplicity of rhetorical and biographical experiences that learners were bringing to the classroom" (Samaniego & Warner, 2016, p. 199). Although World Language education is also moving towards a multiliteracies-based approach (Warner & Dupuy, 2018), using this framework is most significant for heritage language learners who find themselves in the in between. Thus, "by integrating critical awareness with design, multiliteracies pedagogy promotes learners' (re) construction of their hybrid or multiple identities in and across multiple genres" (Samaniego & Warner, 2016, p. 199). Based on New London Group (1996), multiliteracies opens what is considered academic by widening the definition of literacies to include everyday practices through multimodal texts (including the visual and spatial), the importance of cultural and linguistic diversity, critical and dynamic literacy, and multiple voices, that include hybridity and intertextuality. This framework allows students to become aware of their available texts and

create beyond them by thinking in multiple modes, communities of practice, home and community literacies, the effects of power, as well as the roles of race, culture, religion, and social class in literacy education (Rowse & Walsh, 2012, p.144). The theory of multiliteracies then takes a stance on knowledge itself that refines it as “what we do and make not just what is in our minds” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). Although research and curriculum development that applies a multiliteracies framework has taken place in the K-12 setting, such as in English or in L2 classrooms, and as of late, heritage language education has joined this trend since multiliteracies are supported by critical pedagogies.

Beaudrie and Loza (2022) divide heritage language educational trends into three basic waves, each more critical than the last. In the current wave, researchers are calling for both critical language awareness as well as multiliteracies, based on sociolinguistic principles of the value of difference in languages and their uses. Critical language awareness and multiliteracies pedagogy are united by their focus on shifting power from the language forms to the language users themselves. Lacorte and Magro (2022) cite Parra (2016) who suggests that the multiliteracies framework should be used to build critical reflections through a variety of texts that go beyond the written word (Lacorte & Magro, 2022, p. 31) with the goal to promote multiliteracies in antiracist heritage language teaching preparation. Multiliteracies, along the same lines as antiracist pedagogy, understands language to be more than a system of signs but “as a social practice that has the potential to inform us about the way in which experience are organized and identities negotiated while exposing racism,” with the goal to raise CLA in order to transform it into action and ultimately social change (Lacorte & Magro, 2022, p.30). It is also made clear that through these recent publications, there is a high need for heritage language instructors to design their own culturally sustaining curriculum by following the multiliteracies

pedagogy and Learning by Design processes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). In fact, according to Lacorte and Magro (2022), teachers themselves need to start with their own critical language awareness and lived experiences before conceptualizing and analyzing the state of heritage language education. This is a precursor to creating outside of the bounds imposed by limited views of literacy, which may be perceived positively as “academic.” For the purposes of my own research study, as an instructor and practitioner-researcher, I also move through these processes of knowledge to pre-plan, respond to the immediate, and reflect through the unit of study. This type of data, along with student productions, can shed light on how teachers can apply a conceptual framework that bridges different ways of knowing to better support students, their instructors, and their sense of community.

Before applying Learning by Design pedagogy in heritage language courses or mixed L2 courses at the secondary level, it is important to turn to recent university studies that could serve as models and inspiration for more research that establishes communication between practitioners and researchers (Torres, et al., 2017). These studies typically take place during the context of a semester course organized by modules that explore a topic such as family, immigration, traditions, and bicultural/ bilingual identities (Parra, et al., 2018; Zapata, 2018; Parra, 2021). Within these modules students approach a new topic from the vantage point of experience and this experience grows by adding the “new” to the “known,” and then follow with guided steps of “conceptualizing” and “analyzing” that often includes language structures in context and author’s intent, with the use of reflection and metacognition to establish a critical lens. Model texts are multimodal and connect under the same theme, traditional or classic readings with songs, film, poetry, art, as well as creative genres that blur the genre continuum (Samaniego & Warner, 2016; Parra, 2016; Parra et al., 2018; Zapata, 2018; Parra 2021). Using

digital (Zapata, 2018), artistic tools (Parra, 2018), or work in the community (Ruggiero, 2018) for instance, students produce work that responds to the unit or module of study that is personal and yet connects their prior experiences and knowledge to a larger concept explored in the class. Images, sound, and writing are used together to produce a reflection that is unique to its creator whilst it is accepted and belongs to the tapestry of the classroom community.

Although studies within heritage language education have looked to the multiliteracies framework through innovative research and practice, the most notable contribution has been Zapata & Lacorte's (2018) text dedicated entirely to multiliteracies within the Spanish heritage university classroom. In this text, Zapata (2018) shares her own study focused on a semester course organized by four themes, one being immigration. The unit detailed within the chapter details how students gained metalinguistic awareness as they improved their own narratives based on the known text *Cajas de Cartón*. All of the final drafts from the course were incorporated into an electronic portfolio that allowed for multimodal designs in students' responses to model texts. Zapata (2017), as in other studies, such as those by Parra (2021; 2013) follow the four epistemic moves from Cope and Kalantzis (2015): a) experiencing the known; b) experiencing the new; c) conceptualizing by naming; d) conceptualizing with theory; e) analyzing functionally; f) analyzing critically; g) applying appropriately; and h) applying creatively" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015, p. 4-5). Similar to Zapata (2018), Parra's (2021; 2013; Parra, et al., 2018) studies follow these ways of knowing to empower students to redesign and create from both "the experienced" and "the new" that grew from these personal experiences. Parra (2021) includes the goals of the course in which her study and her students' course work takes place. Naturally, the goals of the course align with critical pedagogies, critical language

awareness, and use the framework of multiliteracies to scaffold students' agency in their moment of re-design (NLG, 1996) and creative applications (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015).

Multiliteracies pedagogies is also connected to imaginative learning practices (particularly in that last step of Learning by Design from Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) in order to allow students to use creativity in the preservation and maintenance of their languages and cultures, against dominant monolingualism. For instance, Parra (2021, 2013) incorporates art, such as visual representations, to go along with other student generated texts, allowing students to express their own individualized learning that starts with their experiences and ends with a sustained curiosity and transformation that values their language, culture, and thus empowering their acts of agency. In Parra (2021) specifically, she includes various modes such as visual art, poetry, literature, and songs in each unit before students design their final projects that result in creative writing assignments that are accompanied by artistic artifacts. Students create, inspired by their own experiences and those built upon these experiences (such as translanguaging and identity development) in the course. Without ignoring traditional literacies that are mostly focused on written text, the studies mentioned previously (Parra, 2021, 2013; Zapata, 2018) prove that SHLL students can expand what a written genre looks like and moreover creatively apply their learning in real and meaningful contexts. Ultimately this framework allows for the incorporation of concurrent critical pedagogies and theories that stem from those discussed thus far (CSP and CLA) to achieve both access to “genres of power” but also the agency to change and re-design by consciously responding to the awareness of their cultural experiences (Samaniego & Warner, 2016, p. 207).

Concluding Remarks

The connections between language, culture, and community are essential to the World Language classroom, and for SHLLs, in a more personal, urgent way. As critical pedagogies are applied in this setting, more support is needed for future and current instructors in the field as they continuously learn how to best respond to the interests and needs of the students before them. By situating the World Language field, and SHLLs within it, it becomes even more clear that learning, maintaining, and developing a language is far from neutral and requires the language education classroom to provide “the ideal context for entering critical, transformative spaces of culture and community study informed by a social justice framework” (Randolph & Johnson, 2017, p. 101). Moving past “half-stepping” and good intentions (Paris & Alim, 2014), asset-based theories, specifically CSP that sustain language and culture through student agency, reveal that there is a reason we speak of critical pedagogies as plural and non-static as ways to match multilingual learners. These pedagogies are interconnected and do not offer one answer but offer avenues that place students in the driver’s seat of their education. CSP reveals how other theories, such as translanguaging, action research, and service learning, among others detailed in this literature review, require a process of critical awareness through language and are multifaceted. This critical awareness through a process of inquiry, supported by multiliteracies, engages students in *real* issues of equity that not only achieve language and social justice standards and goals, but allow students to surpass them by *responding* to them. Even though I am in many ways continuing the work of the field of both World Language and its subset, heritage language education, there is a need to realize alternative ways of teaching SHLL and L2 students from the stance of a practitioner-researcher in a variety of contexts. Just as critical pedagogies do not present a panacea to social inequities, research in this area needs various

applications to highlight how to respond to one's particular context. In this position, research can support SHLLs' agency and multilingualism by recognizing alternate ways of knowing and learning while it works to unravel long-standing transnational systems of oppression and the internalization of them that schools, communities, students, and instructors also quietly perpetuate.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

As mentioned previously in chapter one, heritage language education is a matter of social justice. The pursuit of this study then aligns with creating a more inclusive educational system. Regardless of which school system heritage speakers find themselves in throughout the nation, maintaining the language and culture of locations outside of the United States within its territorial bounds becomes an act of resistance to the "melting pot" of assimilation. Heritage language students find themselves in the "in between" of hybrid transnational locations that at times are perceived as partial or incomplete. I situate my project within this tension that Spanish heritage learners navigate in their schooling, including Spanish classes, to further develop different areas of their identities as members of various communities and ultimately to maintain and grow their heritage language and culture. As a teacher and researcher, I look to create change within the imperfect context, finding ways to make the "unofficial" spaces I have encountered through student interactions more deliberate in order to empower heritage language students to take ownership of the progression of their life-long journey to defining and defending who they are and what roles they want to serve within their communities and immediate context.

The purpose of this practitioner inquiry case study is to understand how Spanish heritage learners' agency, within the context of advanced secondary courses, is reinforced and developed

through both the exploration of social justice topics that affect Latinx communities and the creation of identity artifacts with a real audience in mind. These artifacts are embedded in students' own inquiry-based project where they can creatively apply (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) what is discussed, reflected upon, and acquired within the space of the classroom. By including personal experience and people in students' lives both inside and out of school, students used their funds of knowledge to create their own analysis and personal artifact that respond to the social justice issue of interest. A curricular framework was implemented that cycled through topics of language, culture, empowerment, and action when confronting social issues where ultimately students could reflect upon relatable stories (lived experiences) and express their own as a response to their learning and growth. By creating a space to honor voices of resilience, students were called to respond—to act to create awareness—and change in the process of reflecting on themselves.

Students in this study were in a dual-enrollment course, which grants them access to college credit in an Intermediate Spanish composition course. The course also serves as an optional Capstone requirement, where students presented their research and findings at the end of the school year. Although there are key units of data that I collected throughout the year, I also tracked the development of students' projects during each quarter of the school year since these are imposed markers for students, teachers, and stakeholders. I used the following research questions to analyze student reflections, interactions, and artifacts that respond to others' stories as well as their own identity texts and overall development of their year-long projects. The first question functions as an “umbrella question” that is followed by three specific sub-questions: In what ways do Spanish heritage language learners and their teacher engage with diverse experiences centered on social justice themes that affect Latinx communities?

- a. How does a Spanish heritage language teacher use a reflective practitioner stance to deepen students' critical awareness?
- b. How do students' own storytelling reveal their socio-critical awareness developed within the classroom?
- c. What happens when the process of learning is emphasized over its product in the classroom?

Qualitative Research Approaches

Since this study takes place within my own classroom where I am both teacher and researcher, I take on a practitioner inquiry approach in aims to theorize my work within the classroom. In other words, I am using my own practice as a site for research, which is one of the practitioner inquiry genres identified by Cochran-Smith & Lytle (2009). However, “teacher research is not generally part of what is considered normal work of teaching and calls attention to the fact that research about teaching is an activity usually carried out but someone other than a teacher” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 45). Thus, most of the available genres within practitioner inquiry are dominated by post-secondary researchers and often involve collaborations with local schools (Irizarry, 2017; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; McLaughlin, et.al, 2006). This study speaks to the need for more educational research from practitioners, in my case teachers themselves. By blurring the boundaries between identifying issues affecting Spanish heritage learners and implementing changes, this approach supports the aims of this project to create spaces for heritage learners from within parameters that primarily focus on second language learners. In broad strokes, practitioner inquiry “is about generating a deeper understanding of how students learn—from the perspective of those who do the work. The larger project is about enhancing educators’ sense of social responsibility and social action in the

service of a democratic society (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p.58). Specifically, Cochran-Smith & Lytle (2009) define practitioner inquiry within “inquiry as stance,” which “involves a continual process of making current arrangements problematic, questioning the ways knowledge and practice are constructed, evaluated and used; and assuming that part of the work of practitioners individually and collectively is to participate in educational and social change” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 121). The approach for this study is ultimately the inquiry as stance posture from the inception of noticing a social justice issue within a World Language program to the iterative process of refining and evaluating ways in which Spanish heritage students can be recognized for their *funds of knowledge*.

This practitioner inquiry aligns with the case study approach within qualitative research. A case study is characterized by being “bounded,” “a single or collective case”, and “an event, process, program, or individual” (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 96). This study is bounded by many factors since it takes place in specific classes in a specific program with Spanish heritage learners in mind. Working with an initial cohort of 23 students, this study is also bounded by the specific heritage learners in this course. Most of the data used for this study is also situated during a limited amount of time (one school year). Case studies also collect in-depth data from multiple sources (Creswell, 2013 in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since this study requires different levels of student reflection and interactions with the instructor and other students, student and teacher artifacts were systematically collected throughout the entirety of the study. Individual conferencing also took place and was recorded through notes and teacher feedback which is organic to this classroom setting.

Role of the Researcher

My role within this study is best described as a practitioner- researcher since the students I interacted with were my current students, many of which I had in class for multiple school years since starting the Spanish heritage pathway at the secondary level during their freshman or sophomore year. Practitioner inquiry “enables practitioners to engage in structured inquiries that are directed towards knowledge generation; it helps practitioners to gain formative insight into what concerns or confuses us, what aspects of practice are most challenging and rewarding, about our roles as supporters, advocates, collaborators and change agents, about the parameters, possibilities, and constraints of our work settings”(Ravitch, 2014, p.6, citing Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Thus, my stance as a practitioner- researcher carries the responsibility to engage students in deeper learning that awakens social consciousness and strengthens their sense of identity in the process. Inquiry as stance also goes beyond the scope of this project; it refers to a long-term and consistent mindset intended to be lifelong (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Therefore, this dissertation captures, within a unit of study, what is really a much longer process that has become a practitioner-researcher mindset rather than an applied technique.

As established in Chapter 1, my own identity and background as a Spanish heritage speaker and my student experiences within the education system not only led me to become an educator but are also integral to my pursuit of this project. The personal element of my investment as well as my hybrid role as a practitioner- researcher required me to maintain reflective practices that could respond to data in ways that, above all else, would benefit student learning and engagement. It was through these practices, such as questioning the existing curriculum for linguistically diverse students, that led me to this project in the first place. Thus, my role in this study is simultaneously one of practice and inquiry, in which I theorize my own

practice as a teacher. Although practitioner or teacher research has gained more traction since the 1990s, Martell, et.al (2021) highlight that there still exists a need for “knowledge-of- practice,” which includes the theorization of practice by practitioners.

The hybrid emic and etic perspectives practitioners possess becomes a position in the field that can also shape the state of the field while they are immersed in it. The practitioner researcher takes on the dual role of being an insider with the access to capture the emic perspective (Pappas, et al., 2011) but also a researcher reflecting and reporting on their own experience, which captures the etic perspective (Fetterman, 2010). This unique position aids in providing an in-depth understanding of a case, which is the goal of case studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

As explained further in the section “Data Analysis Procedure” of this chapter, to accomplish this, there needs to be a systematic investigation of my own practice as part of my empirical process (Green, et.al, 2006; Campbell, 2013; Ravitch, 2014; Babione, 2015). In fact, practitioner research is not “a process that teachers engage in from time to time, but a way of understanding and enacting ethical practice, wherein professional formation is shaped reflexively through the learning that takes place across the realms of research and practice” (Mockler, 2014, p. 156). To properly analyze my unit of study of Spanish heritage students, I must simultaneously engage in reflexive methods that allow me to track my ethical decision making (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012; Campbell, 2013; Babione, 2015).

Context and Setting of the Study

Practitioner inquiry should always be a direct response to its context (Gilchrist, 2018; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Therefore, this study does not offer a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, but one which needs to acknowledge context and be shaped and adjusted in light of this”

(Gilchrist, 2018, p. 135). This study takes place at a 6-12 public magnet school in the state of Connecticut, where I have taught as a Spanish high school teacher since the fall of 2015. I have chosen this setting because there is a significant population of students that identify as Latino/Hispanic (roughly 35%) and nearly all of these students take Spanish courses. It is important to note that this population is not homogenous and breaks down into different nationalities, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The majority of the Latinx/Hispanic students (as categorized on school forms) come from Puerto Rico, however this is quickly followed by Perú, Colombia, la República Dominicana, Ecuador, México, Guatemala, Honduras, Chile, Argentina, and Cuba (in respective order). It is not surprising that most students have Puerto Rican roots or have migrated from the island to Connecticut. Puerto Ricans have been migrating to the state in large numbers since after WWII and Hartford, the state's capital, is considered one of the largest Puerto Rican communities in the US. Typically for this reason, there is the widest variety in language proficiency among students with family from the island since I have students that are second or third generation along with those who migrated and settled in Connecticut in recent years. Most of the other countries mentioned represent newer immigrants and typically tend to be first generation students born or at least educated in the US.

Since Spanish is the only World Language offered at the school, Spanish heritage students were automatically placed in higher-level Spanish courses (typically starting at level 3) through the 2018-2019 school year. However, even at a higher level, most of the existing courses follow a second language acquisition curriculum that is not tailored to the heritage learner. Since the 2019-2020 school year, I began to offer Spanish heritage classes that now have two levels followed by dual-enrollment courses in writing and conversation through a state university. It is within the culminating dual-enrollment course, where both heritage and second language learners

meet, that this study took place to observe how heritage students further develop their identities during the process of gaining socio-critical awareness about issues that impact Latinx communities and the empowerment to respond to those that affect them. My practitioner research benefits not just my own practice but ultimately the curriculum and professional development of the district's Spanish heritage classes as the Spanish heritage level I and II courses have begun in two other High Schools in the magnet district.

Working in a nontraditional magnet district, along with having a large enough population of Spanish heritage students to serve, has allowed me to propose the existence of the aforementioned courses, however the sustainability of the courses and the replication across the district at times feels like a delicate endeavor during “trying times.” Referring to the graph “Practitioner Research in Trying Times,” Cochran-Smith & Lytle (2009) highlight the different paths taken during practitioner research that often respond to their context by advocating for equity against the established educational structure. I identified with one of the trajectories, which reveals the crevices in which equity still needs to be sought by practitioners within the system, even within a school district that identifies as a social justice organization. The magnet district in which this study takes place is not immune to the nationwide political pressures to elevate science (STEM) education over the humanities. Although I am not sharing the names of our schools, most are geared towards math, science, and computer science as ideal ways of knowing. Therefore, I chose this context as my starting point. Proposing for more resources and investment into the World Language department does not stand as a priority, which is not necessarily a critique as much as a reality in which this study exists. As I follow through the graph, I can eventually reach through my context of study, an active role in offering more inclusive “views of knowers and knowledge” that at times must push “back against constraints”

to “develop a conceptual framework” for “democratic and social justice ends” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p.7, Fig.1.1).

I also find it necessary to address that this study takes place during an unprecedented and difficult time in education after the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. During a time when teachers are misunderstood and undervalued in combination with chronic fatigue from adults and students alike, this study responds to the unprecedented “pandemic of education” that has left students, especially the most vulnerable, disengaged, and apathetic about school. In efforts to teach “what really matters,” this study aims to respond to this lateral “pandemic.” Instead of viewing the perceived student apathy as an obstacle, I view the need for student engagement to be a true urgency and an opportunity to teach and research differently. This study is responding to this need by providing space for students to feel connected to their education through their identity development and community membership with the aim to make their experiences in the classroom meaningful.

Study Participants

Although I teach a Spanish heritage learner, level II, course as well as my second language learner courses, the data I collected for this project is from one mixed (SHL and L2) learners’ course. This is the highest-level course available at the school and is the final course offered to join two tracks or pathways for the first time. As a prerequisite, most students in the course either took Spanish II- IV as second language learners or have taken Spanish for Heritage Speakers I and II before being admitted during their junior or senior year to take this course. A few students blended these two pathways due to being language learners of varying proficiency levels. Most of the students I have taught at least one year before this course, and most Spanish heritage learners that started in the program as freshman have now been my students for three or

four consecutive years at the end of this school year. However, not all the heritage students in the school are able to take part in this class or even in the pathway designed for Spanish heritage learners due to the resources available and scheduling conflicts. For this reason, the study is bounded by a narrow definition (Valdés, 2001) of what it means to be a heritage learner, which requires language output in addition to input comprehension (albeit of a variety of proficiency levels).

Most students in this course enrolled for ECE (Early College Experience) through a local state university, which offers them 3-college level credits, and/or are interested in taking the course for its Capstone (independent year-long project) element. This is the first year that the high school offered a humanities course in Spanish to fulfill this graduation requirement in efforts to disperse Capstone requirements to each discipline divided into departments. The class totaled 26 students at the start of the school year, reduced to 23 students who completed the course, and 16 of these students were heritage language learners of different proficiency levels. Six of these students were taking the course solely for the opportunity to complete a Capstone in Spanish since they already achieved college credit the previous year through the ECE program in Spanish. Ultimately, 17 students accepted to be in the study. This number includes 13 Spanish heritage language learners. Independent reflections, artifacts, and teacher-student conferences, as well as more collaborative group and class work were collected. Using this data, I first analyzed the course and the entirety of its members, through each interconnected unit of study. However, to achieve an in depth understanding, proper of a case study, I selected three participants to analyze in more detail. This smaller group of students was selected through purposeful sampling, which entailed me choosing information-rich cases that most correlate with my qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2015, p. 53). It was important for me to select focal students that met certain

criteria. Although students in the course included second language learners, students chosen were all be Spanish heritage language learners, even if they varied in proficiency levels (from intermediate low to advanced low), as determined by ACTFL (American Council of Teaching Foreign Language). Since this was a study that took place over the entirety of the nine-month school year, students also had to complete the determined milestones within the course that led to the final project to track their progress and reflection throughout both semesters. The focal students selected also portray different perspectives, particularly in how they approach sharing their own stories that fuel their research, how they reflect in the process of the course, and how they decide to respond to a selected issue with their own research. These criteria were defined in conjunction with the research questions that guided this research study. Since this study explored diverse experiences, maximum variation was used as a sampling strategy that highlights different experiences to answer research questions in a qualitative case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The focal students' work is closely analyzed in Chapter 5.

Data Collection Procedures

Data within a practitioner inquiry study can be very broad and include student work of any type ranging from drawings to dramatic play to essays as well as journals and self-reflections by practitioners (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). However, data collection in practitioner inquiry is collected in an orderly fashion, where experiences are systematically recorded from both within and outside of the contexts of practice and with intentionality, rather than in a spontaneous fashion (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006). Countering the perceived importance of standardized data, this qualitative, practitioner inquiry case study offers "the systematic examination and analysis of students' learning (and other educational outcomes and issues) juxtaposed and interwoven with systematic examination of the practitioners' own intentions,

reactions, decisions, and interpretations" (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006, p. 511). This study exists within these parameters which thus required me to reveal both my systematic and intentional approach to collecting data.

The data collection took place in the ECE/ Capstone Spanish course throughout the school year which is organized into a quarter system. Each quarter is regarded as a separate unit that offers a different entry point for students to interact with social issues that affect Latinx communities, while allowing students to layer their self and community-based reflections as they design their own inquiry, “Capstone,” projects in the process that interact with the units of study. As seen in Table 2 below, the work collected followed a cycle that ranges in frequency and allowed the practitioner to continuously engage with the data throughout the course.

Table 2
Data Collection Timetable

Source of Data	Data Collection	Frequency	Approximate Dates
Classroom observations	Field notes and teacher journal	Daily (approx. 3 times per week)	September- May
Teacher artifacts	Lesson plans and teacher journal	Weekly	September- May
Student artifacts: Student journal entries	Daily writing in class notebook/ handouts	Daily (approx. 3 times per week)	September-May
Student artifacts: Digital notebook reflections	Web-based submissions	On-going (2-3 per quarter)	As submitted, approximately once every 2 weeks
Student- teacher conferences	Field notes and teacher journal	On-going (two weeks each quarter)	As submitted 1-2 times per quarter
Student artifacts: Unit presentations	Web-based submissions; in-class	Once per quarter that builds on previous	Personal narrative (11/4)

	presentations	work	Argumentative writing: letter (1/26) Argumentative writing: comparison (4/6) Capstone Project with analysis (6/1)
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All students in the course followed the classwork cycles as noted, which entailed quick writes using their notebook at the start of each class and to take notes on observations made during group work, in addition to any hand-outs meant to aid with the exchange of information with other students in the class. Students also submitted all web-based work through Schoology, our school’s learning management system (LMS). These submissions included digital notebooks and choice boards that store unit texts and students’ reflections about their connections to them after completing group work. Any data collected through Schoology was later anonymized and securely stored in a computer that requires three levels of passwords to reach each document. Each week, I kept my digital lesson planner up to date with notes on changes or observations as well as my teacher journal which includes weekly reflections, classroom observations, and my own quick writes during our class routine. All data were housed in a data catalog to facilitate data analysis and kept an audit trail of my memos, notes, and ultimately codes. Reflective notes were kept in separate columns to show my own progression in analyzing the data in a spiral fashion.

Classroom Observations

Observations take place in the setting being studied and through a firsthand encounter (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since this study took place within a classroom where I was the teacher, my observations began in real-time as I intentionally planned an overview of lessons, rearranged the layout of the room for an activity, jotted notes on how particular lessons need to

be adapted, adjusted my decisions due to limits of time. Classroom observations also occurred during the “in between” spaces of class, such as a quick exchange with a student until the next bell rings or an interaction after school. Thus, observations took place before, during, and after instruction itself.

Classroom observations allowed me to address my research questions in order to see both process and product. Although students produced individual artifacts that would be analyzed, classroom observations allowed me to see how my interactions with students and the level of interaction within classmates informed their products. School policies allowed for video or audio recordings to aid in the improvement of instruction and the district as well as the students were made aware of my use of audio recording. I used audio recordings of group work in addition to group conferences to see students building relationships with one another as they related to the perspectives highlighted in the course through their own lived experiences. However, even though I captured some interactions through audio recordings of classroom discussions, most of the richest data came from students’ individual reflections and work.

To establish an observation protocol as a teacher- researcher, I applied the checklist of six elements provided by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) for researcher observations: the physical setting, participants, activities and interactions, conversations, subtle factors (such as informal and unplanned activities), and my own behavior (p.141). My fidelity to this process, especially since this study took place over an entire school year, was to collect my observations each week and take time to reflect further. Transcribing and moving notes into a digital format allowed me to take double-sided notes that are not possible during or directly after a lesson. Although teacher reflection is considered good practice, the reality is that I had to fit most of it in after my

contractual hours, making this study also a way to advocate for the restructuring of teacher responsibilities to follow best practices within professional (not personal) time.

Student Produced Artifacts

As laid out in the student syllabus, each quarter was both self-sufficient and interconnected with the other units. Likewise, student-produced artifacts were cyclical within each unit. Journal entries called “Diarios” were typically short writing assignments completed during class time often in the physical class notebook, which was stored in the classroom. These “Diarios” followed the norms for “quick writes” which instructed students to write as much as possible in the time allotted (5-8 minutes, depending on the prompt). Students then shared with a partner or small group part of their quick reflection and were allowed to make edits before using this prompt to guide the lesson for the day.

Students also engaged in Digital Notebooks that collected texts under each theme of the course: Unit 1: Education and Identity; Unit 2: Activism from Latin America to the US; Unit 3: The Environment and Technology; Unit 4: Emotional and Physical Health. Since these notebooks were digital, they allowed for mixed media and collected reflections after group work and class discussions that also explored different genres and research methods (such as interviews, essays, slam poetry, music, etc.).

All of this guidance and thematic exploration allowed students to review their classwork when assigned a final project for each unit that represented at least one section of their culminating Capstone project. Each final project was a multimodal presentation that engaged with a genre of writing while going beyond the written text. These presentations went through an editing process that allowed for peer editing and student-teacher conferencing before “gallery walk” presentations, where multiple students presented at the same time at different stations. The

final project for each quarter ultimately informed the Capstone Presentation that stored the culminating process of each unit and the final digital presentation. In this final project, students condensed their connection to the chosen project (taken from quarter 1), a preliminary literature review (taken from quarter 2), a comparative element within their literature review (taken from quarter 3), a description of their data collection (taken from quarter 4), and finally a brief analysis and reflection (taken from quarter 4).

Although I planned specific milestones for students during each quarter of the year, the reality is that I remained flexible. This was the first time that I ran this course with this redesigned syllabus, and I had to make the necessary changes that best served my students at the given moment. I will go into detail about these decisions in Chapter 4. It was also the first time that I taught a Capstone course that entailed students' own inquiry process, and this learning curve affected the adjustments needed along the way. Finally, there were elements out of my control as a teacher and my response to them required me to prioritize students over my research goals.

Practitioner Artifacts

Practitioner inquiry data can include an array of documents that uncover information about a particular setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). For this reason, my own documentation, such as the changes that I made on my syllabus document in addition to my digital lesson planner were essential for me to keep track of changes as well as my teacher journal which was a supplement to these documents. The syllabus document for each unit gives a holistic overview of each quarter, but when organizing students' digital notebooks to go along with lessons, I made the necessary changes. For instance, in Unit 1, I adjusted the order of listed activities. I kept track of changes and notes on a digital copy of the syllabus with the comment feature on Google Docs.

I also used my teacher journal to sketch my lessons and activities, as well as to take part in the quick-write portion of class as a participant. Although I often had to tend to interruptions during this time, such as phone calls, late passes, and attendance, even unfinished writing allowed me to connect with my students through this form of participation. My journal does not allow for double-sided notes, however, when I transferred data to a digital format, I was able to take notes on what I was observing that I expected or not and what I learned as I continued making decisions for other classes.

Student-Teacher Conferences

Student-teacher conferencing occurred during the last two weeks of a quarter and/or as the due dates for final or summative assignments approached. Here students were supposed to fill out a form identifying what they have learned through their individual and peer revision process and identify what questions or concerns they have for their teacher. However, instead of filling out a form, in practice, I found that interacting with students in real-time built rapport and helped students receive more feedback. By following a workshop model, I met with students in pods by where they were seated. Here, I would check-in with students and ask guiding questions with related follow-up questions, as seen in Table 3 below. In retrospect, to improve this process, I would like to use a short form as an “exit-slip” where students could write to recap our conversation and write lingering questions.

Table 3

Dialogue and Reflective Conferencing Protocol

Guiding Questions	Related Follow-up Questions
What stage of the writing process are you at?	Explain your process to me. How has it been challenging?
What have you added/ adjusted since your last re-read or peer review?	Explain how/ why you made these adjustments.
What questions do you have for your teacher?	How have your interests/ questions/ project changed since we last conferenced?
What are your next steps after this conference?	How do you feel moving forward with your project?

Even though my initial plan was to have a written record of these questions. Now I see that doing so verbally increased teacher-student connection, but I also think it would have been beneficial to record our conversation in a written form that students could use to support their projects. This record could be used as individualized agendas during independent work time. These conversations were not audio recorded since it could have inhibited the process and would not seem natural or relaxed for the students. As a teacher, however, I kept my own list of suggestions and action steps per student on a running list that I later used to journal on cases that stood out for different reasons. In addition to conferencing during class time, I took copious notes on interactions with students outside of class. When students accepted to conference during a research block, lunch, or in the minutes after class, a different dynamic was achieved between teacher and students, which is further explained in the data analysis of Chapters 4 and 5.

Data Analysis Procedures

As noted by Creswell and Poth (2018), data analysis happens in a cyclical or spiral fashion, rather than linear (p.187). Analysis begins from the moment data is collected (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Grbich, 2006), which I was not an action foreign to me as a teacher. Going a step further as a researcher, I had to be systematic about this type of reflection to analyze data with validity. As I collected data and made decisions to continue the course and study, I was

implementing data analysis as a teacher-researcher. My journaling and lesson planner documented the entire process of analysis and added to the corpus of data to be further analyzed in relation to the growing amount of data collected. Therefore, I was familiarizing myself with the data during preliminary analysis as part of an on-going analysis (Pappas, et al., 2011). At the end of the year, I began to analyze the final Capstone projects and that were the most recent. Since I was interested in answering how students reached this point to showcase their journey, along with mine as their teacher, I started back at the beginning of the year to analyze each unit and its artifacts in order. This decision mirrored the course where each unit moved the students' projects forward while interacting with content-based units.

For the overall study, I used thematic analysis to recognize patterns from the multiple data sources for interpretation to achieve triangulation. Student data was analyzed using six recursive steps as outlined in Table 4 (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Each unit of data was organized on a spreadsheet where excerpts were added as well as codes in order to have a digital code catalog. A column was reserved for current reflections of the data to highlight tensions, connections, and surprises. I used this form of double-sided notes in my teacher journal as well. Besides aiding me in the analysis process, it also serves as part of my audit trail.

This study is a case study, bounded within the limits of my course, ECE Spanish. I began analysis of all students in the course that accepted to be in the study, which led to a preliminary analysis through my practitioner reflection, which is reflected in Chapter 4. As I continued to spiral through the data, I chose three focal students through maximum variation sampling to highlight different perspectives within the journeys through the course (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

To analyze classroom observations, field notes, and my teacher journal, I combined the reflexive aspect of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) with inquiry as stance (Cochran-

Smith & Lytle, 2015). My notes, journal reflections, and preliminary evaluation of student work throughout the study formed part of my ongoing analysis (Pappas, 2011). I used a reflective process that was not only essential for the final report of the study, but also meant to be used in action where inquiry was directly affecting my practice. Ongoing interpretations were collected as data summaries that evolved as more data became available. These data summaries included notes about the (1) context, (2) the data details, (3) the arising questions, and (4) the following action steps (Pappas, et al., 2011). Thus, data summaries stored in my teacher journal and data catalog documented the decision-making behind curricular adjustments and the spiraling of creating and defining codes and themes.

Table 4 below aligns research questions with the theoretical concepts that inform them along with the data sources and analytical approaches, which portrays the essential layering necessary to establish a sound study (Lochmiller, 2021; Peel, 2020). Peel (2020) presents a research inquiry framework in which research questions lie in the center and maintains a connection to each part of the study from identifying the issue to collecting and analyzing the data, in this case thematically. Therefore, although this chapter focuses on the procedures to obtain the study’s data sources and later the analytical approaches used to analyze them, these must be rooted in the research questions. I used this table to ensure the validity of the study from the planning stages to the analysis stages ending in this report.

Table 4
Research Questions, Data Source and Analytic Approaches

Research Question	In what ways do Spanish heritage language learners and their teacher engage with diverse experiences centered on social justice themes that affect Latinx communities?
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Follow-up RQs	Theoretical Concepts	Data Source	Analytical Approach
<p>How does a Spanish heritage language teacher use a reflective practitioner stance to deepen students' critical awareness?</p> <p>STUDENTS</p>	<p>Asset-based literacies</p> <p>Critical Literacies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds of identity • Language ideologies (Flores & Rosa, 2015), • Critical Language Awareness (Leeman, 2018; Holguín Mendoza, 2018, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student individual reflections • Small group conversation reflections • Conferences between students and teacher • Audio: class discussions, group discussions, self-reflections 	<p>Reflexive thematic analytic approach (Braun and Clarke, 2021)</p>
	<p>Practitioner Inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015; Pappas, et al., 2011)</p>		
<p>How do students' own storytelling reveal their socio-critical awareness developed within the classroom?</p> <p>What happens when the process of learning is emphasized over its product in the classroom?</p>	<p>Sociocultural-critical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Literacy (Freire, 1998; Luke & Freebody) • Multiliteracies (Zapata & Lacorte, 2018; Leander & Bolt, 2013; Perry, 2012) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal narratives (written text) • Reflections (written/audio) • Student conferences • Images/ visuals on slides • Final Project 	<p>Reflexive thematic analytic approach (Braun and Clarke, 2021)</p>

Strategies for Validating Findings

I used Braun & Clarke's (2021) reflexive thematic analysis to analyze my student data, throughout the coding process and to establishing of themes. In Table 5, I highlight how an iterative process of thematic analysis was established to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

Although thematic analysis is a relatively straightforward method of analysis, it can also easily be misused and lead to inconsistencies due to lack of transparency and thus impacts the trustworthiness of the study (Nowell, et.al, 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2019; 2021). For this reason, Table 5 also includes my data collection and how this process leads to a systematic yet iterative form of analysis and quality assessment. In this section, I will outline why reflexive thematic analysis is appropriate for this study and how it is used within this research study to analyze student-generated artifacts. A second part of this section turns to practitioner-research and its influence on both the methodology and the validation method. Since this study also included my own teacher-produced data to answer my first research question, I had to systematically produce and analyze my own data as well. To address my involvement in the study as practitioner-researcher, I will also highlight how inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Pappas, et al., 2011) also informs the data analysis procedures for the data I produced both during and after class.

Table 5

Analysis, Trustworthiness Measure, and Data Source Procedure

Iterative Process of Thematic Analysis	Trustworthiness Measure
Coding and Theme generation (Braun & Clarke, 2021) (Pappas, et al., 2011)	Credibility; Transferability; Dependability; Confirmability. Audit Trails; Reflexivity in Audit Trail (Nowell, et.al, 2017 referring to measures from Lincoln & Guba, 1985)
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data (Braun & Clarke, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Credibility: prolonged study, data triangulation ● Audit Trails: organization of raw data ● (Reflexive) Audit Trails: evidence of theoretical and methodological decisions and choices

2. Systematic data coding (Braun & Clark, 2021) Ongoing analysis (Pappas, et al., 2011) First cycle coding Second cycle of coding Theme Initialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dependability: logical, traceable, and clearly documented (audit trail) ● Credibility: prolonged study, triangulation, and external check ● (Reflexive) Audit Trails: evidence of theoretical and methodological decisions and choices
3. Generating initial themes from coded and collated data (Braun & Clarke, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (Reflexive) Audit Trails: evidence of theoretical and methodological decisions and choices
4. Developing and reviewing themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Pappas, et al., 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (Reflexive) Audit Trails: evidence of theoretical and methodological decisions and choices
5. Refining, defining, and naming themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Pappas, et al., 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confirmability: clear link between data interpretations and conclusions ● (Reflexive) Audit Trails: evidence of theoretical and methodological decisions and choices
6. Writing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confirmability: clear link between data interpretations and conclusions ● Transferability: thick description

Braun & Clarke (2006; 2021) provide six steps that guide the analysis in this dissertation. I particularly use their updated steps from 2021 that clarify and emphasize “the importance of researcher’s subjectivity as an analytic resource and their reflexive engagement with theory, data and interpretation” (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p.330). Furthermore, any description about the data is a result of the researcher’s interpretive activity “who reads data through the lens of their particular social, cultural, historical, disciplinary, political, and ideological positionings (Braun & Clark, 2021, p.339). My own thematic analysis is also influenced by the theoretical literature that was expounded upon in chapter 2, and that informs my research questions. Thus, I offer a theoretical thematic analysis, which Braun & Clarke (2006) define as a thematic analysis that tends “to be driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytic interest in the area and is thus more explicitly analyst-driven” (p.84). Theoretical or deductive thematic analysis, as in the case with this study, “requires engagement with the literature prior to analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.86) yet still allows for research questions to evolve through the coding process (p.84). Here lies

a generative tension between what is decided a priori and how new observations aid in the evolution of the project and the analysis process. I welcomed this tension as it spoke to my constructivist paradigm, which does not shy away from creating within what may seem established (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.84). Constructivism aims to understand the world by interpreting different perspectives and constructing meaning within a context that includes the researcher and the subjects of research (Lincoln, Lynham, Guba, 2011.) Within this paradigm, the purpose of this study is to reveal many interactive and subjective truths and aim for greater understanding precisely by joining different perspectives. The added reflexivity to Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis allows for a natural connection to the reflexivity also found in practitioner inquiry through inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), which uses subjectivity as strength, if it is properly communicated through transparency to bolster analysis.

Using Braun & Clarke's (2021) Reflexive thematic analysis, as highlighted in Table 5 gave me a solid six steps to go back to during the iterative process of data analysis. Although it seems to represent a linear trajectory from beginning to end (steps 1-6), the process started back at familiarizing myself with the data any time I added a new data item and even required a spiraling effect when coding a piece of data within the larger data corpus. "The inquiry design and the techniques used in the data analysis at iterative stages reflect how the data fitted together in relation to the issue of investigation, the research questions, the data collection and the data analysis" (Peel, 2020, p.11). This is especially true when considering the coding and theme creation process. Braun & Clarke (2006) already stressed the recurring process of creating codes and ultimately themes but rectified in later work that the code and theme creation were not emergent but rather produced by the researcher (Braun & Clarke 2019; 2021). Through the triangulation of data across an entire year, every time I encountered a new data point, I revisited

and reflected upon other work by the same student and how it also related to others in the classroom. This process both adds validity and functions as an aid for analysis of findings to recount the school year of development of both students and their teacher during this study.

My role as practitioner-researcher is valid to the extent that I carry out a systematic way of collecting and analyzing data and trustworthy thus insofar as my decisions are logical, documented, and transparent (Mockler, 2014). Braun & Clarke (2021; 2006) outline how to systematically code in phases moving from familiarization with the data to coding within the bounds of a data set and then across the entire data corpus. In the second and final stages of coding to produce categories and ultimately themes that are also interconnected, I used thematic mapping both in the process of developing themes and lastly to represent the themes developed for the overall project. Ultimately, themes should capture “something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.82). Theme development is also an iterative process where themes are verified in both coded extracts as well as across the data set, which leads to decisions such as collapsing themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 91).

Reflexivity is integral to the data collection and analysis process in both reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) and in practitioner inquiry (Peel, 2020; Mockler, 2014; Ravitch, 2014; Campbell, 2013; Kennedy-Lewis, 2012; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Reflexivity is especially important for "experienced educators, who are adopting the role of researchers, as it is impossible for them to escape themselves in terms of their experiences" (Peel, 2020, p.4). Thus, tools that form part of practitioner inquiry such as reflexive memo writing and self-narrative “help the teacher researcher gain insight into how he or she makes particular decisions during the research process and explore alternatives that can lead to more

robust findings” (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012). I achieved methodological reflexivity by using these tools offered through practitioner inquiry in collaboration with reflexive thematic analysis to do so.

Reflexivity also entails both systematicity and intentionality (Cochran- Smith & Donnell, 2006). Within practitioner research, systematicity refers to the ordered ways of “recollecting, rethinking, and analyzing events” and “ordered ways of gathering and recording information, documenting experiences inside and outside of the contexts of practice” (p.511). Intentionality is defined as “planned and deliberate rather than spontaneous nature of practitioner inquiry.”

Besides documenting students’ learning, I also documented my own experiences and growth as a practitioner both in and out of the classroom (Zeichner & Liston, 2014). My extensive and recursive reflexive journaling, memo writing, lesson plan reflections, in class free-writing, and annotating of data sources through the analysis process was as much part of the data collection process as the validation methods. Reflexive thematic analysis also calls for systematicity in a spiraling fashion to produce an audit trail that can be used during the data analysis process but also to produce a valid report across the data, which includes the researcher’s interpretive lens. By recording Zoom meetings with a colleague quarterly and communicating each week, I was able to add layer of data sharing through peer review. On-going analysis of my notes and data summaries (Pappas, et al., 2011) discussed during these weekly check-ins complemented my own journaling and allowed me to constantly process my data as well as functioning as an audit trail to move forward in my decision making for the course.

What makes this report valid is precisely the systematic examination of both student learning and practitioner decisions and their intersections to create a “more richly detailed and complex analyses of teaching and learning than those available to outside researchers” (Cochran-

Smith & Donnell, 2006, p. 511). Establishing a systematic and intentional way to interact with my data supports the reflexive nature of both practitioner inquiry and thematic analysis especially since both required processes that “remain open-ended and evolving” (Ravitch, 2014), which also defines inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009).

Potential Ethical Issues

This study should not negatively impact student learning or assessment. Data was collected from Spanish classes that I normally teach and learning goals were not be altered to fit the study. The oral participation, written feedback, and documentation of conferences between student and teacher were already embedded in the curriculum. Student artifacts that included audio-visual recordings and written work were saved without names or other identifiable student information. Voice recordings of classes were transcribed without student identifiers as well. The students in these classes participated in discussions as well as in the creation of written and audio-visual artifacts that respond to social issues for the Latinx community. At the start of the school year, I clarified my role as both teacher and researcher as well as their role as students and optional role as research participants. Student assent as well as parental consent was required for me to analyze their work and artifacts beyond the purpose of the course and to be included in recorded data for this project.

I normally discuss with students their upcoming in-class activities, assignments, and projects pertaining to each unit of study. I explained to them, both in person and through a consent form, that they were free to accept or deny if I could go beyond giving them feedback on their assignments but also store their work for analysis outside of school. I clarified to both students and parents/guardians that even after they gave consent, they (or their child) could request to be removed from the study and that this would not impact their standing in the course.

Communication with students and parents was consistent throughout each quarter of the school year, even beyond the scope of the data collection and analysis. I stressed in these interactions and documentation that students' grades would not be either positively nor negatively impacted by their permission to analyze their reflections, participation, and work. Either students or parents were able to request removal from the project at any point, even after the final grades were determined.

Student data is stored only on encrypted devices. Student work was automatically stored in the school's LMS (learning management system) and then transferred to a program that requires three passwords to enter the computer, program, and document. Work was saved and organized in folders and documents with student pseudonyms. The transfer and analysis of data took place outside of class time. Recorded classes were also directly saved in the same digital location as the transferred student work and organized by date. These recordings were transcribed using student pseudonyms.

Admittedly, in practitioner inquiry, the teacher-researcher can mistakenly blur the inquiry with the personal and could allow teacher judgment and power dynamics in the classroom to dominate (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Kennedy-Lewis, 2012; Mockler, 2014). However, the personal involvement of the teacher in practitioner inquiry should also be seen as its strength since the researcher has somewhat of an insider advantage to the site. To avoid these ethical issues, Peel (2020) advises keeping the utmost clarity in the process and practice of research methods. By remaining vigilant to one's fieldnotes, memoing to promote self-reflection, as well as systematically and explicitly elaborating on one's method of coding and arriving at themes, it is possible to obtain the advantages of practitioner inquiry.

Research and Dissertation Timeline

The timeline for this research project extended throughout the 2022-2023 school year. I began collecting my own practitioner-research data just as school began in early September. However, student-produced artifacts were not organized and analyzed formally until the end of June when final grades were posted. During this nine-month period of data collection, I used my teacher journal to document what I identified as key moments from class and individual interactions with students as well as my curricular changes or decisions that responded to these student interactions. During the summer of 2023, I coded and analyzed both teacher and student work in a spiral fashion, as I edited the first three chapters from my dissertation proposal into my dissertation draft. I then continued to analyze data as I completed the initial draft, focusing on the findings and implications. During the early fall months of September and October 2023, I received feedback from my advisor on my dissertation draft and completed revisions by mid-October. During this time, I also invoked member checking from my three focal students since they still attended STEM Academy high school as seniors. They were able to read the pages dedicated to their work in Chapter 5 and their input was applied. The final draft was then shared with my other committee members, before the dissertation defense in early November. Refer to Appendix D for the complete timeline.

Summary of Methodology

This qualitative practitioner inquiry case study examined the students in my Spanish dual-enrollment course at a magnet public high school. I used reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2021) and inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Pappas, 2011) to interpret how I guided and became a collaborator along with students on their own research journeys. This framing allowed me to examine how I created a space that allowed Spanish heritage language

learners to connect curricular themes to their own lives in unique and personal ways. In this role, as both teacher and researcher, I was able to take on an emic perspective of the multiliteracies that students engaged in and enacted within their research process.

Data was collected using teacher generated reflections and artifacts, field notes from classroom observations and student- teacher conferences, in conjunction with student produced artifacts throughout the entirety of the course. By collecting a wide range of data, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the collaboration achieved between a teacher and her students when they are learning together about how to apply learning in ways that matter to their identities. Chapter 4 as follows, will highlight the teacher-researcher role in this study by offering a storyline of the academic year with special attention to teacher interventions in students' learning process to reach an in depth understand of inquiry as stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Pappas, 2011). Chapter 5 will then focus on student generated data that stemmed from course interactions through three focal students, selected through purposeful sampling of maximum variation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Chapter 4: A Practitioner's Reflective Journey

“The Dilemma: I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that will create the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a student's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a student humanized or de-humanized.” - Hiam Ginott

Introduction

This chapter presents findings through a practitioner reflection that was collected during the length of the 2022-2023 school year in one advanced Spanish course at the secondary level. (The subsequent chapter will focus on focal student data.) In this study, practitioner inquiry gives way to better understanding how course members, specifically Spanish heritage language learners and their teacher, manage the development of research skills in the target language in response to topics of personal interest that are situated in context and in relation with larger society. This chapter aims to clarify how practitioner reflection takes on inquiry as stance in action as an on-going process that threads throughout the entire course to support students on their own journey. Through this established relationship between practitioner and students, the entire course not only builds the final product for students, but more importantly sustains and transforms students by affirming students' funds of knowledge and offering opportunities to extend that knowledge in unscripted ways.

The trajectory of this course thus promotes autonomy while merging the “personal self” to the “academic self” for all involved, without excluding the practitioner. The practitioner data were collected from classroom observations, written reflections stored in a physical journal, student artifacts (through written feedback), whiteboard class notes, student-teacher conferences within and in between class times, course/ lesson mapping, and tracked adjustments on course documents. As previously mentioned, this qualitative study responds to the following questions:

1. In what ways do Spanish heritage language learners and their teacher engage with diverse experiences centered on social justice themes that affect Latinx communities?
 - a. How does a Spanish heritage language teacher use a reflective practitioner stance to deepen students' critical awareness?
 - b. How do students' own storytelling reveal their socio-critical awareness developed within the classroom?
 - c. What happens when the process of learning is emphasized over its product in the classroom?

As noted, there is one umbrella question with three sub-questions. As a precursor to answering questions centered around students, this research seeks to respond to how a Spanish heritage teacher becomes an active participant in taking the stance of a learner alongside students to work towards common goals of socio-critical awareness. Thus, this chapter answers sub-question “a” above.

The findings in this chapter provide an understanding of the teacher's role in the course as a collaborator who accompanies students on their journey of deepening their socio-critical awareness through a reflection of lived experiences. In order to contextualize these findings, I first describe the history of the course, the layout of its redesign, and the purpose behind it. I also describe the development and process of guiding students as they implement their own research process rooted in their funds of knowledge.

Integrating Funds of Knowledge through Multiliteracies

In this section, I describe the pedagogical context in more detail including the (re)-design of an existing Spanish course. Noting the affordances and limitations in the given context, offers the foundation necessary to highlight how students' funds of knowledge were integrated into the

learning process through multiliteracies. Within this framework, following the epistemic moves of Learning by design (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015), students and their teachers, as collaborative counterparts, learn through the four quadrants of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice. By design, multiliteracies are “premeditated,” purposeful, and “applies to both teachers and learners” where “teachers are designers” that guide the flow between these four quadrants (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015, p.31). These features of learning by design align with practitioner inquiry, which is characterized by its systematicity and intentionality (Cochran-Smith & Donnell, 2006). Within the limitations of time and resources, teachers design experiences between lessons and gather student data in real time as well as through the meticulous collection of artifacts and reflections to better inform decision making in this process grounded in situated practice. However, this intentionality is not limited to a formulaic pre-planning but rather mirrors the learning process that is dynamic and is open to changes if needed. Consequently, this section provides the contextualization of a course and its redesign process to better understand the ways in which a teacher reflects on student learning and the continuous act of sustaining their identities in the research progression of the course.

Course overview and redesign

This study takes place at the highest-level course available at a secondary magnet school titled Early College Experience (ECE) Spanish. Students enrolled receive simultaneously one High School credit and three transferable college credits. The course is titled “Intermediate Spanish Composition” on the university transcript, while it appears as “ECE Spanish” on their High School transcript. I started this course in the 2016-2017 school year for students as an alternative to taking Spanish V. ECE Spanish is the culminating point of a pathway of Spanish language instruction that begins in our 6th-12th school building from grade 7.

Although the Spanish program is the only World Language offered, the pathway followed a traditional second language learner (L2) pathway until the 2019-2020 school year. From this year on, Spanish heritage students with a proficiency level of Intermediate began to be placed in “Spanish for Heritage Speakers I” as freshman and in “Spanish for Heritage Speakers II” as sophomores. Spanish heritage learners are then placed in Spanish IV or ECE Spanish, both of which are mixed heritage and L2 courses. Heritage learners that advanced through the entire pathway by the culmination of their junior year during the 2022-2023 school year were offered a fourth year of Spanish by taking ECE Spanish as a Capstone course, and not for the college credit already received the year prior. This option allowed five students to retake the elective course that was redesigned with a new curriculum. All students were taking the course as an elective but for different reasons as a High School and/or college credit, however, all were united by the new Capstone element of the course. An additional motivation to take this course was to prepare to take the necessary testing in May to receive the state’s Biliteracy Seal on their diplomas. This testing required students to reach the minimum of intermediate-mid proficiency in all four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Preparing students for this test also impacted the layout and rigor of the course.

The course was structured as a Capstone class and thus all students, regardless of their reason for taking the class, were required to follow a passion project throughout the course of the four quarters of the year. However, at the start of the school year, there was confusion among students, especially juniors, about what a Capstone element would entail especially if they had more than one course denoted as Capstone. In my early journal entries, I note frustration with this confusion. Multiple students spoke to me after class asking how they could complete a Capstone in more than one class and if they had to participate in the annual “Shark Tank”

presentation that had taken place in years prior after school or during the school day where students were asked to pitch their project idea in front of school and community members. Although students and teachers lacked a clear direction on what unified Capstone courses across disciplines, restructuring ECE Spanish to include a Capstone project fit well with the course goals, which were shared and approved by both the High School and partnering university. At times, educators must use these moments of transition and lack of clarity as opportunities to create and be innovative. In the end, three students in the course were both enrolled in a general Capstone course in addition to ECE Spanish and one student remained in two content Capstone courses.

Capstone is a graduation requirement that up through the 2022-2023 school year was taken as a separate year-long course or nestled in a content course. Now that ECE Spanish would be considered a Capstone course, it was revamped in two significant ways: (1) units were not just cumulative but also interconnected and (2) each unit guided students to follow a personal passion project that stemmed from the units' content. The previous course description stated that "the curriculum integrates language study with current social, political, and economic events as well as cultural topics related to families and communities, beauty and aesthetics, global challenges, science and technology, contemporary life, and personal/ public identities," based on the Spanish Language and Culture AP (Advanced Placement). Without dismissing the topics from previous courses, the revamped course introduced the final project as soon as the first day on the course syllabus, which offered a clear vision throughout the entire year. The new course description below highlights this clarity and change of direction:

This course is organized by a cultural topic per unit with specific goals for multilingual presentational and interpersonal writing and speaking. It is designed for students to develop the skills necessary to present their Capstone project before applying it to their own personal project. This course fulfills the Capstone graduation requirement, which

entails that students complete original (and meaningful!) research as guided through this writing course as well as present their final project. Thus, this curriculum foregrounds student empowerment and agency as they integrate language study with current social, political, and economic events that impact their communities. (Appendix A, Course Syllabus)

In retrospect, this course description was a course manifesto and one that would bring me back to guide students to follow their passions and curiosities over just fulfilling a requirement. I began sketching this syllabus months before the previous school year had ended and I knew I wanted to create units that were a culmination of the learning sequence, especially for Heritage levels 1-2, which is heavily influenced by English Language Arts standards in which skills were organized by genre writing. I created a fusion of a content and a capstone course where each unit was a way to accomplish a portion of students' Capstone project through a genre of writing that entailed student generated research. In Table 6, there is a sequence of writing genres that are necessary to conduct research in order to root those genres in units that allow students to start with themselves (their identity and experiences in education) and then progress from this starting point to the topic of activism, where students can begin to reflect on themselves as researchers and activists as they move on to topics that impact greater society, such as environment, and health.

Table 6
Units' Writing Genres linked to Capstone Projects

Unit	Writing Genre	Capstone Project
Education and Identity	Personal Narrative	Problem; Positionality
Waves of Activism in Latin America and the US	Argumentative	Research Questions; Literature Review
The Environment and Technology	Argumentative: Comparative	Literature Review; Methodology
Physical and Emotional Health	Description and Analysis	Data Collection; Analysis of data

Based on these unit topics, I designed and organized assessments that moved from the categories of assignments that the students recognized in all of their classes as our district moves towards standards-based grading, which include “practice, formative, and summative assessments,” tied to specific skills. Assignments labeled as practice had very low stakes and were mostly participatory in nature, such as their “diarios” (physical notebook entries), the small group and class discussions based on these entries and homework practice of grammatical structures. “Cuadernos digitales” included much of the content for the unit that exposed students to multimodal texts that highlighted a particular issue. Some of the slides were labeled as practice and others included a rubric and were documented as formative and ended with an application slide that became part of the summative assessments of the particular unit. All of the summative assessments were contributing to the students’ year-long project in skill and prompted connections between their project and the thematic content. My constant challenge as the teacher of the course was to structure and adapt a course that would sustain the layering of the units for them to be interconnected while also allowing students to practice and explore research and writing skills that would then contribute to their own personal project. Although I adapted the dual-enrollment composition course to have more time for the Capstone element by offering one college semester course across a complete school year, time constrictions are always a challenge.

Offering a college level course in a High School is challenging both for teachers and students. Even though students are recommended by their prior teachers for the course, not all students are at the same proficiency level and ultimately are not turned down from taking the class if they are not at the “ideal” intermediate proficiency. For most of the Spanish heritage language learners, this course was also the first Spanish class they were taking with second

language learners and vice versa. Important steps had to be taken to build a new mixed classroom community, especially during the first unit of the course. This challenge was met by placing students in intentional groupings and at times, provided extra scaffolds to communicate on deep issues in Spanish.

These students' high school careers have also been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The juniors were 8th graders in March 2020 and seniors had an interrupted freshman year, followed by shortened classes and unequal access to online classes due to socioeconomic factors and living situations. Greater flexibility and quite frankly the lowering of standards in student achievement during the past three school years, impacted students' performance and motivation. Even still, students struggled during this school year with their stamina to complete the increase in work and in meeting deadlines. The point of this course was not to go through material and leave students behind and thus I had to promote and set high expectations while remaining attuned to students and meeting them where they were developmentally. This challenge is important to recognize, which existed previously, but was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

Developing and guiding the student research process

A New Year for Continued Growth.

How you open your first class matters--it sets the tone for the year. Even at the start of my 14th year, I felt the adrenaline and the excitement. “Ya muchos me conocen, algunos me han tenido como maestra por tres años, especialmente los que han tomado las clases de heritage.” [Many of you already know me, some have had me as a teacher for three years, especially if you have taken heritage classes.] I was interrupted at this point by students sharing smiles and commenting how long they have known me and when they took my class either consecutively or

as returning students. “Hay algunas caritas nuevas,” [There are some new faces] but I reassured them that we all knew each other because these junior and senior classes were very dear to me. “Creo que 2023 será el año de graduación que más Kleenex necesitaré,” [I think 2023 will be the graduation year I will need the most tissues]and I can now confirm that my words would come true. As teachers say these were mis muchachos [my kids]. Even with the excitement of seeing so many familiar faces, there was also a sense of ease not having to worry about learning new names for a period and building. Community building could not be skipped even in an upperclassmen course like this. Feeling comfortable is the true objective of these first classes, especially between students that had not yet taken a course together or even between acquaintances that thought they knew each other. Speak to someone in a different grade, sitting across the room, or who took a different Spanish class than you last year were part of some of the prompts to share about you and your writing. Warm-ups for the course were usually individual “quick writes” that were linked to the content and language structures but meant to ease into the class by having students think about themselves and their own connection to the material in class. The low-stakes daily assignment was part of the routine: take out or grab your notebook from the class bin, read the instructions during passing time, and write for the length of the timer accompanied by music. The most important norm for these “quick writes” was to write for the entire time even if that meant making lists, drawing, and extending the prompt, while permitting translanguaging, without trying to second-guess oneself. The next step was to re-read and edit to share with a group by either reading or speaking about a part or the whole. There was also an expectation that listeners would ask questions and make comments that connected to their peers. I moderated the class conversation but only after walking to the six groups of desks and gathering what conversations ensued and even ones I prompted or participated in.

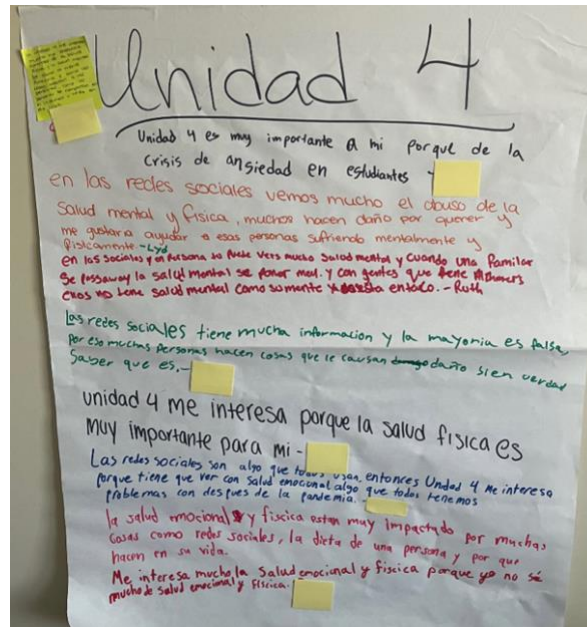
Although the syllabus has a set of essential questions per unit, these questions are meant to keep those questions present and sustain curiosity. Part of my lesson planning process included creating but also adjusting my planned questions to heighten engagement and confidence to build trust within the members of the class. Since it is a composition project-based course, I find it imperative that students look at themselves as writers and researchers--ones that have important stories to tell that break the divide between the self and academics. Reflecting and writing alongside students was an essential part of my process as well. Besides journaling about classes, I often used a portion of the time to write in my own notebook during class. With my teacher responsibilities, this was not always feasible, but I modeled writing with the time that I had and sharing or extending what I had written through speech. The question on September 13, 2022: “Crees que los EE. UU es un país multilingüe? ¿Cómo? ¿Por qué? Usa ejemplos concretos, personales y/o académicos.” [Do you think that the US is a multilingual country? How? Use concrete examples, personal and/or academic.] My own introduction states how the EE. UU should be considered a multilingual country since we are a land of immigrants, with each new wave bringing in their customs and culture which includes language. However, this assumption perhaps does not question how the US sustains multilingualism in schools even though the country does not have an official language. I am an example of multilingualism, but my family and I had to fight for and protect my bilingualism that often was not recognized as an asset. However, overwhelmingly, students shared how the US was a multilingual country due to the existence of various languages and due to the value placed on those who knew multiple languages in the workforce. It was clear to me that students were not going to strive to change something that they thought existed, even when there are systemic reasons for language attrition within the first generations of immigrants. Without providing answers, I used these prompts to

begin a process of critical thinking without the aim of simply producing words on a page. In the following unit, I would ask students to define the qualities of an activist and in a subsequent question to turn inward and identify what characteristics of an activist that they already possess. Besides sharing with them my own reflections, my aim was to change the way students perceived themselves as not having the power to create change, and instead have them feel empowered exactly *where* they are and by being *who* they are.

Centering Language Experiences to Build Critical Language Awareness.

In an exploratory activity, after reviewing the syllabus course plan at the beginning of the year, students reviewed the four units of study of the year and added notes to chart paper around the room that remained posted in the classroom for the duration of the course. Students were not asked to choose and commit to the unit of study but express why they cared about a particular unit to build awareness about the topics that would be studied during each academic quarter. Overwhelmingly, students chose units 3 and 4 to comment on instead of the first two. I reflected upon this in real time and reassured the class that the topics we were studying were in a particular order purposefully and that the first two units were in that place to lay the necessary groundwork on who they are (their identities) and how that informs and benefits their course work. Having this physical representation of ideas and units posted in the classroom allowed students to remember and reference their Capstone journey as they grew and changed their ideas on how to research their final topics.

Figure 3*Syllabus: Initial Reflections*



Throughout the year, I found myself pointing to the four areas of the room that portrayed the chart paper and would remind students of their original interests, especially if it had progressed. As stated in an anonymous course evaluation survey shared through our dual-enrollment state university, “The units we discussed were interconnected with each other connected and discussed in depth” (Course Survey, 6/ 2023). The interconnectedness was something I thought about deeply as I worked on the new syllabus in the summer of 2022. My aim as an instructor was to achieve a cohesive year where units built on each other to mirror the year-long seamless research process. As I read the anonymous and voluntary course survey answers shared with me, I am not only struck by this answer but how this answer pertains to the question of how this course differed from others. Creating and maintaining this cohesiveness was

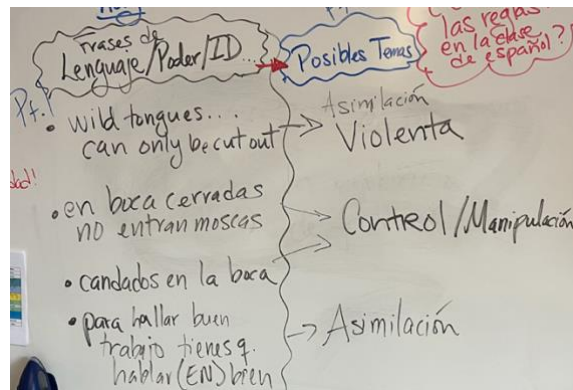
difficult for me during the planning process and this answer from a student confirms why although it felt right philosophically, it was difficult to obtain due to the pressures of quarters, semesters, and the overall race against time to speed the learning process during the school calendar.

The first quarter was dedicated to studying multilingualism at a personal level. This journey would be individualized but also require sharing with others to find commonalities but also honor differences. Ultimately the goal was that this level of reflection would set the groundwork for student research as they reflected on themselves by connecting who they were, their language experiences, and their academics. As a composition course, the genre of personal narrative was the focus, and the basis of this narrative would be a Linguistic Autobiography slide that asked students to portray visually their relationship to their languages using the multilingual concepts discussed in class. A fellow teacher and researcher allowed me to share student examples that I showed my students and pointed out how I cited this colleague so that they knew that my citations were also combining my own personal and academic network. Alongside students, I journaled with them, moving back and forth from broad thought-provoking questions, such as how our current society can increasingly support a multilingual one. Following the exploration, we looked at how others experienced multilingualism in the US and in Spanish-speaking countries, which required reading different texts. The most generative text was an excerpt by Gloria Anzaldúa. Anzaldúa, an icon of the Chicano feminist movement, was a Mexican American author, academic, and activist whose most cited text, *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, is based on the social and cultural marginalization she experienced living “in between” physical and cultural spaces.

The Anzaldúa text was used to identify themes and match these themes with textual evidence (academics) and life experiences (personal) to meet the objective of connecting personal and academic experiences along with the social justice standard of recognizing language hierarchies and their effects on Latinx communities. I created this assignment, at one level, to read what was important in the text and, in a deeper sense, to connect it to the skill of analysis. This fulfilled a concern I had in my teacher journal as I constantly evaluated units and assignments to see if they were simultaneously deepening content and allowing students to practice research skills. I made a note referring to class on September 30, 2022: Looking at the picture from class from last week, “I see how I scaffolded analyzing a text in a way that can be transferable to analyzing data, something students will be expected to do by the end of the course” (October 7, 2022). At this moment, I was honestly disappointed that perhaps I had made a guide that was not as clear as it needed to be, but now I feel that this reflection misses the mark of working along with students to conquer a new skill. The sheet they were working on individually and in groups had two parts that challenged the majority, in part because they needed an example, but now I realize they might have also not trusted in their abilities to read into the text. To break it down further, I asked them to first pick out a phrase that struck them-- that was just so powerful to them that it deserved to be highlighted. Without writing them out completely, I wrote phrases on the left marked under Part I, which led us to think about possible themes that these quotes pointed towards such as assimilation, violence, and control/ manipulation as seen in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4

Guided Discussion of Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza, “Linguistic Terrorism”



As we completed this exercise and they continued to work in groups and share out, I reminded them that this text was important and canonical for the educational Chicano movement, which was our class’s ancestor. Without the Chicano movement, which they defined in their own words in their digital notebooks, we would not have Spanish heritage courses, or this level of Spanish education. This was also a text read in many undergraduate and graduate courses. Even though students knew they were in a college course, I wanted them to feel erudite for reading such a powerful text. I owe much of this lesson idea to my summer reading of *En Comunidad: Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinx Students* (España & Herrera, 2020), which is directly geared towards the ELA middle grades classroom, but applicable in World Language classrooms as well. I knew the way these authors explained the use of this text to identify themes, a common core skill in English classrooms, was applicable in Spanish in a unit that highlights multilingualism and moreover offered a way to prepare for the fundamentals of qualitative coding.

Reading parts of Anzaldúa's text was a class wide experience; however, I offered students a choice board of different texts: articles, documentaries, podcasts, and blogs to analyze on their own to then prepare for a Socratic seminar, in which students would listen to a partner and comment on their participation and texts, particularly if they were different from what they had read. Besides taking notes on student participation in real time that I also reviewed in recorded form, I had to remain silent, which was difficult for me. I noted that "there were moments I wanted students to dig deeper and ask more questions that were not on the guided prompt, but that rarely happened, and I had to stop myself from speaking up" (November 2, 2022, Teacher Journal). I am glad I also had students answer reflection questions after the seminar to capture more of their thoughts of the texts they read but also about how the different experiences were connected among themselves and to them personally. I incentivized the students to complete this assignment as I was including a question on what they would have liked to have said in the seminar to give them a more accurate grade, instead of one that only assessed being responsive in the moment. For some students, they extended on how else they connected to the discussed texts. A senior in the course, Luis, commented on how many perspectives they understood about multi/ bilingualism.

Yo aprendí demasiado más perspectivas que ofrecieron dificultades nuevas que las personas bilingües enfrentan. Por ejemplo aprendí que unas personas se sienten aislados, perdidos or traicionados por el lenguaje. Estas cosas mayormente lo aprendí cuando yo participaba en las discusión pero también escuche estos temas como el audiencia (11/2/2022).

[I learned about many more perspectives that offered new challenges that bilinguals face. For example I learned that some people feel isolated, lost or betrayed by a language. These things I mostly learned when I participated in the discussions but I also heard these topics in the audience.] (11/2/2022)

Luis highlights how hearing and reading about different lived perspectives about bilingualism helped him see some of the issues that come up through the struggle to maintain languages

and/or cultures. He attributes his learning to participating in the Socratic seminar as both an active speaker and as an active listener when he heard more examples from different texts as an audience member. Daniel, a junior in the course, also highlights how the activity gave him various perspectives as both a reader and a listener: “Leyendo las lecturas del tablero me dio muchas perspectivas diferentes sobre la identidad de las lenguas. Y también, porque fui en el segundo grupo me dio chance de escuchar las perspectivas de otros estudiantes y lecturas” (11/2/2022). [Reading the texts from the choice board gave me many different perspectives about the identity of languages. And also, because I was in the second group it gave me a chance to listen to the perspectives of other students and their texts] (11/2/2022). Listening to others also aids Daniel in his participation because he was able to listen twice since he was in the second group. Besides the reading students had selected on their own, they also learned about other perspectives by listening to other students who selected different readings or podcasts. Luis goes on to state “...estas perspectivas ofrecen textos y escritores que pueden crear cosas que personas pueden encontrar relacionable[s] y con más representación de estas perspectivas esto puede tener un efecto positivo en la audiencia” (11/2/2022). [...these perspectives offer texts and writers that can create things that people can relate to and with more representation of these perspectives this can have a positive effect on the audience] (11/2/2022). He finds value in the fact that these materials showcase different perspectives because people in the audience (assuming the class and those who consume these texts outside of our classroom) can relate to them and can feel represented.

The ways of relating to the texts result in thinking about the future and expressing both fear and hope. Azucena openly expresses that she can relate to the texts, particularly in how she fears losing her languages:

Yo me puedo relacionar con el miedo de perder mis idiomas. Como yo no uso mucho mi español, yo intento usar lo no mas posible en la casa. Habes mis hermanas piensan que soy un poco raro de usar algunas palabras en español cuando estamos hablan en inglés. Perdido el habilidad de hablar el español es perdider un aspecto de mi cultura. Porque hay algunas cosas que son mejor explicadades en español en vez del inglés. (Digital notebook, Azucena, 11/2/2022)

[I can relate to the fear of losing my languages. Since I don't use my Spanish much, I try to use as little as possible at home. Maybe my sisters think I'm a little weird about using some Spanish words when we're speaking English. Losing the ability to speak Spanish is losing an aspect of my culture. Because there are some things that are better explained in Spanish instead of English.] (Digital notebook, Azucena, 11/2/2022)

Focusing on language loss, Azucena reflects on how she relates to the readings and reacts to them in her daily life by speaking Spanish at times that are not as natural for her, such as with her siblings. She interchanges both language and culture stating that she does not want to lose Spanish because she does not want to lose her culture and the ability to express something that is described better in Spanish than English. Meanwhile, Daniel sees this fear induced by the texts as a means to expose what is happening “...y con ese conocimiento puede ayudar crear la próxima generacion to be proud of who they are instead of ashamed of it” [...and with that knowledge it can help create the next generation to be proud of who they are instead of ashamed of it] (11/2/2022.)

I asked students to see languages as living cultural artifacts that were in constant flux and lived within power structures that were relative. As Azucena commented, language could reveal issues they were “underneath” it (11/2/ 2022). Her use of the word “underneath” indicates that, at the surface, language hierarchies are not evident, yet they produce real consequences. This understanding allowed us to explore different contexts in which Spanish had more or less power and see that through lived experiences. We purposefully started with this topic since all students in the class, heritage and second language learners alike, were embarking on a course where their experiences with language would influence not just the topic of their year-long project in the

course but also how they could situate their projects in relation to their local and global communities. I commented to the class how the Spanish course and their projects had to be purposeful, down to why they were using the language(s) beyond the fact that it was a World Language credit. Each unit requires a critical lens which appropriately begins with an exposure to Critical Language Awareness. I noted my surprise to see some reflection on language hierarchies in writing, whether that be in students' digital notebooks or reflections, however, in their linguistic autobiographies, languages that were partially lost in them or their families were not undervalued--they were recuperated by holding space and being physically represented as linked to the student. Although we would discuss through Anzaldúa and the variety of texts how the hierarchy of languages was a construct that shifted, in Latin America and Spain, I still wanted students to enrich and extend the value and pride for their language learning and maintenance.

Supporting Student Research through Capstone Projects.

Towards the end of the first quarter and unit, I thought there would be a two-week period that would culminate with the beginnings of a course portfolio on a website. Instead, this period of time was extended into a month "mini unit" that was stored in its own folder on our learning management system (LMS). Although the product of the first quarter milestone was not met according to my original plans and syllabus, I felt the need to adjust and run more workshop style classes to conference with students. Students were given a guide on how to discuss their social issue of interest, create tentative research questions, and use the narrative genre to connect their personal and academic interests for their project. Everyone was expected to meet these objectives even if their topic could change in the future. Some of the guidance provided, such as the guide to creating research questions, was adapted from a previous general Capstone course in English. Giving students these initial and flexible "formulas" gave them a starting point in the

process of identifying what they really desired to learn about a given topic. Since students were previously assigned a personal narrative after their Linguistic Autobiography presentation, they were encouraged to return to those slides and an anecdote that they could describe using specific details. They were also presented with assessment rubrics for the objectives “I can connect my academic experiences to my personal experiences” and “I can write a personal (descriptive) narrative that connects with my academic (project) goals.”

Since it was the first time I taught this curriculum, I did not have student samples from previous years. This made my own modeling even more essential. However, rather than starting with my model, students began drafting their short narratives in cycles. This process scaffolded writing a personal anecdote related to their language experience and project topic, using descriptive language. As I previously mentioned, students were asked to review their Linguistic Autobiographies, but also continued brainstorming their narratives by responding to “quick writes” at the beginning of each class. Students had to, for example, describe experiences and objects using their senses and detailed adjectives. They also answered guided questions along with a draft of their short narrative to receive feedback and edit before submitting their summative version during Quarter 2. These layers of work or scaffolds were intended to guide students, while still allowing them to edit and adjust along the way.

During the last week of this cumulative work, students had to submit three sections: An issue or problem, research questions, and their positionality, which included prompting for their anecdote. Ultimately, modeling my expected outcome on an assignment helped me share who I was as a researcher and teacher, when I was expecting them to think as researchers and students. Instead of presenting my work at length, students worked together and read the model and completed a guided reflection of the text that ultimately had them decide how to apply what they

observed in the model for their own work. The issue I presented was not far off from our first unit on Identity and Education, but it also aligned with the issue presented in this dissertation. I shared with them how as a heritage learner, teacher, and researcher, I was moved to respond to the challenge of maintaining one's heritage language in an educational system that mirrored the silent pressures to be monolingual in the US.

Los latinos son la minoría más grande en Estados Unidos. Aunque las culturas que representan, en realidad, son diversas, muchas inmigraciones latinas traen y mantienen el español como segundo idioma más usado en este país. Sin embargo, la mayoría de la educación de los niños en EE. UU es en inglés. Existen escuelas bilingües o “dual-language,” por ejemplo, pero no es la costumbre o tradición. Entonces, muchos niños entran al sistema educativo para olvidar el español (u otros idiomas) de forma sustractiva en vez de solo ganar el inglés de forma aditiva. (Unit 1 Teacher Model, 11/30/2022)

[Latinos are the largest minority in the United States. Although the cultures they represent are actually diverse, many Latin immigrants bring and maintain Spanish as the second most used language in this country. However, the majority of children's education in the US is in English. There are bilingual or “dual-language” schools, for example, but it is not the custom or tradition. So, many children enter the educational system to forget Spanish (or other languages) subtractively instead of just gaining English additively.] (Unit 1 Teacher Model, 11/30/2022)

Using words like subtractive and additive were part of our established vocabulary during the first unit to describe language attrition while still conserving and evolving one's identity as a language learner. Because everything I was doing with the class was also related to my personal and research interests, I journaled “I should have written this model earlier” and “It felt like an authentic way to share my work with students as a learner, rather than a teacher” (Teacher Journal, 11/30/ 2022).

Even though it goes beyond the prompt I provided in the problem section, I also included ideas for action. I state that I would like to research how multilingual students feel about their formal/ informal language education. I go further in explaining how this possible open-ended survey could help me not just understand the issue better in my school context but also identify

students that might be interested in meeting during our Advisory period to create short stories for younger students (in our Middle School or Elementary). I conclude this problem section by returning to the prompt and indicating how this project would be important to me and my community at our school, as part of a larger picture of helping maintain multilingualism in our country.

In the personal narrative section, I returned to my own slides, similar to the Linguistic Autobiography that my students completed, but one that I prepared for my first graduate class in this program. I describe my relationship with reading, one that was riddled with apathy until I read books that spoke to me as a young woman and first-generation student in the US. I describe how everything changed for me in High School: “Todo cambió en la clase de un electivo ofrecido por mi profesora de historia” [Everything changed in an elective class offered by my history teacher.] (Unit 1 Teacher Model, 11/30/ 2022). I recalled thinking in this course “Creo que me gusta leer, pero solo dónde se encuentra la persona con su historia.” [I think that I like to read, but only where I can find the person with their story.] Sharing with students how reading minority experiences in the US led me to change was an open invitation to reimagine their experiences as well. I conclude that my experience with an obstacle is inspiring change in my current context as a learner-researcher: “En fin, sé lo que es no verse reflejado en la educación y aceptarlo por un tiempo hasta experimentar algo diferente que me inspira a crear textos para el consumo de otros estudiantes.” [In the end, I know what it’s like to not see yourself reflected in education and to accept it for a while until I experience something different that inspires me to create texts for the consumption of other students.] The application of this reading was for students to compare their work to the model and decide what they could add or adapt to reach what the rubric marked as “proficient” or “exemplary.”

As students refined their Capstone research topic, research questions, and personal connection to this topic, their language and cultural identities were not just present but central to their projects. Luis, a senior in the course, made explicit links between his Linguistic Autobiography, personal narrative, and his Capstone project. He sees himself as an intermediary thanks to his language repertoire: “puedo conectar mis experiencias como una persona bilingüe y multicultural con cosas que yo he visto” [I can connect my experiences as a bilingual and multicultural person with things that I have seen.] (Unit 1 Narrativa Prep, 12/15/2022). This placement within his family has given him the vantage point to identify cultural differences in how mental health is perceived in the US, especially among the Latinx community. In his personal narrative, he describes a time when he overheard family conversation that included extended family.

En la mesa es notable por la comida que se come, pero también es el lugar en cual muchos tópicos se discuten. Uno de estos tópicos fue como vivir la más saludable vida posible. Note que muchos dijeron la misma cosa, “come comida saludable”, “hacer ejercicio.” Pero ni una vez han mencionado cosas mentales. Y eventualmente alguien dijo que “no, necesitas una buena vida mentalmente?” La mesa se quedó en silencio por un rato, y note que ellos no tomaron en serio (11/28/2022).

[The dinner table is known for the food that is eaten, but it is also the place where many topics are discussed. One of these topics was how to live the healthiest life possible. I noticed that many said the same thing, “eat healthy food,” “exercise.” But not once have they mentioned mental issues. And eventually someone said that “don’t you need a good emotional life?” The table was silent for a while, and I noticed that they didn’t take him seriously.] (11/28/2022)

He highlights how the dinner table is more than a place for food, it is a place of verbal exchange. At this table, thanks to being multilingual and multicultural, he notices that his *parientes* (family members) have a lack of understanding for mental health as opposed to physical health and cites his family taking care of his brother when he was physically ill and his sister when she broke a bone, but mental health could be ignored. The “alguien” that speaks up in his narrative later turns

out to be Luis himself, but nothing really came from this intervention. He does not change anyone's thinking, but he does not criticize his family, instead he rationalizes their lack of response: "Yo no culpo a mucho de mis miembros de familia por pensar así, cuando yo investigue por posibles explicaciones, yo note que mucho de la cultura que han crecido en les influyo"[I don't fault many members of my family for thinking like this, when I researched for possible explanations, I noticed that a lot of the culture they have grown up in has influenced them] (Unit 1 Narrativa, 11/28/2022). Luis notices the challenges that arise between generations in a multicultural society. In other words, he is seeing something his parents and tíos are not precisely from living in the "in between" of languages and cultures in which those languages exist. Similarly, he revealed the tension of preserving culture and language in the Anzaldúa text while simultaneously the same community was instilling the tradition of judging among themselves and feeling *traicionados* (betrayed) if community members use other language (not the native language). For his Capstone research project, Luis reasons that he lives in this tension precisely because of belonging (asset-based) to different environments.

Yo creo que la razón que yo y otros notamos esto fue que nuevas generaciones están creciendo en entornos multiculturales, en cual ponen más atención a la salud emocional. Como aqui en EE. UU. muchos escuelas discuten situaciones emocionales o sociales. (Luis, Unit 1 Narrative, November 2022)

[I think the reason I and others noticed this was that new generations are growing up in multicultural environments, in which they pay more attention to emotional health. Like here in the US, many schools discuss emotional or social situations.] (Luis, Unit 1 Narrative, November 2022)

In this conclusion of his narrative, he also refers to others that have similar understandings that belong to his generation and go to school in the US, while belonging to families educated elsewhere. His project has a greater significance since he can provide greater understanding of mental health in communities that require a cultural intermediary and "encontrar soluciones para

resolver estos nuevos problemas, también puede hasta prevenir (prevenir) unos futuros problemas.” [finding solutions to resolve these issues, also they can even prevent future problems] (Unit 1 Narrativa, 11/29/2022). Luis is the only student that started to hint towards creating change for others after acquiring more information about his topic and collecting more data outside of his family. Since I did not include this step in the instructions and only gave them my model in how to apply their activism in response to the social issue that their project represented, I used this data in the moment to plan and readjust the second unit, “Corrientes Activistas” (waves of activism).

Taking on an Activist Lens.

By focusing on students’ projects, after exploring the guided texts in the first unit, students were able to generate questions that they had about a particular issue that was somehow connected to who they are in terms of their personal, contextual experiences with language while starting to blur that invisible line that often divides the self from “academics” or learning. The project goal for the second unit was to gather evidence through students’ own research. By starting to collect a mix of texts (such as articles, videos, podcasts, and social media posts) on a research log provided. However, the goal for the second unit on waves of activism was to awaken a sense of urgency to respond to an issue. This second unit, much like the first, began with students’ identities but this time there was an expansion within their self-awareness that not only included what it meant to be a student researcher but also an activist within a social justice paradigm. Since providing a breadth of knowledge of activist movements would not allow for students to go deep into reflection with the time given, I chose depth over breadth. After all, the point of exposing students to activism is to inspire and empower them to respond in their circles

of influence. To see themselves as capable actors in their communities, students need to understand the work of those before them as they take on their own stance against injustice.

Students were asked to review the social justice concepts that many had seen the previous year in class with me and apply them to an activist from a list provided or one that was connected to their research theme. Even if there were students who had not been in my previous course, most were familiar with these concepts in English, which were expounded upon during our Racial Justice Action Week each January. With social justice at the center, the categories of inclusivity, empathy, solidarity, advocate, and action in the Figure 5 below were created by a colleague and I during a shared teacher duty the previous school year and derived from the Teaching for Justice standards.

Figure 5

Concept Map: “La justicia social”



The figure above includes student work samples that came from two different digital notebooks, where each student was asked to add words and/ or images under each heading and

use them for discussion on the left. On the right, the student selected to research Arturo Alfonso Schomburg and linked examples from his life's work under each category. This mapping of social justice starts with empathy, which coincides with how we dissected this figure after a quick write session, where empathy was identified as being foundational to the other concepts to achieve social justice (Teacher Journal, 12/13/2022).

When asked to describe the qualities or characteristics of an activist and reflect on their own qualities as activists, students identified both characteristics that were in line with their perception of activism and those that were deterring them from being activists. As expected from our class conversation, most students saw their empathy as most compatible with being an activist. Azucena begins her reflection describing her empathy to relate to social topics (Notebook, 12/6/2022). Meanwhile, José adds in at the end of his reflection “También tengo empatía por personas que no se pueden defender solos.” [I also have empathy for people who can't defend themselves.]

What I coded as “self-experience” is another characteristic that was discussed in class, but this time after writing. Albert and Jessica refer to activists as people who fight for a cause that they understand and experience to some degree. Jessica cites our previous reading of Gloria Anzaldúa as an example, “le importa mas lo que es el bilingüismo y el problema de la identidad porque ella pasó por eso,” similarly Albert explicitly explains that activist are usually motivated by their connection to an issue: “Las personas activistas tipicamente tiene algo en comun con el problema. Por esa conexión que tienen ellos están más motivados y apasionados a seguir con una buena causa” [Activists typically have something in common with the issue. Because of this connection they are more motivated and passionate to continue with a good cause.] (Notebook, 12/2/2022.) In that moment, I realized that I had fostered this thought process by asking students

to choose topics that they were somehow connected to and cared about. I noted in my teacher journal on this day that our conversation about this connection to an issue in order to be motivated to help solve it was also part of advocating through solidarity which is possible through empathy and “allyship,” which I remember translanguaging to describe.

Self-doubt was also present in students’ reflections, and it is notable how teacher intervention intervened in two particular cases. Daniel and Yarielis added on to their answers after their initial quick write. As I circled around to the groups, Daniel confessed he was struggling with the question of what qualities he had to be an activist. He wrote, “Tal ves tengo [maybe I have] the charisma to be one pero al menos de eso no tengo muchas cualidad para ser activista [but besides that I don’t have the characteristics to be an activist” but then he leaves a blank line and adds, “Pero Sra. Adan me enseño que solo tratando de ayudar alguien es una forma de ser activista y como que yo estoy tratando de ayudar a los demas con la ciencia es una forma de activismo” [But Mrs. Adan taught me that simply trying to help someone is a form of activism and since I am trying to help others with science it is a form of activism] (Notebook, 12/6/2022.) Similarly, Yarielis first explains “Siendo honesta, no creo que tengo muchas cualidades para ser activista (for others rights).” [Honestly, I don’t think I have many characteristics that make me an activist (for others rights).] Yarielis is self-aware that she comes before others in her life, and she is not always sure that is incorrect. This makes her feel like she is not an activist, however, underneath her freewrite she adds bullet points: “Pero si no yo soy responsable. Se hablar infront of a crowd. Annoying en la manera que no paro y sigo luchando” [But if not I am responsable. I know how to talk infront of a crowd. Annoying in the way I don-t stop and keep fighting.] (Notebook, 12/6/2022.) Although I encouraged students to add notes after our discussions of quick writes, these examples capture students processing their own

identities as change-makers within their current context. Other students, such as Azucena and Jessica highlighted their self-doubt and it remained unresolved even after teacher and class intervention, which I attribute to being part of their research process. Both students revealed their self-doubt by believing that they lacked the power and knowledge necessary to take action and resolve an issue or shed light on an issue.

Students were also exposed to both historical and current forms of activism, they engaged with the content of the unit, but also and perhaps most importantly, continued to develop their critical voice as students, community members, researchers, and activists. A key example of this stands out in my journal reflections when students watched “El Apagón-- Aquí Vive Gente,” a music video-documentary by the popular artist Bad Bunny. The roughly twenty-minute video released in September 2022 was not in the syllabus since it was not released until after the school year. However, by allowing students to research and present on activist movements of their choice that once took more room in the syllabus, we could use this documentary as a current artifact that responded to various issues in Puerto Rico specifically. I had a hook for students that I could not ignore by including an artist that they knew to discuss social and economic issues, such as gentrification, displacement, and the abuse of private energy companies.

Before watching the video, students were asked to decide whether a statement such as “La naturaleza puede pertenecerle a una persona y no a otras” [Nature can belong to one person and not others]. This state would later be connected to the privatization of nature (beaches) in Puerto Rico. However, in our discussion with only a portion of the class due to school events and winter break, I realized that it was more interesting to talk about these opinion statements on a continuum and incorporate a spatial- visual aspect. As the class reconvened after winter break in January, this time all students had to show their opinion by standing up and moving across the

room depending on how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement. “Listening to others seemed more purposeful and some students revealed they had stood in a spot that did not reveal their true opinion after all (José had to change his spot)” (Teacher Journal, 1/3/ 2023.) Moments like these aided students to visualize their opinions and even physically move as they started to both hear and see other’s perspectives. After the class finished the documentary, Daniel returned to his opinions still documented by the paper version of the physical activity described and commented on how his opinions had changed. Seeing “El Apagón-Aquí Vive Gente,” caused him to want to change some of his answers. His classmate, Melissa, sitting next to him reassured him that having an opinion in the abstract could be different when applied to a specific context. Daniel accepted this discrepancy; he accepted that his philosophical and contextual point of view were going to be at times in a state of tension. “This is why it’s important not just to have our opinions but listen to different contexts and put a face to issues,” I replied (Teacher Journal, 1/4/2023.) This exchange helped me capture and better understand Daniel’s awareness of social justice issues, which as further explained in Chapter 5, was not always his stance.

Joining the skills of argumentative and persuasive writing with research evidence, students practiced under the quadrant of Multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) by “applying appropriately” to the documentary by writing a hypothetical letter to a leader in Puerto Rico. However, it was this application that allowed students to then “apply creatively” by using this imaginative format and reach out to someone relative to their research topic. For Sergio, for instance, his letter to a local Latinx actress and screenwriter would mean not just a Mid-term requirement but a rough draft of an email he could send to his contact. Sergio asked for his Mid-term weeks later when he was preparing to send the actual email. He had to face my feedback in a real way. What was his action? What did he want this contact to guide him or help him create?

Although he later journaled about not acting on this connection due to his pressures of being in the school play and his stresses due to his senior year (Sergio, Student Journal 5/30/ 2023), this letter went beyond the hypothetical, Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) often recommended in World Language education. Linking students to the local community is part of the educator's work that is still done on a volunteer basis. The truth was that this playwright was an acquaintance that I follow on social media after meeting her in our capital city before a play reading that she invited me to, and I attended. She was gracious in her response to my student, but ultimately, he never contacted her. He had a clear understanding of the issue he was researching: “Me encantan las obras de teatro, especialmente los musicales. Pero, siempre noto que no hay muchos que representan mi cultura. En el cine, tambien, hay pocas peliculas que me hacen sentir representado” [I love plays, especially musicals. But, I always notice that there is little representation of my culture. In theater, also, there are few films that make me feel represented.] (Midterm Letter, 1/28/23). When he received my written feedback and during our in-person conference, I emphasized that he really had to think about an action, even small, that he wanted her help for. Although I could not do this for him, I gave him ideas to create his own videos or involve the drama club he was in. He includes in the letter " Tal vez le podría preguntar unos puntos para que podamos crear ideas para poner en videos que podemos grabar y postear. Espero que podamos conversar. Con su ayuda podemos crear mas oportunidades para creativos latinos y latinas.” [Maybe I could ask a few points so what we could create ideas to put together videos that we could record and post. I hope we can discuss it. With your help we can create more opportunities for creative Latinos and Latinas.] I wondered why Sergio stayed in this “safe zone” where he was complying with the assignment but not going a step into what I considered action. An obstacle that teachers face, even when breaking with the hypothetical or “appropriate”

reproduction of knowledge, is that students are also used to an educational system where the extension of learning beyond the classroom is not required.

As their teacher, I repeatedly encouraged students through our conferencing and coaching, yet I also struggled with the action piece. I realize now that this struggle of achieving “action” is rooted in three tensions: (1) adjusting the learning process to expected school year milestones, (2) striving for individualized learning within a class community, and (3) valuing the learning process over its product. As soon as October, I have journal entries exploring what I wanted action to look like and how I needed to backwards design this process with a clear ending that used the content and skills of the course’s units to reach it. “Action is more than what is perceivable by outsiders looking in. Some students in the class may achieve my understanding of “action” by creating a club, writing a children’s book, making a podcast, or hosting a school/community event, but what if action is also the act of reflection and personal growth through the exploration of a social issue that matters to them?” (Teacher Journal, 11/26/2022).

Connecting the Local with the Global.

Students were asked to work in groups and make explicit connections to course content and each other’s projects. In efforts of having students view themselves and their project as stemming from activism, they explored different presentations in Spanish and English of the Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations. Using resources through Amnesty International, students used different versions of the rights presented not just in different languages but also to different audiences, including young children. When asked in their digital notebooks why there were such different multimodal versions, the answers varied. Students highlighted that different modes and language could access populations of different ages, levels of education, and regions.

In their digital notebooks, students wrote reflections on the reading of these rights and how they were connected to their projects. My thought process was that if students had chosen project topics that indeed were connected to their personal experiences, seeing how they were linked to human rights would emphasize the importance of their projects in a global sense and most importantly, their personal connections to such topics. In their digital notebooks for the unit, students responded with connections that were at times expected and other times were surprising. Noah, a second language learner focusing on heritage/ indigenous language maintenance in the US and Latin America, connects his project to rights that protect against discrimination: “El derecho que protege a las personas de la discriminacion es importante para mi proyecto. Muchas lenguas que están muriendo son de las personas que sufren de la discriminacion. Algo más, muchas veces las lenguas están muriendo porque sus hablantes sufren la discriminacion” [The right that protects people from discrimination is important for my project. Many languages that are dying are those spoken by people that suffer discrimination.] (Noah, Unit 2 Digital Notebook, 12/2022). Noah not only links his project to discrimination but places it at the root of his project. The metaphor of “roots” when identifying the cause of a social problem can be seen in Freire’s Problem Tree, where the roots, trunk, and leaves compose the continuity of the issue. Noah at this stage, questioned how he could see the leaves (the present issue) in his life and community. In a short conference with him, I asked, where do you see the issue of “dying languages” within the context of this class or students at STEM Academy? He had lost his ethnic languages, he admitted, and he was interested in understanding the power dynamics between languages. He had mostly researched indigenous languages at this point and was unsure on how he could make a difference with those communities. I reminded him that he was interested in continuing to learn and use his Spanish in a space where the language is being

lost across generations that stay in the US. After our interaction, he would create a survey for heritage language learners in the school to see how they viewed language maintenance and the pressures they felt to do so. Finding the root issue of power dynamics between languages in different contexts ultimately gave him more direction on how to connect to his project issue in the here and now and in international contexts.

As we closed the second unit, now into Quarter 3, students were asked to investigate indigenous movements in the Mesoamerican region, specifically in Guatemala. At the start of the new year, I reached out to a mother of students still attending STEM Academy High School, but who were not in my classes this year. I met this mother during a Hispanic Heritage Night sponsored by the World Language Department in 2017 when her children attended the Middle School. She signed up to host a stand of fairtrade and handmade dolls and clothing from Guatemala. I would come to find out through conversation that night that she was born and raised in our state, but worked through the Peace Corps in Guatemala, where she later met her husband, and developed and maintains strong ties to K'iche women that were protecting their textile designs from being patented by cheap labor, often found on their dress, güipiles, that had been passed down for generations. She worked specifically with the group AFEDES (Asociación Femenina para el Desarrollo de Sacatepéquez), who I would soon follow on social media and admire from afar. In 2018, she visited one of my classes, but I did little to really integrate her experiences and content with the course at the time.

Years later, I stayed in contact with this mother. This school year when I reached out, she was thrilled to visit our class via Zoom and as always shared with me the latest contact she had with the leader of AFEDES, who had just presented at an international conference about the environment. I explained to her what class she would be presenting in and how the topics of

language maintenance had also evolved into including tradition maintenance, as well as how to be an activist within our context, a great way to connect to her experience with the Peace Corps and AFEDES. In preparation for her attendance, students explored questions about tradition preservation in their physical notebooks, watched a video and read social media content from “El Movimiento Nacional de Tejedoras,” learned specific vocabulary to discuss Guatemalan textiles in context through visual content, and created questions for our visitor that were first drafted and then submitted on a class Google document. Their challenge was to ask questions that were also somehow linked to their research interests. “Your project is your lens, and you don’t know what connections you can find,” I challenged them.

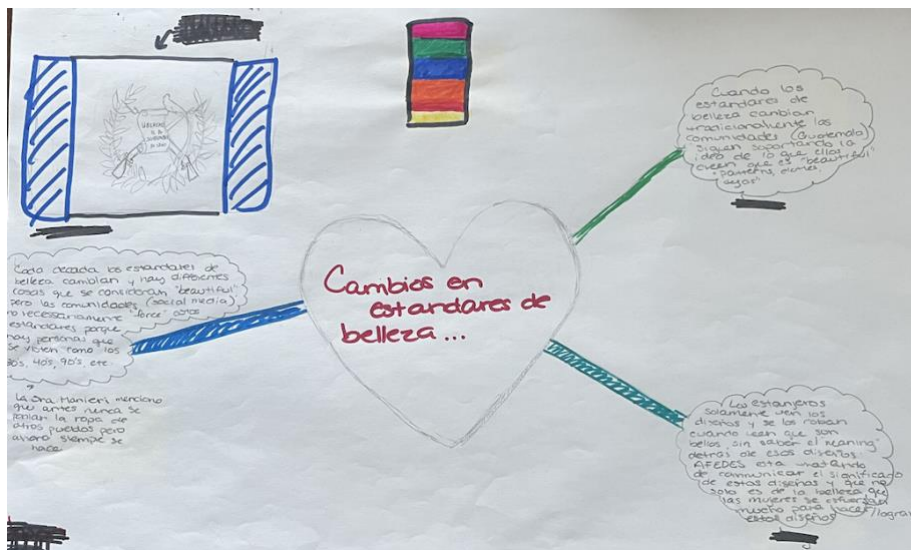
To my surprise, students struggled with this connection seeking that I found so innate to life-long learning in my own research interests. When I read or scroll through social media, news outlets, and have conversations about new experiences, I cannot help but ask how I can best connect what is happening in the present to what we are learning. Returning to the Freire’s tree metaphor, is teaching not collecting those leaves (the issues we see and/or experience) and questioning the trunk and roots of those issues? Learning, purposefully as a gerund, seems to be two-fold, understanding the parts of an issue and reflecting and expressing your own take on how the issues unfold and what your relationship is to the issue.

To guide connection making and creativity, students were asked to create mind maps in groups, through different lenses to present their understanding of AFEDES. The topics were decided through a collaborative effort between students and teacher to recap the points learned from the presentation. There were five groups in total and the topics were the following: “Protección de derechos” (mujeres indígenas, el medio ambiente) [Protection of Rights (indigenous women, the environment)], “Cambios de estándares de belleza” [Changes of beauty

standards], “Mantenimiento de idiomas”[Maintenance of languages], “Equidad en la Educación” [Equality in Education], and “Independencia económica” [Economic Independence], respectively. Groups were once again assigned by similar research interests when possible. Two of the maps are included below. In Figure 8, the group in charge of “Cambios en estándares de belleza,” had three students and each one highlighted a distinct perspective within the same topic. Yarielis asked to see the authentic textile I had in class and coordinated the markers she needed to represent the colors on their map. The colors are located vertically in the top- center of the map and those colors served as the extension from the heart with the topic in the center. Luis, the group artist, drew the Guatemalan flag con el escudo that he copied from his laptop screen and wrote about how their topic highlighted resistance: “Cuando los estándares de belleza cambian tradicionalmente las comunidades (Guatemala) siguen soportando (apoyando) la idea de lo que ellos creen que es “beautiful” “patterns, clothes, tejas (tejidos).”

Figure 6

Making Connections: Cambios en los estándares de belleza



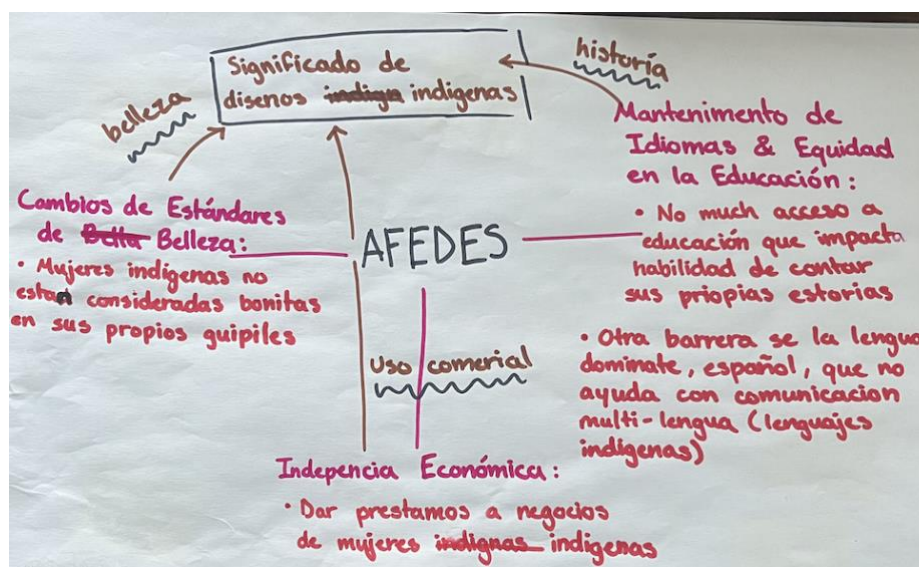
(Group work Yarielis, Luis, and Daniel, 2/15/2023)

Yarielis thinks about how beauty standards are always relative to what people want to wear. It seems like people have the control to decide just how someone in western culture can decide to wear vintage from the 20s and an indigenous woman can decide to wear designs from a neighboring pueblo. Lastly, Daniel sees the deeper meaning behind an aesthetically pleasing design. He is concerned with the cultural and economic appropriation of indigenous designs without understanding the true meaning and history.

The topic of beauty standards also appeared in the group assigned “economic independence” as their focus, as seen in Figure 9. This group did not place their topic in the center but rather the AFEDES group and the other topics stemming from it in order to all point towards “el significado de diseños indígenas” [the meaning of indigenous designs.]

Figure 7

Making Connections: La belleza, la educación y la economía



(Group work Azucena and Alex, 2/15/2023)

The only pair group, Azucena and Alex, captured their conversation about each of the topics in a way that highlights the value of the indigenous population, such as recognizing their history/stories, multilingual abilities, and ability to be women leaders in a commercial world enacted by the west. However, they also present their lack of privilege in a society that wants indigenous to believe that their güipiles are not beautiful and that sustains linguistic and educational barriers by excluding non-dominant languages.

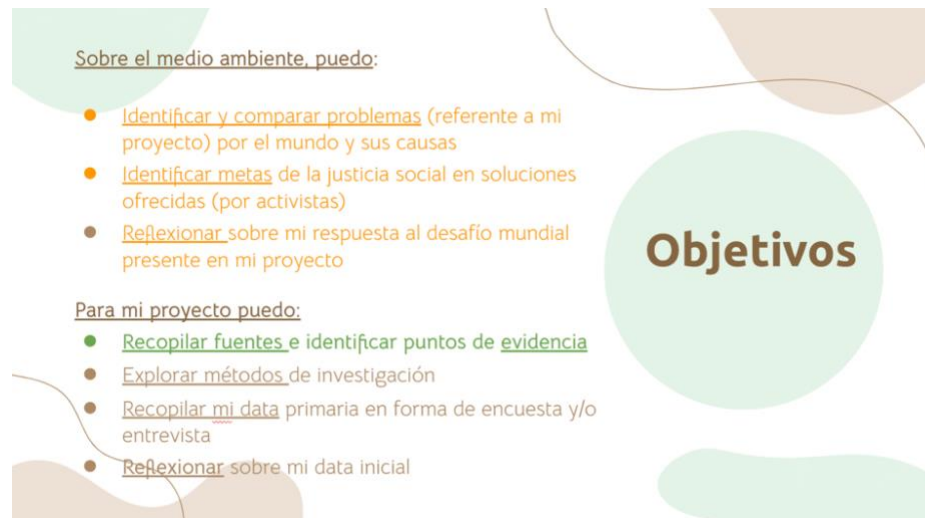
During the time that students were preparing for these mind map presentations, they were also reflecting on an “Exploración de Entidades Locales” document, where students had to research local non-for-profit businesses or associations that were connected to their projects. Although I did not offer them an exhaustive list, I thought of local entities they could potentially contact organized into four categories: Access to literacy, Access to health, Access to history and voluntarism, and Access to art. My decision to join these two planes of connections was to shift from the global to the local in order to intensify students’ critical lens and guide their practical applications in their own context. However, having students connect in the local sense took on a different purpose after an exchange later in the year with Azucena. She mentioned to me how sometimes studying even her home country can seem foreign and that places she has never been, also in the US just made her wonder what a certain issue looked like “here,” in places she knew (Teacher Journal, 3/15/2023). With this assignment I led students to brainstorm how they could build upon the entity’s work. I expected students to plan how local connections could support their project as resources but also could inspire them to become more involved. However, because we had a February week-long break after this, I left it as an exploratory reflection and did not follow it up with a summative assessment. Something I wanted to prioritize fell to the

pressures of time and unit progression that prepared students to present data in predetermined ways.

The general result of my flexibility as a teacher lengthened the amount of time we spent on the first two units that exceeded the first two marking periods or quarters of the school year. By the time we entered the third unit, “El medio ambiente y la tecnología” [The environment and technology], we were already in March. I used the transition of our late February break to move into this new unit. Even though I adjusted after Unit 1 to include a mini unit dedicated only to students’ projects, we could not afford to do this anymore and the year was winding down, even though it did not feel like it to students. We had approximately 6 weeks, about two weeks less than other units, and project and content goals had to be met by the last marking period that began after Spring Break. This race against time had me evaluate and make decisions, at times to cut material from the syllabus and other times have me reroute the direction or path I was creating for students. In addition, some of the students that had taken this course without the Capstone element last year had background knowledge about this content. My response to this was to make class-wide goals (objectives) and offer a wide variety of texts to choose from, especially magazine articles, videos, and podcasts of different reading levels. I shared the objectives with students, as seen in Figure 8. The orange bullet points include the objectives related to the content material (environmental issues and technological responses) and the second category of bullets included the goals they were to meet for their personal Capstone projects. The green bullet was the one we worked on when we began the unit in conjunction with the content material.

Figure 8

Unit 3 Objectives Slide



As I was backwards planning to have students reach the project goals I mapped out, I realized that students needed more help in acquiring sources for their own research. Expecting independent research requires specific skills such as using keywords, identifying reliable sources, citing in APA format, notetaking in their logs, and noticing counterarguments. We had to continue the project objective from Unit 2 without reaching a point where most were ready to review options for their methodology and collect initial data to better inform their project conclusions and action steps. Instead, I adjusted once again, deciding to move forward but in a way that the content goals could complement their personal project goals. Comparison is one of ACTFL's 5 C's and is often included in language proficiency exams, which most students would be taking in May to qualify for their Biliteracy Seal.

Because the ability to compare, along with offering evidence to sustain that comparison, was a skill we were accessing through the content in both a local and global sense, it seemed

appropriate to extend this level of comparison within students' own projects. Through students' digital notebooks, we discussed short videos as a class, such as "El Wall-e Boliviano" and "Kawsaq allpa | Tierra viva," which later allowed for time to choose articles and podcasts that would offer students a way to compare how the climate crisis is being dealt with in different locations and who is being (most) affected. Within this exercise, students had to build a small research log, much like the one they had started for their project and choose what they wanted to compare as well as prepare a short presentation that included an introduction to the issue they compared, the actual comparison, and conclusion. Students adapted the slides provided in their Digital Notebook or added additional slides and prepared for presentation day, which usually created a buzz in the room as students went from presenters in their "booths" (from by groups of desks) to audience members in different rounds. After these presentations, students were asked to leave a recording that included a synopsis of their presentation and what they learned from other presenters and/ or what connections they can make to their own projects, depending on their topic.

In order to connect content, skills, and the continuous of Capstone projects, I extended the application of creating connections between the local and the global into the application of what we called fostering one's own "activist lens" in the last section to comment on a global issue. I saw this flourish in concrete ways, for example in, two students' work, Azucena and José. In Azucena's Digital Notebook, she commented on the Quechua produced video "Kawsaq allpa | Tierra viva," by stating that the lesson of the video for the audience is to "Respetar la naturaleza en forma que tomamos lo que necesitamos (recursos) y tener la mentalidad de no dominar la, para las acciones que dañan la naturaleza" [Respecting nature in the way we take what we need (resources) and have the mentality of not dominating it, for the actions that harm

nature.] Using the word “dominar” [dominate] reveals a critical lens, through this perspective she nods to the shift of power that society (since the “big wave of industrializing” as stated by Daniel) has made thinking that humans can control and act against nature rather than live within its rules.

Students’ critical and activist perspective also began to mirror the hope and resilience necessary to believe and make change happen that I stressed through our content. For instance, in their Digital Notebooks, students had to respond to a peer that did not want to care for environmental issues since they were just one person. They indicate that one person is part of a greater unit, but that as individuals “tú tienes el poder de cambiar hábitos y convencer a otros que se unan en la pelea de cambio climático porque cada acción cuenta” [you have the power to change your habits and convince others to join the fight of fighting climate change because each action counts] (Azucena, Digital Notebook, March 2023.) In her presentation reflection, Jessica sees beyond injustice by citing indigenous populations that have worked with nature to work against climate issues, such as in an article we read as a class on the cultivation of potatoes in Peru. With this example, she sees how a marginalized community could also be part of the solution and not just victimized. Students are emphasizing beacons of light in ways that can move us out of an environmental crisis. I hoped that these perspectives of resiliency would carry over to students’ projects, and I expressed to students contributing with their own “granito de arena” (grain of sand) to the issue they were studying in their year-long project.

This unit was one of the most challenging for me as a teacher because I felt increased tension with the “where we ought to be” as a class and “where it felt right to be” at the moment. After analyzing students’ work as a whole, I see the benefit in spending time responding to the need to make connections in many different angles with both the content and their projects. In

addition, this section “connecting the local with the global” also built upon and continued the work from “taking on an activist lens.” However, as I look to teach this course again, moments of reflection lead to changes that cannot be ignored. This unit was “supposed to” include formative experiences with data collection. I believe that as I repeat this course, I need to better support students in starting data collection as a way to collect evidence in their own lives, especially by interviewing someone or taking notes on conversation groups.

Applied Learning.

Towards the end of each unit, the learning cycle ended with what I will call applied learning in the sense that students were applying learned skills to their Capstone research projects. To build upon their skills of comparison and research in the process, I had students follow a similar format. I remember saying to keep the consistency that “Now that you presented on the research you did on the environment and climate issues, you will present your summative assessment in your application to your own project.” The aim for cohesion within the content unit here allowed me to better support students in expanding their research logs, this time with a more defined objective of inserting comparison in their literature review. Although some students received feedback for comparing the US and Latin America too broadly, most were expanding their topic’s reach from the local to the global and back. Almost all presentations compared the US or the local with Latin American or in one case, European countries. Where location was not the primary interest, students found ways to better support their claims or thesis statements by finding more resources on comparisons that highlight disparities. Sergio, researching the lack of representation in theater and film, compared the US population to its representation in different art forms. He decided to include data cited by others on this issue in the form of graphs, clipped from his sources. When conferencing, I made note to him that he

could compare how marginalization translates to film in other countries as well, but I also shared with him a post on Instagram that could give him a clue. The post cited statistics from Pew Research Center that I suggested he look up directly himself. Since he did not have this social media account, I sent him screenshots that influenced his focus on adding statistics to his research. On his slide, he bolded his thesis statement around his graphs: “Tenemos una distinción de ser un país muy diverso, pero el entretenimiento no tiene mucha representacion de actores y actrices de color” [We are distinguished as a diverse country, but our entertainment does not have much representation of actors and actresses of color.] This example allows me to reflect on my guide as an instructor, still leaving decisions in hands of the student and thinking about how to guide him next with the question, “so what would you like to do about it?” Not providing the answers, yet offering a guided path to students, also takes time, something that I was already running against.

As noted in previous sections, adjustments were made depending on the unit when this application would move from a more guided and content related product to their personal projects. As I reflected during the year, I made decisions to veer from the syllabus, which led more to better defined goals, which I find happens frequently when teaching a new course curriculum for the first time. Admittedly though, there will always be some level of flexibility that is needed to cater to the individuals before me. With that said, the last unit, from mid- April to early June was mostly dedicated to students collecting, analyzing, and presenting their data on the issue they had researched throughout the year. This was not my original plan on the syllabus (Appendix A) where the last unit was supposed to leave space for students to explore our last content theme on mental and physical health and implement an action step based on their research study while they worked on the presentation of their findings. Once again, I had to

prioritize, condense, and adjust the unit outcomes. Students had a shorter time to explore the last unit theme but were able to reflect upon how mental health is promoted through educational efforts and in larger society, particularly within the Latinx community in the US. Since there are more interruptions at the end of the year as well with AP exams, field trips, and events, the content in the unit had to be simultaneously used to review elements of argumentative writing through different genres so that then students could apply those skills in their own projects and ultimately Capstone project presentations.

Using articles that utilized images and the magazine article genre in particular, students had to identify how evidence was provided for claims about mental health. A website through the NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) was also used as a text to promote students' critical and analytical skills on how and what information was provided for Latinx consumers trying to better understand mental health issues. I selected a website in addition to other genres because I wanted students to brainstorm what their own website or other form digital presentation would need to include as an argumentative text with a cause. Among students' reflections on this website, Luis, whose project on the role of culture on mental health directly correlated with the text, highlights how the website recommends speaking to professionals "que entienden la influencia de la cultura" [that understand the influence of culture] (Unit 4, Luis, 5/3/2023). Alberto, who studied the effect of technology on mental health, also thinks that having a website, even in Spanish, is not enough to reach its intended audience. He indicates that more awareness within Latinx communities is needed, and that communication can be spread through the news outlets. When asked how a website such as this can be improved, Alberto and Luis's answers hint at how a text needs to provide a bridge to other resources, such as conversations with

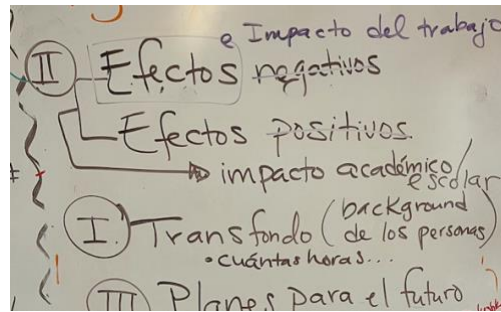
qualified professionals that understand Latinx culture and making information more accessible through other forms of communication such as through audiovisual elements.

Instead of ending the course with a traditional research paper, usual of Capstone courses at STEM Academy High School, students were prompted to (re)-write four short documents (introduction, literature review, methodology, and analysis/ conclusions) and then present their research and their personal growth through the study of their topic in a multimodal presentation. After evaluating argumentative texts and studies they referenced within this last unit, students moved on to apply their own evaluation of the ethics and limitations of their own study, create questions for open-ended surveys or interviews, and collect their data. Their analysis of this data was included in their conclusion and reflections about the project.

Students had to create and share their questions and to them approved if their study required a survey and/or interview. Without a prescribed formula, they were told to brainstorm questions. Later, as a class, we used a few drafted questions from volunteers. As we reviewed the questions, we had to identify and help expand what the student-researcher wanted to know. In the process, the student-researcher was asked to step back from these questions and make a list of topics or key points they wanted to find out. I explained that those key topics should lead to questions but to think about them fully, “so you have more depth and breadth to your questions.” Albert, who wanted to see the impact of technology (particularly cellphone use) on mental health, drafted questions for his interviews. As his digital draft was on the Smartboard, he could adapt to the feedback as I and other students added suggestions in real time. In Figure 9, I stood and worked alongside Alex, who was organizing his categories to create questions for an interview.

Figure 9

Workshop: “Let’s try to figure this out together”



Students began to collaborate, check their work, ask me for added feedback and begin collecting their data. Including this process at a smaller scale during unit 3 as I proposed for next year, should also streamline this level of applied learning. The goal is for students to apply this knowledge to the topic they are passionate about but in ways that are not necessarily a formula. Giving this amount of choice can be overwhelming, but effectively moves students from applying “appropriately” to “creatively” in transformed practice (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015).

As seen in the instructions of students’ final project, in Appendix E, students had to return to previous work from each quarter to complete the divided parts of the research project: Introduction, Investigation, Methodology (and analysis), and Conclusion/ Reflection. Documents that separated the project and yet hyperlinked to their previous work, allowed for students to evolve their own work and to shift from the inner circle of the multiliteracy quadrants that moves from the “known” or “appropriate” to the new and creative production of knowledge based on their extended experience. The skills of identifying and articulating their own Capstone project throughout the year incrementally allowed students to apply the content and writing skills into

their own project in an interconnected and spiral process, even though the course had milestone markers that needed to align to the quarter and semester system. Azucena states, “Lo más inolvidable de este Proyecto es como mi tema (encontrado) fue conectando con otros temas” [The most memorable aspect of this project is how my topic began connecting with other topics] (Notebook, 5/31/23.) Although this student struggled to find her topic more than others in the course, by the end, she valued her experience. Overall, nearly every student who conducted interviews named that experience as one that pushed them beyond comfort but was also the most gratifying. Luis conducted interviews to verify to what extent those close to him showed ties between their culture (as well as socio-economic status) and their mental health. Luis states, “Para mi una de las cosas más difíciles de este proceso era cuando nosotros necesitamos recopilar datos. Este proyecto en general es algo que no voy a olvidar. Fue una experiencia única y muy difícil” [For me one of the most difficult parts of this process was when we needed to collect data. This project in general is something I will not forget] (Digital Notebook, 5/26/23.) Joangelys, who also conducted interviews on a similar topic, states “Lo más inolvidable fue hablando con otras personas para poder saber cómo ayuda. Me impactó lo mucho que necesitan ayuda en latinoamérica para sus medicamentos y otras cosas” [The most memorable part was talking to other people to know how to help. I was impacted by the need for aid in Latin America for medication and other things] (Notebook, 5/31/23.) She recognizes that speaking and learning from others in her extended community enables her to think about how she wants to respond to the issue of mental health and well-being in Latin America. Reading about a problem is not enough, yet speaking and listening in a real context, beyond the class, allowed her and others to use their language and literacy skills for a real purpose. The fact that their project topics were ultimately student-generated, with limited guidance, allowed students to start looking inward in

order to look outward. Albert also states how his interviews and the analysis of them were the most powerful experience in the course, however, he adds that the entire project on the effect of technology on mental, “me animó a buscar una forma de que me pueda ayudar a mi mismo” [it motivated me to look for a way to help myself] (Notebook, 5/31/23).

As I completed this project as both a teacher and researcher, I found that much of the advice I gave my own students also served me. The cliché “trusting the process” felt daring in a setting where parts of the process are predetermined. I looked at my role as both proactive and reactive to best respond in the moment to my students. We shared the uncertainty and the joys of learning on a shared plane, which at times blurred and ultimately united our roles.

In the next chapter, I will present the findings through the data following the stories of three focal students in the course. Students’ year-long Capstone projects will be foregrounded as I weave their processes in the course to create three unique tapestries of the school year. These stories are presented with the aim to better understand how these experiences, of Spanish heritage language learners, align with the findings of this research study.

Chapter 5: Findings via Focal Students

Introduction

In Chapter 4, I presented the highlights of the course while emphasizing the practitioner-researcher role to answer one of my research questions: How do Spanish heritage students and their teacher collaborate to deepen their socio-critical awareness of lived experiences? In this chapter, I present the results of the data analysis that focuses on the student experience by answering all the research questions: In what ways do Spanish heritage language learners and their teacher engage with diverse experiences centered on social justice themes that affect Latinx communities?

- a. How does a Spanish heritage language teacher use a reflective practitioner stance to deepen students' critical awareness?
- b. How do students' own storytelling reveal their socio-critical awareness developed within the classroom?
- c. What happens when the process of learning is emphasized over its product in the classroom?

The data were collected throughout an entire school year, as detailed in Chapter 3, in the forms of classroom observations, course documents, student and teacher artifacts, and student-teacher conferences. The structure of the findings of this study first went in the order of the school year, as seen in Chapter 4, through my practitioner reflection, which includes evidence from a larger variety of students in the course.

In this chapter, I present the findings through three focal students. As indicated in Chapter 3, these students were selected through purposeful sampling, following maximum variation sampling, which values highlighting “diverse variation of individuals or sites based on specific characteristics” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 159). Even though the students selected can all be classified as invested in the course through their levels of engagement and their desire to excel in their studies, they represent different project topics as well as highlight the variation of their learning process. Table 7 below includes the focal students along with their classmates that accepted to be participants in this study.

Table 7*Student Final Project Themes*

Student	Grade	Language	Unit	Final Project Theme
Noah	12	L2	1-2	Language maintenance/ recovery of marginalized language
*Azucena	11	HL	1-2	The role of culture in translation
*Yarielis	11	HL	1,4	How judgement affects one's identity within the Latinx community
Jessica	11	HL	1	Language maintenance and home- life involvement in schools
Melissa	11	L2	1	Language maintenance to prevent knowledge loss
David	12	HL	1	Language maintenance to strength family bonds
Mason	12	L2	1	Second language learning: Including out of class conversations
Patrick	12	L2	2	Food insecurity in our capitol area
Sergio	12	HL	2	Latinx representation in theater/ arts
Alex	11	HL	2	The effect of working outside of school on teens
José	12	HL	3-4	The impact of technology on teens in different contexts
Julissa	12	HL	3	The effects of environmental consciousness
*Daniel	11	HL	4	The access to CRISPER technology in different contexts
Milka	12	HL	4	Awareness about Dementia/ Alzheimer's and its effects on families and caretakers
Albert	12	HL	4	The impact of social media on mental health
Joangelys	12	HL	4	The quest for mental and physical health access for Latinx (im)migrants
Luis	12	HL	4	Mental health access for Latinx in US

*Denoted students are focal students.

To answer my research questions in this chapter, I look at the specific development of these denoted three students' Capstone projects. I turn to students' stories that are revealed

through written and spoken reflections and interactions through the units of study and ultimately their final research project presentations. I pay particular attention to how students use their multiliteracies to actively engage and make connections within the course content and their developing projects.

I have chosen what I refer to as “key moments” in the development of their projects that supported students’ agency rooted in their identities as a way to engage with course material. To better understand this process, that is developed between the teacher and students, I present three students’ backgrounds, their Capstone Final Project, and three key moments per student at different points of the year that highlight the students’ progression, not just in their project but in how they viewed themselves as student-researchers. Along the way, these moments were also significant for me as the instructor to adjust, adapt, and challenge the course outcomes to fit the students, rather than the other way around.

The theoretical framework discussed in Chapter 1, informed my decision making as a teacher-researcher. Under the umbrella of critical sociocultural theory, I used culturally sustaining pedagogies to achieve critical language awareness in the learning process, as structured by multiliteracy epistemological moves. The result of this process has different implications, making students’ learning process more individualized within an educational system that is organized by generic learning milestones. It also has the result of making teachers lead from a hybrid role as an instructor, researcher, and student of the experience with their students.

The findings are organized to provide an overall understanding of how Spanish heritage language learners (SHLLs) navigated an advanced writing course that supported their Capstone projects throughout the school year. Since the course and its milestones have been contextualized

in Chapter 4, each section in Chapter 5 focuses on a focal student. I begin each section describing each student. I then present each student's Capstone final project and follow with the artifacts in chronological order that reveal the connections students established through their own learning process. This process is divided into four sections that correlate with the four findings of this study, which reflect the Learning by Design moves (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). As seen in Table 8 below, the overall theme of "disrupting hierarchies in the learning process," is defined by (1) connection of self and academics, (2) content and skills support independent research, (3) reflective critical lens, and (4) student choice and agency. These major codes emerged during my thematic analysis across students' reflections in both digital and paper notebooks, a personal narrative as well as presentations at the end of each unit of study, and teacher-student conferencing. All of these final codes together and examples from the data collected support the overall theme of this research study. The moments I highlighted through the sample quotes from student and practitioner artifacts during this study show how it was through the collaboration of knowledge between students and their teacher that students were able to move from the inner circle of applying skills in an appropriate or guided setting to one that could be applied with more freedom and creativity, resulting in transformation for the sake of student agency. The sections to follow on each focal student, capture how these SHLLs apply a critical sociocultural lens to motivate their research projects.

Table 8*Codebook Chart: Disrupting Hierarchies in the Learning Process*

Overall Theme	Code Name	Initial Codes	Definition	Example of segment of text from study
Disrupting hierarchies in the learning process	Connection of self and academics	Self-Academics	When students and/or teacher specifically describe a life experience that inspires or fuels an academic endeavor.	<p>Mezclar nuestros intereses personales con los academicos, si los mexclamos podemos entender y ayudar más a otras personas. Puedo conectar los dos ya que soy bilingue y muchos se burlan y piensan que mi acento es gracioso y lo que estoy investigando habla de la salud mental y tehnologia y pienso que esas dos cosas estan unidas con el bullying y muchas cosas más...</p> <p>[Mixing our personal interests with academic ones, if we mix them we can understand and help other people more. I can connect the two since I am bilingual and many make fun of me and think that my accent is funny and what I am researching talks about mental health and technology and I think that those two things are linked with bullying and many more things...]</p> <p>(Joangelys, Notebook, 11/15/22)</p>

	<p>Content and skills support independent research</p>	<p>Vocabulary Text</p>	<p>When students use a text or new concepts from the course to support their own views or experience.</p>	<p>...porque el mundo "glorifica" a un español como el español "original" nos tomamos envidia y empezamos a compararnos con este español que despues se convirtio en juicio entre nosotros.. (cita de Anzaldúa: "We suppress each other trying to out-Chicano each other, trying to be "real Chicanos" "tratamos de out do each other como una manera de ser el "original." Como manera de afirmar el dominio pero tenemos que entender que somos una sola comunidad, una unidad.</p> <p>[..because the world "glorifies" a Spanish as the "original" Spanish, we become envious and begin to compare ourselves with this Spanish which later becomes a judgment between us.. (quote from Anzaldúa: "We suppress each other trying to out-Chicano each other, trying to be "real Chicanos" "we try to out do each other as a way of being the "original." As a way of asserting dominance but we have to understand that we are one community, one unit.)</p> <p>(Yarielis, Midterm Letter, 1/27)</p>
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		<p>Modeling Scaffold Adjust Move</p>	<p>When curriculum is purposely adjusted to provide aids in student-initiated research</p>	<p>When asking students to create questions in general but also with the topics or Capstone in mind felt a bit rushed but they still produced their own impressive questions. Some students admittedly did not participate, or some were "stuck" in how to connect their interests to the topic at hand. I underestimated how important this is to teach: Connections (drawn arrows) critical thinking, especially available through the social sciences/ humanities. Using Daniel and Yarielis questions, I was able to address the class better with their process examples before approaching other student groups. (Teacher Journal, 2/11/23)</p>
	<p>Reflective critical lens</p>	<p>CLA</p>	<p>When students express understanding how language exist in social hierarchies</p>	<p>Como el español es mas aceptable en Guatemala. Esto tambien es puede decir con el resto de pais en latino america. El Mam y otro lenguas usado en pais esta perdido lentamente por el mayor uso el español in many settings. [Since Spanish is more acceptable in Guatemala. This can also be said with the rest of the countries in Latin America. Mam and other languages used in the</p>

				<p>country are slowly being lost due to the greater use of Spanish in many settings. (Azucena, Digital Notebook, 10/7/22)</p>
		<p>Social justice Activism Human Rights</p>	<p>When students extend their understanding of injustice to their projects</p>	<p>La minería ilegal tiene efectos negativos significativos en el medio ambiente y la sociedad, incluida la destrucción de los bosques, la contaminación del suministro de agua, la exposición de los mineros a los riesgos para la salud, y la violación de los derechos humanos. La pobreza y la escasez de posibilidades económicas son con frecuencia las fuerzas impulsoras detrás de la minería ilegal en las comunidades afectadas por ella.</p> <p>[Illegal mining has significant negative effects on the environment and society, including the destruction of forests, contamination of water supplies, exposure of miners to health risks, and the violation of human rights. Poverty and limited economic opportunities are often the driving forces behind illegal mining in communities affected by it. (José, Unit 3 Presentation)</p>

	Student choice and agency	Hope Breaking the Cycle	When students express hope or change in the future to solve societal issues	...y con ese conocimiento puede ayudar crear la próxima generacion to be proud of who they are instead of ashamed of it. [...and with that knowledge it can help create the next generation to be proud of who they are instead of ashamed of it.] (Daniel, Socratic Seminar Reflection, 11/2/22)
		Choices Collaboration,	When curricular decisions allow for students to decide how to investigate an issue and respond to it	He (Daniel) wants to use Prezi and has a visual idea for his project, but also wants to adapt the outline I provided. We ended up discussing and I wrote on a post it sized notepaper "Crisper: 1. uso, tech de CRISPER, 2. Uso y acceso en diferentes contextos 3. Disparidades." (Teacher journal, 5/23/23).

Focal Cases

In this section, I introduce each of my focal students by providing background information about them before introducing their Capstone project and highlighting key moments during this school year-long journey. By presenting three different experiences through purposeful sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), I used maximum variation sampling to choose the focal students within this case study. Even though these students portray different experiences through this course and study, they have commonalities that respond to the research questions of this study. All three students are Spanish heritage language learners of roughly similar proficiency levels. They all passed their Biliteracy Seal testing with a minimum score of

intermediate-mid (in reading, writing, listening, and speaking) on the STAMP (Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency) test during their junior year and will be recognized for this at their graduation the following year after the study took place. I had taught these three students for three consecutive years at the end of this study, and they had taken the Spanish heritage pathway of courses from Heritage Spanish Speakers I through this Spanish ECE course. All three students were also invested in the course, and yet had generative struggles within the course material that allowed them to grow in areas of interest that were rooted in their concept of self.

Daniel: Cómo CRISPR afecta el mundo

Introduction to Daniel.

During this research study, Daniel was a 16-year-old in the 11th grade who identified as Latinx through his parents' country of origin, Dominican Republic. He is a student that excels in most of his classes, especially his passion—the sciences. He has two older siblings that he looks up to that are interested in a similar field. Although he was born in the US, he travels regularly with his family to the Dominican Republic and feels connected to his culture. In my courses, I observed Daniel to be a very good student who communicates regularly and voluntarily about his work. He approaches me to check for understanding and to give extra feedback. Receiving a grade under an “A” always means another attempt to do the best he can to achieve high marks. Unlike most students that I have had that struggle with the humanities though, Daniel recognizes it is not his nature and seeks to improve and complement his knowledge in math and science with the humanities.

Daniel's Capstone Project.

Early in the course, students had to choose a unit and its essential questions to write what they were potentially interested to understand through a Capstone research project in this course.

Daniel first selected the unit on environmental studies. I was not entirely surprised with his selection since this topic is often studied in the sciences, although often in-depth only through electives such as the Environmental Science AP course. In my teacher journal, I noted that several of my students were confused about the requirements around Capstone. Daniel was already in another course, Molecular Cell Biology (MCB), that was considered a Capstone course. He approached me about this issue, and I reassured him that he would be able to choose something different of his liking to research in our class or find ways to connect his study in MCB with Spanish. After thinking this through, he approached me about joining his Capstone classes and having this Spanish course complement the research and experiment he would run in his science elective. Obviously, I did not know about CRISPR technology the way he did and his biology teacher; however, I saw this as an exciting interdisciplinary study and let him know I would be learning from him in the process. Right away I knew that areas for growth would be to consider his study globally and know how medical technologies, such as this one, function and affect others who would most benefit from these scientific advances. Daniel's Capstone story is more than the "what" and "how" that CRISPR has to offer but also, his own personal challenge of finding the "why" through a critical lens that went a step further to understand the social context in which access to medical technologies exists.

"Somos como un puente."

Within the first few weeks of the course, Daniel had decided the topic of his Capstone and that his research in the class would extend and complement the science background and experiment he was conducting in his molecular science course. Communicating to me that he struggled with "the humanities side," as he referred to our class, he was at first stumped by what it really meant to do this project in Spanish. Why did it matter that he was researching CRISPR

in Spanish? What did it have to do with him personally? Who was this important for? Students were urged to think of a key moment, anecdote, or life experience that connected them to the purpose of their research projects. Writing in the narrative genre to answer these questions with a detailed anecdote was not a new concept for Daniel since we had worked on this genre in Spanish for Heritage Speakers II the year before. However, he told me then and reaffirmed it in the new course that he did not necessarily enjoy writing about himself.

At first, during our conferences, Daniel had a hard time choosing a moment or something about him and his relationship to Spanish and English that mattered for this project. I advised him to go back to our work during Unit 1, especially his Linguistic Autobiography. Daniel had experienced the “known” and the “new” about bilingualism during Unit 1, allowing him to situate his language experiences. Although he still required coaching to make these connections to himself and his project, he ultimately accomplished it. In his narrative he talks about the background of his parents and their move to the United States. He describes in greater detail how his siblings and himself are “los tres puentes ellos tomaron para conectarlo a este país” [the three bridges that connect them to this country.] He also describes how they went to school in the US and brought back home things to teach his parents. They would also translate specific words or concepts their parents were not exposed to.

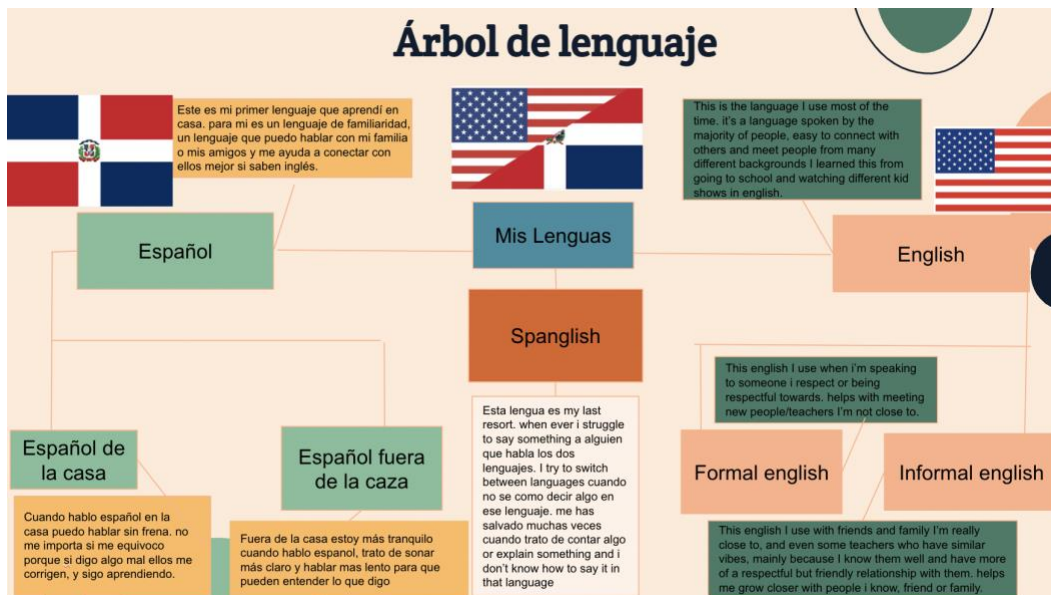
In his Unit 1 narrative, Daniel also makes a shift from what he has been able to do for his parents as a cultural or linguistic translator to what he could now do for others. He states, “Pero no solo son ellos, hay muchas personas que necesitan ayuda para entender información. Con este proyecto voy a investigar la ciencia de CRISPR, pero también tratar de abogar para otras comunidades y buscar maneras de usar esta ciencia para ayudar a los demás. También tratar de difundir mis investigaciones para las personas que lo necesitan” [But it's not just them, there are

many people who need help understanding information. With this project I am going to investigate the science of CRISPR, but also try to advocate for other communities and look for ways to use this science to help others. Also try to spread my research to people who need it] (Unit 1 Final, 12/1/2022.)

In an earlier assignment, Daniel did not view “bridges” positively as he does here. For instance, in his Linguistic Autobiography, he recognizes his hybridity as in between being from the US and Dominican. He also places “Spanglish” as an aspect of his language underneath this hybridity.

Figure 10

Daniel’s “Árbol de lenguaje”



In his description of Spanglish, which he chooses to write mixing both languages to portray its use, Daniel states that his in-between language is a “last resort” when he does not know a certain word. However, the words he uses in English in his Spanglish examples are ones that he clearly

does know how to say in either language. He also admits in the unit’s digital notebook that when he struggled with speaking Spanish, he used to view himself as “less dominican porque en mi mente todos los dominicanos saben como hablar español” [less Dominican because in my mind all Dominicans know how to speak Spanish] (Daniel, Digital Notebook, 10/7/2022.) Ultimately though, in his narrative at the end of the unit, Daniel portrays himself as a bridge of knowledge gained at both home (Spanish language and Dominican-American culture) and at school (connecting science and humanities). After this presentation, Daniel uses his experience with Spanglish as a unifying mix of languages to explain how, likewise, scientific discoveries in one country can be brought to other areas with higher needs:

“Muchos de los países que son más populares y tienen más dinero tienen el poder de usar diferentes tecnologías y ciencias para ayudar a su pueblo. Pero los países que son más pobres no tienen esa privilegia. Y exactamente como podemos mezclar diferentes lenguas juntos como el español e inglés, podemos mezclar los descubrimientos científicos. Por ejemplo, la tecnología de CRISPR, aunque podemos hacer nuestra investigaciones aquí, podemos transferir esos descubrimientos a otros países que no tienen los recursos para hacer las investigaciones” (Daniel, Unit 1 Project Submission, November 2022)

[Many of the countries that are more popular and have more money have the power to use different technologies and sciences to help their people. But countries that are poorer do not have that privilege. And exactly like we can mix different languages together like Spanish and English, we can mix scientific discoveries. For example, CRISPR technology, although we can do our research here, we can transfer those discoveries to other countries that do not have the resources to do the research.] (Daniel, Unit 1 Project Submission, November 2022)

Taking on an Interdisciplinary Approach—making connections.

In a journal entry, Daniel compares schooling to raw ingredients. He expands upon this stating that “durante el año se aprende como puedes usar esos ingredientes para hacer una cena grande” [during the year you learn how you can use those ingredients to make a big dinner] (Notebook, 10/5/2022.) In turn, I would like to use his own metaphor to describe Daniel’s experience of making connections to create an interdisciplinary research project. As we

progressed in the year, he focused more on the *access* to health. His approach to humanities then became more focused on social justice. His raw ingredients from his science and Spanish courses were beginning to intersect at this point. When tasked with finding the connection between his research project and human rights, as described in Chapter 4, Daniel emphasizes the connection to rights that made reference to health: “Un derecho que es importante para mi proyecto es la salud global, porque hay muchos descubrimientos de ciencia que no son distribuidos a las comunidades que no pueden acceder a la misma tecnología de los Estados Unidos.” [A right that is important for my project is global health, because there are many scientific discoveries that are not distributed to communities that cannot access the same technology as the United States.] (Daniel, Unit 2 Digital Notebook, 12/2022.) Widening the impact of his project through global health, started to give him a solid ground for making connections. Once this connection was made, Daniel raised his hand less to ask for help in establishing relationships between his personal and academic interests that informed his Capstone project.

As seen in his final project Prezi in Figure 11 below, he places his knowledge of science on the same plane as the world and thus his knowledge can be extended to better world-wide health as implied with the visuals the go from explaining the technology of CRISPR, how it is and can be used, and ultimately how it can better lives in different countries, including those without the resources to lead the research on CRISPR.

Figure 11

Daniel's Website Sections



Working Against Disparities.

During Unit 3, dedicated to environmental issues, Daniel compared the Waorani population in the Amazon with the poor Black population in North Carolina in 1982 from two articles which he selected to read. Daniel's comparison makes environmental racism a social justice issue and environmental justice a goal in the local as well as the global context:

Alrededor de la selva hay varias comunidades, como los waorani, que usan los recursos de la selva, y cuando las compañías destruyen la selva, están destruyendo los recursos que son necesarios para ellos a vivir. En los Estados Unidos también hay problemas ambientales causados por la conveniencia de compañías. En Carolina del norte en el año 1982, había una compañía que botó tóxicos en barrios de minorías predominantemente pobres. está causando muchas problemas ambientales alrededor los barrios. Los residentes trataban de protestar este racismo ambiental, que ha resultado en muchas personas arrestadas por la causa. (Digital Notebook, Presentation, Unit 3, Daniel, March 2023)

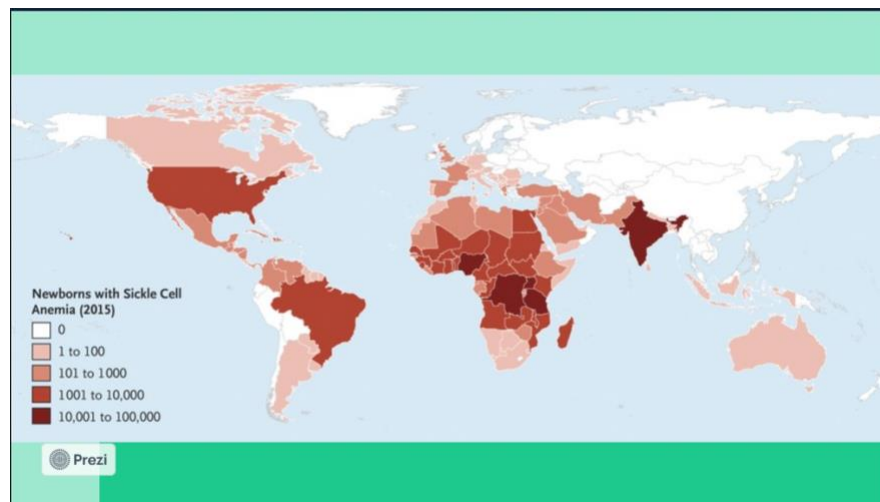
[Around the forests there are several communities, like the Waorani, that use the resources of the forest, and when companies destroy the rainforest, they are destroying the resources that are necessary for them to live. In the United States there are also

environmental problems caused by the convenience of companies. In North Carolina in 1982, there was a company that dumped toxic waste in predominantly poor minority neighborhoods. It is causing many environmental problems around the neighborhoods. Residents were trying to protest this environmental racism, which has resulted in many people being arrested for the cause.] (Digital Notebook, Presentation, Unit 3, Daniel, March 2023)

Although Daniel's Capstone was not specifically focused on environmental issues, he used the skill of comparison to view the distribution and access of medical technology, such as CRISPR, as a matter of justice. His Capstone final presentation included a worldview of CRISPR that highlighted groups of people that would have more access to this health technology and who needs it the most, particularly when referring to how the technology could aid in world hunger and genetic diseases that affect larger amounts of Black and Latinx populations, such as sickle cell anemia. During his final project presentation, he explained this when showing a map of where this disease is most prevalent.

Figure 12

Daniel's Map of Sickle Cell International Cases



Although the cost of CRISPR holds back its accessibility, he states in his final project literature review that through its increase in use and extension into countries with the least access, impoverished communities, who tend to need the technology will also have increased access (Daniel's Final Project, "Investigación de fuentes," 5/29/2023).

Daniel exhibited hope when it came to answering social issues. This hope was placed in educated people who care and work to make a more just world. When answering a prompt giving recommendations to a peer who felt they could not make an impact on the climate crisis by their individual actions, Daniel responds with hope that both an individual and groups can bring since he links the individual to the world: "sus valores no son únicos, aunque la ayuda de un solo humano no ayuda mucho, pero con los valores de muchos habrá cambio, y usted es parte de él mucho" [your values aren't alone, even though the help from one human does not help much, but with the values of many there will be change, and you will be very much part of it] (Daniel, Digital Notebook, 3/2023). Daniel suggests creating awareness (conciencia) as an individual answer that can attract others to the cause and sees continued hope through some organizations and technology, such as those in the sciences who are researching alternative energies:

En el futuro habrá mucha tecnología nueva para luchar contra el cambio climático. Por ejemplo hay científicos que están tratando de crear combustibles nuevos que emitan menos poluciones y también que sean reusables. Por fin sus valores no son únicos, aunque la ayuda de un solo humano no ayuda mucho, pero con los valores de muchos habrá cambio, y usted es parte de él mucho. (Daniel, Digital Notebook, March 2023)

[In the future there will be a lot of new technology to fight climate change. For example, there are scientists who are trying to create new fuels that emit less pollution and are also reusable. Finally, your values are not unique, although the help of a single human does not help much, but with the values of many there will be change, and you are very much a part of it.] (Daniel, Digital Notebook, March 2023)

Process Over Product and Making Plans.

Daniel's progress throughout the course portrayed his willingness and growth in making connections with what interested him academically in the sciences and the socio-cultural web in which medical advancements exist. As he states in his Unit 1 final, this project was more than a requirement: "Este proyecto es importante para mí porque es una tónica de ciencia que tal vez voy a estudiar para la universidad. Después haciendo este proyecto me va a ayudar tener una fundación para estudiar esto. Este proyecto le debe importar a los demás porque CRISPR puede ayudar varios problemas genéticos entre comunidades menos afortunadas..." [This project is important to me because it is a science topic that I will perhaps study for university. After doing this project it will help me to have a foundation to study this. This project should matter to others because CRISPR can help several genetic problems among less fortunate communities...] (Unit 1 Final Reflection, 11/2022.) His expectations were to *begin* his research and do so in the humanities as well, using both of his languages and cultures. Ultimately in his reflection at the end of the school year, he confesses that although his project is important, he did not accomplish all that he set out to do at the beginning of the year. The experiment he was conducting in the laboratory was tampered with and his results were inconclusive. Despite this, he states that he learned more applications for CRISPR in his science course and "me sorprendió mucho cuanto CRISPR puede ayudar el mundo, y también cuanto disparidades hay en el mundo" [it surprised me a lot how much CRISPR can help the world and also how much disparities there are in the world] (Final Project Reflection, 5/2023.) He goes on to explain that he hopes to continue this project in a new course next year, Senior Seminar, where students will be continuing or starting a new Capstone research project. In his research he hopes to "crear conciencia a los disparidades del mundo, o donar lo que puede a los comunidades pobres" [create consciousness about the

disparities in the world, or donate what he can to poor communities.] As he indicates in his journal, Daniel finished the year proud of what he refers to as his first official investigation having always been a curious person (Notebook, 5/31/23). This research project was not the first time he delved deeper into an issue, it was his nature, and thus, he rests in that he will continue to do so in the future.

Azucena: La necesidad de recursos multilingües

Introduction to Azucena.

At the time of this research study, Azucena was a 16-year-old junior. Her parents are immigrants from Guatemala who now live in the capital city, and she has never travelled to her parents' country. Spanish is spoken at home as her parents have limited English and therefore Azucena often accompanies her parents during student-teacher conferences. She would still attend when it came to my conference, even when they were on Zoom, but we joked that she could finally take a break from translating at ours. Azucena is the oldest of her numerous siblings and in many ways carries the weight of clearing the path for her younger siblings. Something she takes pride in is how much her parents have instilled the importance of education in her. Her parents deem she and her siblings American and thus with endless opportunities through their education (Conference, 5/10/2023). She even admitted that sometimes her and her siblings hide just playing for fun on their school computers when their parents expect an impeccable work ethic.

Like the other focal students, Daniel and Yarielis, in the next section, she had followed the heritage learner pathway for Spanish and it was her third year taking a Spanish course. It was her third year at STEM Academy, and she has excelled in all her studies, especially in the sciences and Computer Science. Azucena stands out from other students because even though

she tends to be less vocal than other students, she is a deep and critical thinker, something her teachers realize about her after reading her work and reflections. She does not ask for help right away—she wants to figure it out and does not turn in work if it is not what she deems her best. Due to these high expectations for herself, she often takes more time than others on her assignments. Her recipe for success has worked for her as she received significant recognition at Awards Night as a junior. Sometimes she admits it is not easy, but she attributes her resilience to her parents: “My parents came from poverty, and they stress education...some days I don’t want to do this anymore...but the lack of education...leading to lack of access to information...this is why I push through” (Conferencing 5/10/2023).

Having her as a student for three years in a row has also meant that I tend to use her work as a model for other students. She often extends assignments to include various rounds of editing and includes her artistic capabilities. She enjoys drawing to show her thinking, which she shared with me towards the end of the year. When given the option to think multimodally she tends to choose drawing and most of her journal writing is accompanied with an image in the margins. During the last few weeks of the course, she shared with me that the questions I posed at the beginning of class made her think and that led her to drawing or as she referred to it “doodling,” which according to her she only did in our class (Conferencing 5/23/23).

Overall, her research project allowed Azucena to unite her home and school life with purpose. This was unusual for her because she notes, “I usually keep home and school separate” (Conferencing 6/1/23). Within that frame, she kept English and Spanish in separate worlds, except in Spanish class. Even her name at school, she added, was different at school than at home. Azucena in Spanish sounds like her name, where the “z” is pronounced like a soft “s”, while in English it is a hard “z” and it makes her cringe. “You can’t even say it in English as you

are telling me about this,” I pointed out to her. “I let other people say it like a “z,” but I just can’t.” I reminded her, “It’s like when we read *Mango Street* your freshman year and the character didn’t like how people pronounced Esperanza in English.” Thinking that a student would not necessarily remember assignments in that detail from two years prior, I was not looking for a response to that, but she replied, “I remember that! And I thought about it then too!” (6/1/2023). In conversation, Azucena would mention different moments of her schooling experience so it should not have surprised me as it did.

Azucena’s Capstone Project.

Azucena’s Capstone Project “La Necesidad de Recursos Multilingüe[s]” focuses on how resources can be made more accessible in multiple languages while considering that something is always lost in translation. The issue that she highlights is how communicating information in languages other than English take a second role and thus do not always provide the necessary paths for access that they intend to provide or worse, they are scarce. As part of her data collection, she interviewed a librarian from a branch in our capital city, where most materials would be needed in different languages, especially in Spanish. She decided to create a website through Wix.com which was one of the many options that students could choose to present their project. Azucena was the only student to take up this task of creating a website, even though it was in my original syllabus to have all students create a website through Adobe (which we ended up not having access to). Unlike Daniel, Azucena includes her personal connection to the project within the final project itself. However, in a similar vein, she too uses her experience of being a puente [bridge] as a translator and interpreter in her own life for her parents to fuel this project.

There were bumps in the road for Azucena with this project, which took me for surprise, but I reminded her to trust the process, herself, and me as her evaluator of this process. In my

own reflection, I worried about this change in her and how I might not be supporting her enough. Her largest struggle was choosing and pinpointing a topic. Towards the end of the year, she wished she could go back and ask for help sooner to pick a topic (Notebook, 5/31/23). Ultimately though, she held strong to the idea that her Capstone project would respond to the inequity of access to information that offers opportunity of knowledge acquisition and even social mobility. By November she knew her topic, even though she had not yet decided on the details. As she expressed in her journal, she had a starting point: “mi tema se trata de como las lenguas dominantes afectan la información/ estorias recibidos a una audiencia... ¿Qué son los efectos de esto? La dominancia de algunos idiomas es basado en el colonialismo y lo que es apropiado ‘correct’” [my topic is about how dominant languages affect the information/ stories that reach an audience...What are the effects of this? The dominance of some languages is based on colonialism and what is appropriate “correct”] (11/15/22). However, in the following weeks, the final assignments for Unit 1 remained incomplete. In her journal, she could see herself as an activist through her empathy but struggled to reach action steps due to her lack of confidence to do so. She then explains that, “Para mí es muy difícil porque no se si mis temas/ ideas son tan importantes para otros. A veces me puedo dudar si de verdad estoy haciendo lo correcto (resolver un problema)” [For me it is difficult because I don’t know if my topics/ ideas are that important for others. Sometimes I can doubt if I am really doing something right (to resolve an issue) (Azucena, Notebook, 12/6/22.)

Shortly after she wrote about her insecurities that prevented her from taking on the identity of an activist through her project, we conferenced a few minutes outside of class, in the private moments between the end of class and the calling of buses. “I just don’t know if what I see as a problem other students will see as a problem” (Azucena, Conferencing, 12/6/22). She

further expanded upon this when we spoke by explaining that her interest in researching the lack of access to (accurate) information, especially those who spoke non-dominant languages in the US. In the previous weeks, according to my teacher journal, we had discussed the differences in reporting on the few Spanish air channels available. She had noticed that even the commercials on the Univision Nueva Inglaterra channel were geared to a region in the next state, and referred to places that were irrelevant for her family. She thought the low accessibility of information that her parents had access to was subpar, but she was hesitant to share this openly with her peers. “Nosotros no tenemos Netflix ni nada de eso because it adds up” [We don’t have Netflix or anything like that because it adds up” (Azucena, Conferencing, 12/7/22.) She had started to feel like the social issue she was interested in, not only would reveal her family’s socioeconomic status, but not be as important to her peers who did not have the same experiences as her. As I reflected after our conversation, I was glad that I responded that her voice mattered and that even if other students did not have the same experiences, they were all impacted by the lack access to valid information. Further, I reflected on the lesson I was learning from a student. Prioritizing and building a connection between teacher-to-student was so vital for Azucena to be willing to share this struggle—one that was caught in my blind spot of my own privilege.

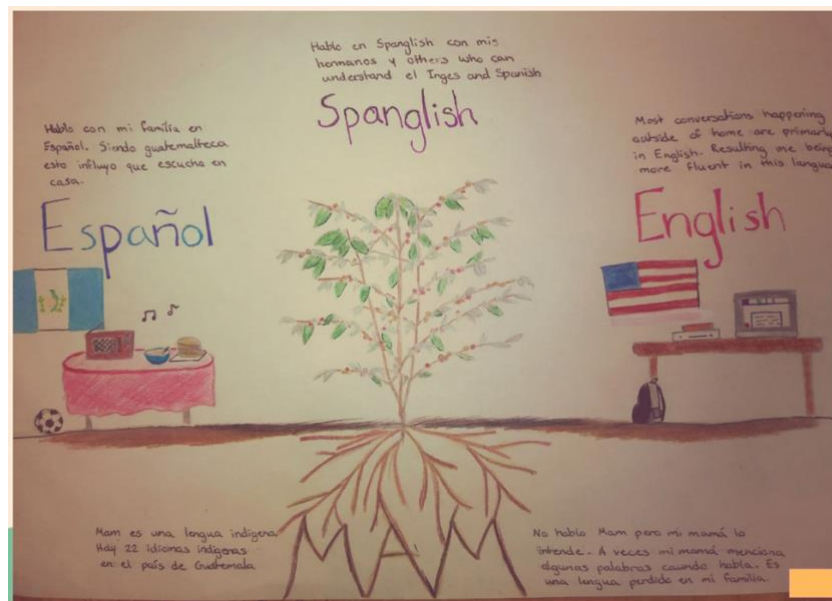
“Honoring mis raíces.”

During the first in-class presentation during Unit 1, Azucena presented on her relationship to her languages in a drawing that was then added to her slide show as I asked everyone to create a visual representation of their languages after a short introduction into language hierarchies even within the same language, where we discussed different “Englishes” as well as “Spanishes.” In her first iteration to her drawing, she included Spanish, English, and Spanglish in the middle of these two. After further prompted discussion in class and mock

presentations, Azucena asked if she could turn in her assignment again because she had thought of a way to change her drawing after our class discussions. I agreed and she came back with a similar drawing except that now her drawing had roots to represent her Mayan ancestors' indigenous language, Mam, from Guatemala. (This was not the first time that I saw Azucena reclaim sus raíces indígenas. In the previous year's course, she asked me if she could identify as mestiza apart from latina and hispana, from our list of identity vocabulary, even when she did not know the language.) In her drawing, Figure 12, she added descriptions and the ones under Mam indicate what I knew from our conferencing and her digital notebook. Her mother's family grew up speaking Mam, but "due to personal reasons," the family had stopped using it and her mom understands it and recalls a few words (Digital notebook, 9/2022).

Figure 13

"La autobiografía lingüística de Azucena"



Mam is the only language that has two chunks of written text where one of them explains where the language is from and how many indigenous languages exist in Guatemala. The image for Mam in the illustration is the roots of all her languages and above it stands a plant that, during the process of member-checking, she revealed was a depiction of a coffee plant because of how much she enjoys coffee. Meanwhile, regarding her other languages, Spanish was represented through its Guatemalan variety by the country's flag, food, music, and sports, while English mirrored Guatemala with a flag and school items, such as a laptop and bookbag. As mentioned previously, English was her school language and that is also what it represented in her drawing. Spanglish appeared in the middle as a language spoken with her siblings and others that are bilingual. Spanglish is present as a hybrid language without a deficit lens, but rather as one of access, in other words, knowing two languages produced this third possibility for bilinguals.

Although Azucena's linguistic autobiography was created early in the school year, it was the starting point in which she started to view her languages and how she existed in and between them. As she states in her final project website, "Ahora se que los lenguajes que hablamos tienen una jerarquía. Los idiomas/lenguas dominantes son considerados el estándar. Dejando los otros idiomas/lenguas sin mucho representación y/o valor en la sociedad" [Now I know that the languages that we speak have a hierarchy. The dominant languages are considered the standard. Leaving the other languages without much representation and/ or value in society] (Azucena, Final Project Website, 6/2023.)

Figure 14

Azucena's Website "Inspiración"



Below her website's introduction paragraph, she includes a section titled "inspiración" [inspiration] that explains why she had chosen to explore the topic of translation since for her initially "it was not something so important but a way of life" (Figure 14). In fact, only in her "subconscious" she notes, was it something she gave importance to. Having translated often for her parents and others in her community, it was commonplace, but she came to realize that she took on a significant role with high stakes and responsibility. She includes a comical puppet video where the police's interpreter happens to be the person that stole from the woman speaking to the police. Obviously, the interpreter does not describe the robber as himself, leading to

laughs. However, Azucena includes this video showing that although comical, translations and interpretation yield to access or the lack thereof.

“Now I have a word for it.”

On Azucena’s website, she includes vocabulary and concepts that have helped her explore the state of translation and how something that she did many times for her parents turned out to be more complex. As seen in Figure 13, she researched and created her own definitions for concepts that in turn allowed her to reveal how the act of translation is on a spectrum and needs to consider its context through localization. Similar to how we spoke about language itself in the course through critical language awareness, she highlights that there is no one, correct translation and in fact, something is always lost from the original iteration: “No importan qué tipo o como traducimos (traducción automatizada, idiomas neutrals, la localización, etc.) sigue que estos métodos experiencias [experimentan] un tipo de *translation loss*, del mensaje original/ voz del autor.” [It doesn’t matter what type or how we translate (automated translation, neutral languages, localization, etc). these methods still undergo a type of translation loss, of the original voice/message of the author.] (Azucena, Final Project, 6/2023.)

Figure 15

Azucena’s Website “Traducción vs. Localización”



Azucena also includes the term language broker on her website, a term that she believed, in retrospect, followed her throughout the course by representing an experience that she thought was unknown and therefore unimportant. She now had a concept or term that validated her identity as someone “who thoroughly understands different cultural systems, is able to interpret cultural symbols from one frame of reference to establish linkages across cultures that facilitate the instructional process” (Gay, 1993, p. 293). On the main page of her website, Azucena had explained how both translating and interpreting “era una puerta a la accesibilidad” [was a door to accessibility] but those actions were also a responsibility which she has had nearly all her life as a language broker. In one visual representation of her findings on her website, Figure 16 highlights that accessibility to information is thus a community effort to best describe her role as language broker but also the role of local librarians, as the one that she interviewed.

Figure 16

Azucena’s Website “Accesibilidad de Información”



She realized that as she was following her topic interest throughout the course, she was led back to herself and her experience being a language broker. During conferencing, she also associates the existence of language hierarchies to the act of language brokering:

I didn't know there was a hierarchy or anything. I just knew English was dominant because, America. (Laughing). And I grew up mostly watching Spanish stuff until certain things changed and now it's mostly English now. And about me, most of my life, because I'm the oldest, because now I can use the word now--so a language broker even though I did not know. And I had this dilemma, like I have to be and act like an adult. I'm mature because of being a language broker because I always had to represent my mother and my father. But not only that, sometimes in my school, there were these kids from Puerto Rico and I think at the time there was no one available so I had to step up. I remember there was this time in 7th grade, before I left that school that there was this new kid that was PR, maybe after hurricane María, and what happened was we were all sitting in a circle, and he came in and he didn't know we were sitting on the outside. So, the teacher was like, "Does anyone know any Spanish so they could talk to him?" So, I was looking around, like who was going to step up... and I saw some people like "go, go." It was kinda normal and kinda not because I get nervous wondering if I know enough vocab. And I've actually translated for adults when I go to the doctors and stuff like that because my mom feels bad that they don't have anyone there to translate for them. So, she goes "go go," and I don't want to make any errors. I have to know what the woman is saying and then translate that... It is gratifying when people are happy like, "yay we communicated!" and it's nice to be helpful in the process. Even in times I don't want to ... It is an honor to do so but it's stressful like their lives rely on me. (Azucena, Conferencing, May 2023)

As Azucena cites examples of language brokering, she goes from the inner circle of her parents to her school and the community. Even though both of her languages exist are perceived differently (English as dominant to Spanish), she is able to use both to make a difference in people's lives, even when it requires her to be the adult in a situation where she rather remain a child.

In her sources, she includes a Ted Talk that helped her further understand what being a language/ cultural broker was: "Technically we are all cultural brokers because we all have to intermix different things... like when we are in different situations, we act kind of differently and we adjust how we speak to people" (Conferencing, 5/30/2023). She highlighted how the choices one makes as a language broker has the potential to include more people in a mixed background audience.

The Importance of Access.

Azucena's research interests ultimately emphasized the importance of access to information. What began as a question about the representation of the Latinx community in the media, was interesting to her but still felt a bit disconnected from her lived experience. Since she did not "really grow up with that" access to different sources of information (Conferencing 5/10/2023), she became more intrigued by how information was presented and who was centered as the audience and who sat on the periphery, receiving the bare minimum. Translation and interpretation were not the only things that she encountered but she also had the responsibility of performing these for her parents and at times, her larger community. Her personal connection to the topic eventually moved her to better understand the cultural competence needed beyond words alone. "It's not all about words" (Conferencing 5/10/2023), as she cited the example of how important a visual map of the immigration process was at the border lands of the US. I was taken aback by this comment, especially since up to that moment, I thought words were precisely what she was focusing on. She explained that she was referencing a parent-speaker we had visit the previous school year that helped create these visual maps (infographics) for children, some that had not learned how to read yet and were separated from their parents and others that had limited literacy in Spanish or English. In her comparison project in Unit 3, for instance, Azucena moved beyond word-to-word translations and commented on different websites in different countries to also see how marketing by the same company might change beyond language and influence what products were deemed as more important in different locations, as seen in Figure 17.

Figure 17

Azucena's Cultural Comparison Presentation



With this notion of moving beyond words, Azucena was starting to widen her definition of literacy along with translation and interpretation.

During the Midterm exam period, Azucena was starting to feel the pressure to decide on the details of her project. In quick conversations at the end of the day or in passing time, she communicated her progress on her research log but still did not feel ready to make the jump in “applying creatively” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). What she attributed to indecision did not prevent her from following content driven topics that connected to the umbrella topic of access. During this time, students were asked to write a letter or email in response to the documentary “Aquí vive gente” narrated by Bianca Graulau nestled in the music video, “El Apagón” as described in Chapter 4. Since the documentary brought up various social injustice on the island of Puerto Rico, the hypothetical letter was aimed at making connections through their own activist lens in a “applied appropriately” exercise that would inspire students to contact someone

about their Capstone project in their community. After watching the video, Azucena approached me after class asking to go beyond the requirements of the “practice Midterm.” She wanted more information because “seeing the lack of access through the lack of access to education...it just made me so angry” (Conferencing, 1/11/2023). In my teacher journal, I recounted our exchange:

Towards the end of the period, Azucena came up to me to show me her resources table. She felt like she had what she wanted to say to connect Ley 22 (Act 22) and her topic of education but was struggling to find the resources to back them up since not much was said explicitly in the documentary we saw in class. We searched together and I briefly went over how to search on YouTube/ Google with Boolean techniques, such as “AND.” Her question on how to search for the information was more than just completing this assignment but rather on how searching for this information also connected to her research topic. We found one resource that was helpful, but I explained that with only 1-2 mins left, I would continue searching and talk to my colleague from PR. That afternoon I spoke to this colleague, and she shared with me a resource she was sent last year. Her husband also sent some links that were quite perfect, especially an article from the NY Times. (Teacher Journal, January 2023)

Knowing what I do about Azucena’s family and their care for her education, this spark of interest from her part emphasizes how motivation to go beyond an exercise is also personal. I modeled my skills at looking for information, which also included accessing my own network which led to the NY times articles she needed.

In her letter, Azucena meets the goals of citing evidence to persuade her imaginary audience (the governor of Puerto Rico), pleading to reconsider closing schools.

“La educación no es un privilegio, es un derecho humano. Las escuelas son muy fundamentales para la comunidad debido a que proporcionan servicios de asistencia, recursos comunitarios y entretenimiento/ actividades. ...Los cierres de escuelas, además son muy frustrantes para las familias. De acuerdo con el reporte de Berkeley, el cierre de escuelas publicas en Puerto Rico, dice que en las decisiones de cerrar una escuela las familias, estudiantes, maestros y otros empleados no tienen el insumo para decir no.” (Azucena, Midterm letter, January 2023)

[Education is not a privilege, it is a human right. Schools are very essential to the community because they provide support services, community resources and entertainment/activities. ...School closures are also very frustrating for families. According to the Berkeley report, the closure of public schools in Puerto Rico says that in

the decisions to close a school, families, students, teachers and other employees do not have the input to say no.] (Azucena, Midterm letter, January 2023)

As she goes on to explain the difficulty of school transfers and the negative impact on individuals and their community, she cites the resilience of grassroots organizations that have and continue to help communities, despite their relative lack of power in comparison to the government who owns property and buildings.

Although I wanted this formative letter to serve as a model for students' Midterm letter, Azucena hesitantly asked me to write about this topic instead of her Capstone project for the course. I usually accept this from students who are chronically absent, which was the case with another student in the class—finding a quick way to move the student forward within the restraints of time. However, this instance was different—she wanted more depth on a topic and added her own way of “applying creatively” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) by extending an assignment.

Process Over Product and Making Plans.

On Azucena's final website, she includes topics she would like to further explore which include the use of infographics to disseminate information, multilingual websites, and language brokering. She states under a section “para el futuro” (for the future), that this project led her to other topics that she would like to learn more about. She would have pursued these topics if it were not for the limits of time, feels reassured that this was a valuable experience. “Lo más inolvidable fue hacer conexiones con otros temas.” [What was most unforgettable was making connections with other topics.] (Azucena, Notebook, 5/31/2023.) During the course, she brought in knowledge from other courses that she has been connecting such as the sciences (environmental science and even computer science) but also the humanities (history) to better understand multilingualism and its relation to power. Sometimes her learning has even changed

her. She cited an example of running for student council in middle school and proposing an idea to make money—to buy plastic bottles and bring them back to the store for some money in return. “I guess I just knew that my parents did that and well maybe it was just me. Now with what I know, I try to use less plastic. I carry oranges with me as snacks...they don’t have to be put in plastic, they have their own peel and don’t need to be pre-cut” (Azucena, Conferencing, 5/10/2023).

In her process of learning, she also yearned to learn more about herself and where she came from because “this is the history I am missing” (Azucena, Conferencing, 5/10/2023). After a series of lessons on Guatemala and the rights of indigenous weaving groups, she said, that those lessons:

“...really connected with multilingualism. En Guatemala hay como 25 idiomas, pero hay una lengua dominante--el español. [In Guatemala there are like 25 languages, but there is one dominant language—Spanish.] Las lenguas indígenas no se consideran oficial-- so these people are lacking power. [Indigenous languages are not considered official—so these people are lacking power.] Like for Rigoberta Menchú’s father, he had to sign papers that he could not read. People can lose rights by not knowing the dominant language.” (Azucena, Conferencing, May 2023).

She went on to explain that word choice, not just translation also mattered giving examples of alien and illegal to “sin papeles [without papers] or undocumented.” When we discussed moving on to an action or at least proposing something she wanted to work on with translation to impact our school or community, she was still unsure. As I gave her some examples of Open House events or College Nights where translation/ interpretation is many times an after-thought, she cited that perhaps the Newsletter that went out every week via email as well. However, it was difficult for her to imagine certain events since she has not physically gone to those events since everything has been online, due to the COVID-19 pandemic: “Yo no sé de esos eventos de antes como tú” [I don’t know about those events from before COVID-19 like you do.] However, citing

examples of action reminded me of a student the previous year that made a website as part of an independent study about post-secondary options, especially when going to college and applying for scholarships as a first-generation student in the US. “Don’t you think in a way you deconstructed and found the roots for Florencia’s project?” I asked. “I remember thinking that was just a cool and needed project pero parece que sí” (Conferencing, 5/30/2023).

For now, her action was to create this website, but it really has been such a journey—more than just a culminating portfolio. So many times, as educators, we plant a seed or ignite a passion in students and might not see the lasting effects. Azucena’s process through her Capstone project is part of a larger web of her education and she plans to continue with this experience in her Senior Seminar class the following year. Even if she moves on to a different topic, she has made her learning experiences interconnect—portraying how essential this is to life-long learning.

Yarielis: El enlace entre la identidad y el lenguaje

Introduction to Yarielis.

At the time of this research study, Yarielis was in the 11th grade. As with Daniel and Azucena, she had taken the heritage pathway of Spanish courses, and this was the third consecutive course where I was her teacher. She took this class with her older brother who was a senior at the time. Her and her siblings, including a younger sister at the school as well, were born in Puerto Rico and moved to the states after their mother had passed away to be raised by their grandmother. Both Yarielis and Alberto are proud of being Boricua (Puerto Rican) but have had different linguistic experiences in their schooling. Unlike her siblings, Yarielis was not identified as an ML (multilanguage learner) by the time she reached high school. She explained, “A mi mucho más que a mis hermanos, y cuando nos mudamos para acá, fue mucho más fácil

para mí acostumbrarme a el Ingles y le costó un poco más a mis hermanos” [For me much more than for my siblings, and when we moved here, it was much more easy for me to get used to English and it took my siblings more] (Personal Narrative, 11/1/2022). This lack of struggling put her in a position where she felt she had to defend her identity as puertorriqueña.

As a student, Yarielis cared about fully understanding what was asked of her. As I conferenced with students, it was rare that she ever held back from asking for clarity. When we spoke, I noted, there was a feeling of trust and understanding—of partnership (Teacher Journal, Class observation, 3/16/2023). She proactively arranged times to meet outside of class and go the extra mile for her grades, but even more so if she is interested and invested in the topic. During class or small group discussions, she consistently offered her opinion and when given the choice, selected texts, and prioritized assignments that she connected to. Although at times she admitted to getting distracted by her peers, she expressed early on that it was a goal for her this year to not “get wrapped up in drama” (Yarielis, Notebook, 9/2/2022). She took tremendous pride in her work and would smile ear to ear as I called her a student-researcher throughout the course. She seemed to always remain self-aware, reflective (as seen consistently in her journal entries) and exuded confidence and strength in the way she recentered herself and followed her path for academic success.

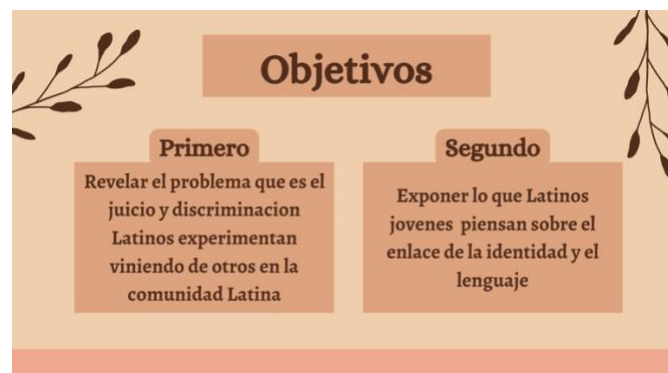
Yarielis’ Capstone Project.

Yarielis’ progress through the course and ultimately her project, followed a model of evolution, where she observed what she was interested in through class material and continued to process all four-unit themes of the course through the lens of her project. Her project entailed both looking inward and out of her experience being considered “puertorriqueña enough.” She was interested in looking within Latinx communities in the US to see how perceptions of

language affected the sense of belonging and “authenticity” within Latinxs themselves. Since, at times, she was questioned for her language use and even her music preferences within her peers and family, she wanted to research if others felt the same. There was genuine curiosity that increased as she approached data collection and analysis. The day before she collected data by attending a Spanish for Heritage Speakers class, we reviewed her plan. Standing near my computer, as I looked over her work, she stated: “Oh my God, I know I have said it before, but I’m so excited!” (Yarielis, Conferencing, 5/3/2023). In the end, she better understood how students in a Spanish heritage class in her school community felt about their relationship with their languages and how that affected their identities. She met the objectives she presented in her final presentation through slides on Canva, as seen in Figure 18.

Figure 18

Yarielis’ Final Presentation Objectives



Although her initial idea for a Capstone project connected more to the effects of technology on mental health, she reflected that, she did not stray too far from this initial idea. She cited as an example the informational Instagram post that I sent her from my teacher account. We discussed how there were psychological effects of assimilation, as explained through one of the posts.

When I asked her how she felt when she saw those posts, she replied, “It was like, yes! —it was clear, in my face.” She reassured me as she was organizing chart paper and sticky papers on the walls of the classroom from her data collection activity, “see, technology can be used for good—it’s not all bad” (Yarielis, Conferencing, 5/4/2023). Her research topic evolved in a straighter line than most students, but she also made the connections necessary to build upon her research interests with the content layered by our units of study.

Sustaining a Summer’s Epiphany.

Since the first weeks of class, Yarielis began to share about her summer in Puerto Rico as inspirational. She returned to Connecticut feeling more connected to her family, using her Spanish more confidently, and even having an easier time connecting to her grandmother. She attributed this change to her experience on the island where her siblings and peers celebrated the freshly minted “Verano sin ti” album by the infamous artist, Bad Bunny. She would go on to explain how before this summer, at times, she did not feel the sense of belonging in her Boricua identity, something she knew she deserved.

When asked to reflect on her languages and the variation of these languages, Yarielis selected Spanish, Spanglish, and English which she placed on a slide to help her visually narrate her connection to her languages. As seen in Figure 19, these categories were separated and defined in Spanish on a tropical, Caribbean ocean-blue complemented with the Puerto Rican flag, the album title, and a coqui frog with an embedded hyperlink to the tiny frog’s unique sound on YouTube. Under the category of Spanish, she identified different ways in which she used the language, separating “formal” from “Puerto Rican” Spanish. When compared to her second language, English, where she divides her acquisition of “formal” and “slag,” her variety

of Spanish fit below a prestigious standard. Spanglish is also defined in terms of deficit since she used it when she forgot a word in Spanish.

Figure 19

Yarielis' "Autobiografía lingüística"



It is clear through this presentation that more work in Critical Language Awareness (CLA) was needed for her to view her literacy through an asset-based lens. However, in her notebook, Yarielis showed her CLA as she encountered texts that countered a deficit lens towards language. She used language variety as evidence to support that “un español correcto no existe, todos los países tienen su propia manera de decir las cosas, y si se entienden y se pueden comunicar no hay problema” [a correct Spanish does not exist, all countries have their own way of saying things, and if they are understood and they can communicate there is no problem] (Yarielis, Notebook, 9/9/2022.) She also admits in another entry to using Spanglish even though others view with disdain, by referring to the mix of languages as “broken” or “ghetto” (Yarielis, Notebook, 9/27/2022).

This initial slide, months later, would become the basis for Yarielis’ personal narrative. This personal narrative had to set the background for her Capstone project, giving it purpose and linking both the personal and the academic as students took on a student-researcher role.

Yarielis did not share with me as many details about her time in Puerto Rico as a young child as much as her brother Alberto did, such as where he lived and his hobbies, but Yarielis shared vivid memories of bonding with her aunt on various occasions throughout our three years together in class. Therefore, I was not surprised to find a vivid scene with her siblings and her aunt in her personal narrative. Her títí (nickname for aunt) was the person that she considered a confidant and role model, a person she could talk to about anything, and she also attributed her early English abilities to her personal narrative. She described being comfortable with her learning:

Con lo que recuerdo, ella nos llevaba a todos para su cuarto, nos sentaba en una de esas mesitas chiquitas de princesas y nos enseñaba a hablar, no solo el español, sino también el Inglés. Recuerdo que tenía una pizarra y unos marcadores de todos los colores y nos encantaba, ella prendía su AC y nos quedamos ahí cómodos con el aire fresco estudiando. (Yarielis, Personal Narrative, November 2022)

[From what I remember, she took us all to her room, she sat us at one of those little princess tables and taught us to speak, not only Spanish, but also English. I remember she had a blackboard and some markers of all colors and we loved it, she turned on her AC and we stayed there comfortable in the cool air studying.] (Yarielis, Personal Narrative, November 2022)

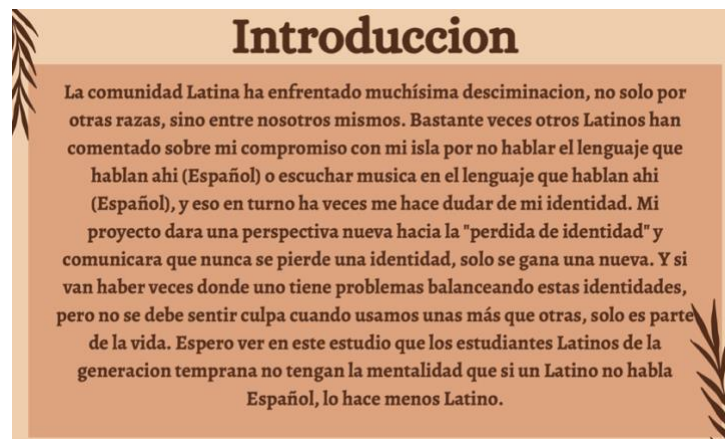
Core memories on the island, such as moments with her aunt and this past summer made her who she was and thus she set out to better understand how identity was impacted by language experiences and perceptions.

When asked to return to her personal narrative to write the introduction to her final project, Yarielis adds moments of tension between her and other family members when they now comment on her assimilation, by citing her music taste, and calling her a “gringa.” She states, “de verdad me sentí un poco dolorida, porque uno de mis mayores orgullos es mi isla, la isla de donde vengo. Estoy tan orgullosa de venir de Puerto Rico, y cuando alguien duda mi compromiso con mi isla, en verdad me enfada, y me pongo muy defensiva” [I really felt a bit

hurt, because one my biggest sources of pride is my island, the island that I come from] (Part 1, Final Project Introduction, Yarielis, 5/2023). Her personal connection to her topic appears in the introduction slide of her presentation, as seen in Figure 20. She moves fluidly between making comments about “la comunidad latina” and her own experiences. Statements such as there being “no way to lose an identity only gain a new one” allow her experiences of assimilation and authenticity to coexist, even if “there will be times when one has to balance these identities.” In some moments, she goes on, we may be more aligned with one identity (language, culture) than another and that is a “part of life” and thus a person should not be made to feel at fault for accessing different aspects of their identity.

Figure 20

Yarielis’ Presentation “Introduction”



Although Yarielis has ample proficiency in Spanish (Intermediate high through Advanced mid according to her Biliteracy Seal results), she also includes at the end of her introduction how she hoped to see that Latinos of her generation would stray away from the idea that language use, in this case Spanish, makes someone more or less Latino. With this, she is thinking no longer about

her own experience, but including other that she considers part of the larger and diverse Latinx community.

Making Connections: “It’s not just me!”

Over the course of the year, Yarielis took on a much more critical view of the connection between identity and language within Latinx communities. In fact, early in the first semester, she was struck by an excerpt we read by Gloria Anzaldúa where the author criticized other Chicanos for being critical for of each other’s speech.

En la historia “How to Tame a Wild Tongue, sección (“Linguistic Terrorism”), la autora Gloria Anzaldúa, habla sobre el problema de cómo ella lo pone, “we use our language differences against each other”. Esta sección de la historia trata de juzgarnos porque hablamos el mismo idioma diferente, o hablamos un lenguaje más que el otro y nos juzgan por eso. Esta es una historia perfecta para usar para comunicar mi lección. (Yarielis, Unit 1 Final Project, November 2022)

[In the story “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” section (“Linguistic Terrorism”), author Gloria Anzaldúa talks about the problem of how she puts it, “we use our language differences against each other.” This section of the story is about judging us because we speak the same different language, or we speak one language more than the other and we are judged for that. This is a perfect story to use to communicate my lesson.] (Yarielis, Unit 1 Final Project, November 2022)

Although this text did not reflect Yarielis’ experience in a historical or geographical sense, she saw elements of the borderlands in her identity. First focusing on her own language losses/ gains and the balancing of two cultures and later the tensions that exist within communities that are “invisible” from the outside. She was revealing that although communities were at times regarded as homogenous, they were not always that united. During the Midterm (end of the first semester), she went back to this excerpt to write to the larger Latinx community as a form of imaginary “writing back” to those who have judged her and others, when “la identidad no debe ser algo que se puede ganar” (identity is not something that needs to be won), but rather it is

personal (Class observation, presentation practice, 6/1/2023). This phrase also made it to the introduction of her project presentation, as indicated in the previous section.

Yarielis's project began to deal with how members within the same Latinx community judge one another as being as she phrased "more authentic." She questioned what it meant to be authentic to a particular culture when living in a mix of cultures. As she communicated these ideas to me during conferencing, she felt more secure about the direction her research was going in, but struggled on making connections that extended her topic from the personal and the local to the global. In one instance, Yarielis caught my attention in that she was really struggling on how to make a connection to a context that seemed so far away for her—the protection of the indigenous weaving tradition in Guatemala. Although she was interested in learning, she did not know what to ask our Zoom visitor, especially what would be connected to her project in some way. I asked her to think about her key words or concepts as we called them in previous classes. These were keywords that students could go back to and help expand their research. When she talked about authenticity, I suggested she follow that word. Not knowing what it meant to be authentic in Guatemala or in an indigenous ethnic group, her questions included "¿Crees que hay partes en la comunidad Latina que se creen más auténticamente Guatemalteca?" [Do you think there are parts of the Latinx community that think they are more authentically Guatemalan?] and "¿Crees que hay partes en la comunidad Latina que no soportan [apoyan] esta causa?" [Do you think there are parts of the Latinx community that do not support this cause?], among others, ended up guiding a good portion of the conversation with our class guest.

During the third unit, where students had to make cultural comparisons within their topic, Yarielis and her brother, Alberto, asked to meet me during a free period that we had in common (4/6/2023). To best guide them, I looked at the work they had done, their evolving research

questions and what they were finding in their research logs. Alberto was finding points of comparison within his topic of the impact of technology, such as age and location. Although the assignment was passed due, this was enough guidance to help him finish the assignment that would strengthen his literature review and give him an idea of the scope of his own data collection through interviews of a specific age group. Meanwhile, Yarielis was overcoming more of an obstacle because she was truly unsure on what to compare. At this moment in the year, she was still processing that she was not alone in her experiences. As I helped her find more accessible resources, such as those posted on social media, she began to see “it’s not just me.” Although this meeting did not lead to the necessary final product for Unit 3, it led her to what would become her data collection and thus final project. How could she see these personal experiences she was having with her identity and language in others? The framing of comparison led her to consider seeing how other Spanish heritage students either reproduced or dismantled the judgement she had felt from her community.

“La identidad no debe ser algo que se puede perder, solo ganar.”

In order for Yarielis to collect her data, she had to stand in front of her peers, including her younger sister. She confessed to being nervous but had channeled these feelings into excitement. She was excused from another class for only half a period (roughly 35 minutes) to collect what she needed. She had three data points within that time: a reflection question that was answered in writing and shared in groups, survey questions that were divided among each small group of students, and finally her observations while students completed these activities. She prepared the questions first by following the strategy discussed in class, students had to brainstorm questions, generate themes or categories that would help answer their research

questions, and then spiral back to their original survey questions to correct them and expand them. Her final project presentation included this part of her process as seen in Figure 21.

Figure 21

Yarielis' Survey Questions

Tema	Pregunta	Respuestas
<i>Personal</i>	¿Más música en español o inglés? ¿Cuántos años cuando emigraron para EE.UU.?	Más escuchan musica en espanol Una edad temprana, entre edades de 6 a 11 años (promedio de 9 años)
<i>Juicio</i>	¿Español = mas Latino/a? ¿Cual es tu reacción a juicio hacia la identidad? ¿Un familiar te ha juzgado por expresarte? ¿Juicio para otra persona Latina?	La mayoría dicen que si hablas más espanol eso te hace más latino/a Una persona dijo que lo critican por ser "muy Latino" y otra dijo que se siente herido La mayoría dijo que si 50% que si, y 50% que no
<i>Identidad</i>	¿Cuántas identidades tienes? ¿Has ganado o perdido una identidad? ¿Un comentario que ha hecho dudar de tu identidad? ¿Hablas o entiendes espanol? ¿Lenguaje = Identidad?	Muchos piensan en su cultura hablando de identidades 75% dijeron que han perdido una identidad Todos dijeron que alguien nunca les ha hecho dudar 50% dijeron que los ambos entienden y hablan Todos dijeron que language = identidad

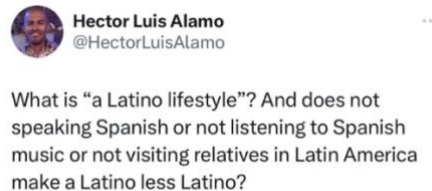
The questions column is in the middle and includes multiple questions that fit under the categories to the left. On the right, she summarizes the responses she received. She explains her results during her presentation in terms of her hypothesis before collecting her own data. For instance, when she submitted her initial analysis of her this data, she added notes to the category that confirm both what she experienced and encountered in others' experiences in the Latinx community.

Figure 22*Yarielis' Initial Analysis*

Juicio - Confirme que muchos iban a opinar que si hablas más español, eso te hace más Latino/a. Aprendí que muchas personas se sentían como yo me sentía hace tiempo, heredia y frustrada. Eso también me sorprendió.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. ¿Español = mas Latino/a?2. ¿Cual es tu reacción a juicio hacia la identidad?3. ¿Un familiar te ha juzgado por expresarte?4. ¿Juicio para otra persona Latina?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. La mayoría dicen que si hablas más español eso te hace más latino/a2. Una persona dijo que lo critican por ser "muy Latino" y otra dijo que se siente herido3. La mayoría dijo que si4. 50% que si, y 50% que no
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These questions composed what she thought would be the majority of her data, but she gained even more insight from observing students during the survey activity. I had suggested to her that she open her activity with what we call a warm-up since this is a common class routine that would follow my usual structure. She decided to let me choose between two posts that I had shared with her through social media from a senior editor at Latino Rebels, Hector Luis Alamo. With her direction, I chose the question in Figure 16 below.

Figure 23*Hector Luis Alamo's Instagram post*

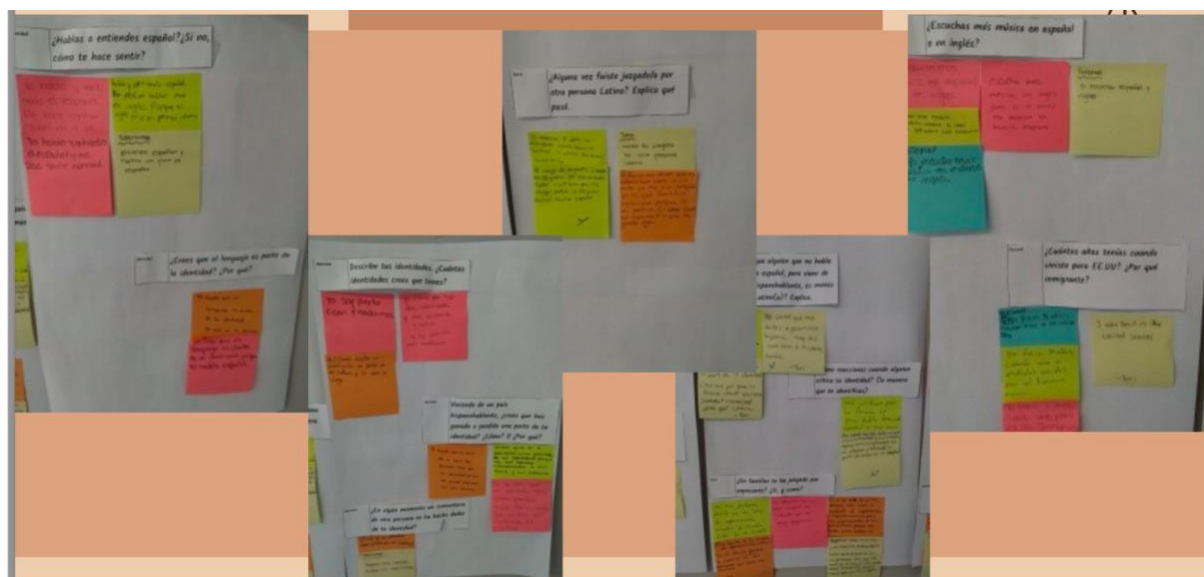


As I walked around the class, I observed Yarielis feverishly taking notes. I would interact with students as they discussed the questions on the board in a mix of Spanish and English. When I pushed students with follow-up questions, giving Yarielis more to write, we locked eyes across the room like we were players on the same team making passes to succeed.

When I debriefed with Yarielis after this class and she began to sort through the sticky notes on her posters as seen in Figure 24, I asked her what struck her about this experience.

Figure 24

Yarielis' Data Collection Activity



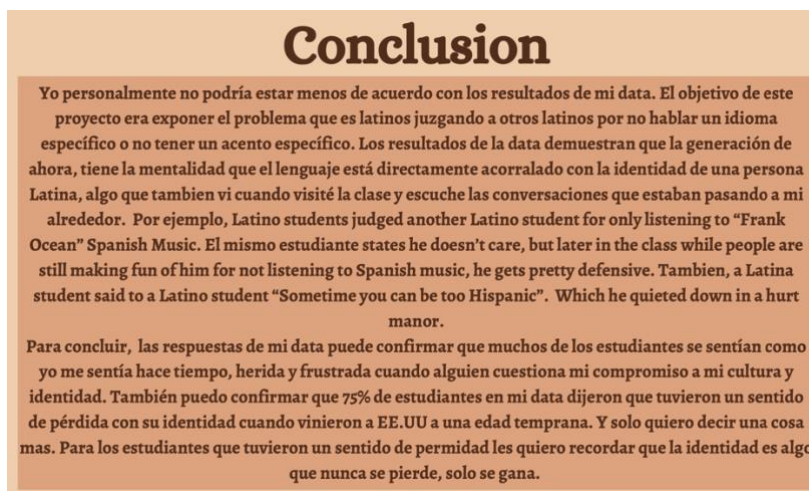
We bonded over how she learned so much more from the “unofficial” conversations that she would have missed if she did not attend that portion of class and only collected the written answer to her questions and prompt. She started citing example after example of what student interactions took place, how one student was ridiculed for his taste in non-Spanish music just as

she was and how others that spoke up also happened to be those more comfortable in English than Spanish. As she stepped towards the door at the end of the day, she assured me she would digitize her notes, as I recommended that this is when it would be fresh.

Ultimately, she was disappointed with the results, as she writes in Figure 25 below, “she could not disagree more with the results,” indicating that she disagreed with her slightly younger peers in this context who evidently hurt others in the Spanish heritage class with less proficiency in Spanish. She pulled quotes from her observation notes and identified participants’ responses to aggression, or judgements as she notes, within the Latinx community at this scale.

Figure 25

Yarielis’ Project Presentation Conclusion Slide



She concluded that the students that were hurt and had nothing to say in response to the aggressions that “questioned their commitment to their culture” were like her. She adds just “one thing” to tell them: “Identity is never lost, only gained.” This was a quote that she mentioned in

passing during her practice presentation and she saw me write it down. “Miss, did you just quote me?” ¡Claro que sí!, of course, I responded. That was very powerful!

Process Over Product and Making Plans.

Throughout this section on Yarielis’ Capstone project, I have highlighted her process over her final project presentation. Her process represents the potential of following a learning process that establishes a relationship of collaboration between the teacher and the student, which is not the standard. Her research taught her about herself in the process that it helped her expand seeing herself in both established and social media writers, and even in other countries. It turned out that her story needed to be known to build more awareness around one of the many facets of language, racial, and cultural discrimination that exists in Latinx communities. The larger issue of the untreated discrimination that exists in supposedly united groups goes silenced yet affects so many who live in the “in-between.”

As a teacher, within a production-based society, I still see so much more potential for this project to lead into action steps. A follow-up to work with the same group she collected data from for instance, could have made a difference for the student that she noticed was ridiculed by his peers in that heritage Spanish class. However, Yarielis’ actions within her research study led to internal changes that should be valued. Her growth is summed up in her reflection at the end of the year, where she states how at the beginning of the year, she had no idea what to research and what it really meant to complete a Capstone project, which made her nervous (5/31/2023). She goes on to explain that now she knew that Capstone project allows students to research what they are interested in and collect data about “algo que te emociona a ti personalmente, y después juntarlo todo en un ensayo” [something that you are passionate about personally, and later put it

all together in an essay] (5/29/2023). At the end of the year, she felt like she had plenty of data and felt “emocionada” (excited).

When prompted to reflect on what she could do next with this research in her notebook, Yarielis commented on feeling more confident in not letting others judge her. Others’ judgement of her, therefore, only mattered to the extent that it caused her distress. She also believed that her work could be used to defend herself or others. Being informed of what is alienating you within your own community allows for self-advocacy.

Disrupting Hierarchies in the Learning Process

In this chapter, I chose three focal students that had unique experiences as Spanish heritage language learners in an advanced writing class. The depth of the analysis reveals students’ own stories and tells of their learning process. Rather than focusing on artifact production alone, this study looked at how students view interconnected content themes that supported and sustained their personal and academic journeys.

This research study began with me and my own planning for the Spanish, Early College Experience (ECE) course: Intermediate Spanish Composition. By restructuring the previously existing course, with permissions from the dual enrollment university, students were able to conduct their own research to engaged with the writing process that is recursive. As an instructor, in charge of my own syllabus, I looked at ways to complement writing goals with student-driven research on passion topics that were chosen through a reflective process that involved both the student and their teacher. In many ways, my challenges to enact a course like this came from pushing the boundaries of how the school system is structured into separate quarters and units that often do not build upon previous knowledge to move forward. I also observed a learned passiveness from students that were not accustomed to seeking a learning

process from a place of genuine connection, curiosity, and joy. There was a collaboration that occurred in this instance between students and their teacher which disrupted the set hierarchies in the learning process. I refer to hierarchies here as an established echelon of knowledge that needs to be produced from the system in which the instructor finds themselves, trickling down to their students at the lowest position. Typically, following this format, students are the ones with the least amount of power and thus agency over their personal and academic journeys in a course. The limitations placed on students, such as processing work within specific time frames-- “or else” --does not respect the individualization of learning seen through the application of differentiation. This is where a level of trust needs to be established so that students can feel more empowered to make their own decisions, communicate with their teachers as collaborator, and at the same time feel supported—which is a balancing act I am sure I tipped at times.

In Figure 26 below, I reimagined Learning by Design by using practitioner-inquiry, to show how Spanish Heritage Language Learners (SHLLs) repeatedly moved from the center of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, transformed practice to applying these in their own student-driven research. To represent this movement from the “safe” or “appropriate” applications of learning to the “creative” and “new,” I leave the center as a necessary core, in a darker color for its quadrant. However, I emphasize the new applications that students and their teacher made together within the provided text in each quadrant. To achieve this extension of applied learning from its core, students and teachers needed to fulfill unique roles that were also complementary. Thus, to achieve these extensions of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice, there is a need to disrupt the traditional and silent hierarchy between teachers and their students during the quest for learning or knowledge production. How these four findings are achieved is found on the outside of the quadrants, sustained by the

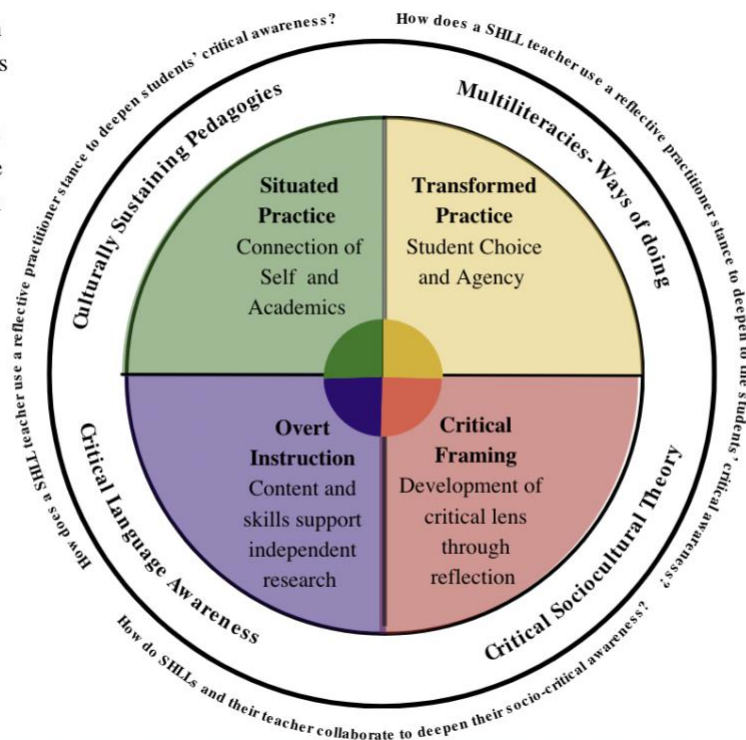
theoretical “how” framing of Critical Socio-cultural theory, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies, Critical Language Awareness, and Multiliteracies-Ways of doing that supported students to create their own space for knowledge production within the World Language classroom.

Ultimately this framing, sustaining the inner findings, aided in answering the research questions found wrapping the circular figure that questions what happens when Spanish heritage language learners, including their teacher, engage with diverse experiences centered on social justice themes that affect Latinx communities.

Figure 26

Findings: Disrupting Hierarchies in the Learning Process

In what ways do Spanish heritage language learners and their teacher engage with diverse experiences centered on social justice themes that affect Latinx communities?



*Adapted from Inquiry as Stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Cope & Kalantzis, 2015)

Chapter 6: Discussion

In this research study, I redesigned a dual-enrollment Spanish writing course to include interconnected social justice topics that paired with research skills to aid students in their process of becoming invested researchers with an activist lens to fuel or sustain future actions. Using a multiliteracies learning process proves that students can be motivated to create new knowledge that is rooted in who they are through their funds of knowledge. This qualitative, practitioner-inquiry case study responds to the issue that World Language courses in the US do not commonly center and actively unravel the injustices that its speakers experience both locally and globally. I framed this problem within a critical socio-cultural approach that implements Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (Moll, et.al, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1995; García, 2009; Paris & Alim, 2017) and Critical Language Awareness (Fairclough 1992; Leeman 2005; Loza & Beauderie, 2022) within Multiliteracies' epistemological learning moves (NLG, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). This resulted in supporting student agency by evening the playing field between teacher and students to collaborate and learn from each other in a partnership that is not the prescribed relationship in our educational system where teachers are expected to have greater power than students over the process and outcomes of a course. This change in dynamic in the classroom allowed for the following, later represented visually in Figure 27:

- Spanish heritage language students in this course were empowered through the process of applied learning and developing greater agency in their learning that is linked to who they are and where they come from.
- The thematic texts used in class not only served as models for students, but also to inspire them to develop their own curiosities that can turn into inquiry projects.

- Students reflected and advocated for their learning and growth as individuals, as a member of the class, and as a member of their own communities.
- Students and their teacher reconstructed the expected learning process from linear to spiral.

In this chapter, I summarize the findings of this study as well as discuss their implications in practice. I recognize the limitations and significance of the project and offer recommendations about practitioner inquiry within World Language classrooms, with special attention in how to center heritage language learners' experiences. I conclude with the insights provided by this study to support the use of critical pedagogies in the Spanish heritage classroom and World Language education where educators and students can work together in the continuous production of alternative futures.

Allowing students to research topics that they are passionate about while providing the support to continue making connections between social issues as they gain research experience challenges how learning is tracked within the school year. Thematic units in language teaching are often revised vertically and horizontally with the intention to cover breadth rather than depth and are controlled by strict quarters or semesters that can stop a natural process of (self)-discovery. Teachers are often given prescribed curriculum that does not allow for student choice. Allowing for student choice requires time and dedication along with unscripted conferencing, which entails a different relationship between the teacher and their students to experience learning in more individualized ways. The findings in this study challenge precisely what is considered hierarchies of knowledge in the learning process that usually place students in the periphery.

Disrupting Hierarchies in the Learning Process

Prioritizing students' agency in the learning process, began with redefining what it meant to be a teacher through a reflective practice. As I redesigned curriculum to bolster student research interests, I also repositioned myself as both a teacher and a learner. The typical power dynamic between teacher and students was maintained from the outside but was much more fluid and nuanced through the experience. The authentic communication between teacher and students, such as comments and messaging through the school's LMS or a school social media account with ideas and additional resources to follow up a conversation after class established a sense of passion for learning. This shared curiosity moved beyond the threat of punitive power that teachers possess through extrinsic factors such as grades and into a form of collegial respect where students are not just allowed but expected to think with rather than for a teacher. The learning process for all players takes place on a more even field and with a greater purpose of "doing school" for a cause that is informed by life experience, reflection, and the quest for the redesigning of knowledge.

Any type of shift of power in the classroom requires adjustment for both teachers and students and can even face resistance. Students in this study, for instance, were already in their last year or two of their secondary education. Taking on the new and added challenge in a course to explore a topic through deep reflection was at times difficult for students who were accustomed to disconnecting the self from academics. Breaking a long-held habit of disconnection is a greater task than supporting students to connect to material in personal ways. However, most students reached higher levels of success precisely by caring deeply for a topic and learning through the process of connecting networks of knowledge that were previously compartmentalized into separate entities as "self" versus "academic" knowledge. The level of

autonomy that students had was also challenging for me as the teacher. Ultimately, even when I guided students, I had to respect their process and capacity to move past discomfort, which they managed along with their other responsibilities during the school year.

Ultimately, the power shift allowed for the individualization of learning. This aim towards individualization is described as a responsibility of pedagogy “to develop an epistemology of pluralism that provides access without people having to erase or leave behind different subjectivities. This must be the basis of a new norm” (NLG, 1996, p.72). What this looked like in practice was the regular communication between students and their teacher, following a workshop model, where students were able to make decisions with their teacher on the follow-up steps. Generic scaffolds and even measuring markers had to be adjusted to best fit the students’ project. More than the finished project or presentations, students took ownership over their learning path in a supported environment where not only were they asked not to leave bits of themselves aside but instead bring their entire selves (languages, cultures, identities) and forms of knowledge into the Spanish classroom.

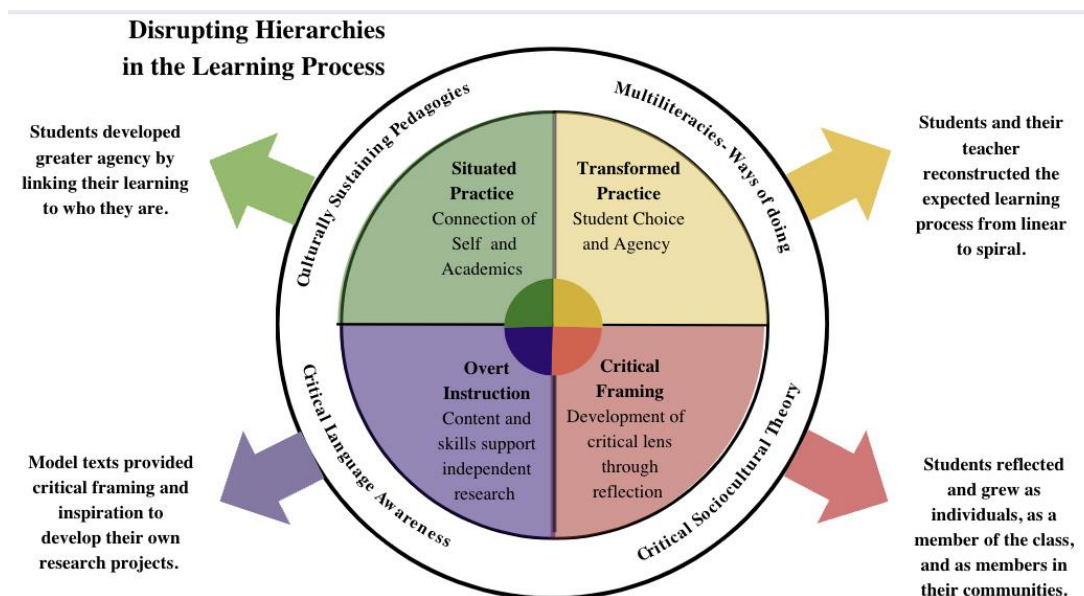
This study challenges not only teachers but district leaders and policy makers to identify opportunities of change in curriculum to establish the flexibility for the individualization of learning rather than establishing generic expectations and leaving teachers to “figure out” differentiation in larger class sizes. Ultimately this challenge begins with the investment in teacher reflection and professional development that allows educators to incorporate reasonable amounts of action research (Pappas, 2011) within their contracted hours, rather than feeling demoralized with added administrative duties. It is through this support that educators could hone their practice precisely by repositioning themselves as learners along with their students to incite passion in the act of learning to contribute to the greater good of society. These changes

would make a direct impact on World Language courses, especially with heritage language learners of different proficiency levels and diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

As seen through this research study, when SHLLs in a dual-enrollment Spanish writing course and their teacher navigated student-led research on social justice topics, the four multiliteracy components of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice led to a new professional relationship between individual students and their teacher. These steps together fulfilled “one of the main principles of Learning by Design is, precisely, to engage with, motivate, and value individual students” (Parra, et al, 2018, p.69). Figure 27, below, adds the implications of the findings in each quadrant of Learning by Design (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015).

Figure 27

Findings and Implications: Disrupting Hierarchies in the Learning Process



*Adapted from Inquiry as Stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Cope & Kalantzis, 2015)

Situated Practice: Connecting the self with academics

As seen in Chapters 4 and 5, both students and their teacher began with situated practice by bringing the entire self to the classroom's academic space. Informed by Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (CSP), situated practice in this study moves towards new knowledge where students developed greater agency by linking their learning to who they are. Using the personal narrative genre in both traditional and multimodal ways, we were able to start with but also remain grounded in our relationships to learning to foster a deeper understanding of the self. Starting with language itself, we reflected and shared how, as multilinguals, we were metaphorical bridges. For example, Daniel recognized himself as a “*puente*” (bridge) in his use of languages and understanding of multiple cultures also reflected his goal of uniting his interests in science to the humanities. This would be the first connection required of students on the course, which proved challenging. One can assume that this was challenging as it was “new” to connect the “known” from metaphorical and literal places that usually existed separately as “home” and “school.” Thus, “the new” had to make sense by connecting to “some elements of familiarity” and “make intuitive overall sense” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015).

Overt Instruction: Supporting independent research with content and skills

A conundrum for teachers is how to give students both the guidance and freedom to support the development of literacy skills, by giving them access to dominating forms of reproducing knowledge and at the same time having them question and move past them to create the “new.” As stated by Gabriela Zapata (2018):

The mission is then to offer learners the tools to develop the traditional literacy skills expected in the academic environment in socially and linguistically framed dynamic ways, while, at the same time, promoting the development of those multiliteracies that will result in the understanding and production of other kinds of multimodal forms of expression through which learners can express their individual and community identities in Spanish (p.20-21).

In practice, as seen through this research study, overt instruction provided the practice of skills (such as the writing genres of narrative and argumentative writing) as well as the access to resources (such as articles and podcasts) that provided students with the theory and vocabulary that validated their everyday experiences. Informed by Critical Language Awareness (CLA), overt Instruction through model texts provided critical framing and inspiration for students to develop their own research projects. As seen through Azucena's section on "Now I have a word for it," being exposed to sociolinguistic terminology and validating experiences such as language brokering gave her the words to express life-long experiences that ultimately sparked her interest in researching translation and interpretation. Students were also guided to keep a source log but include multimedia and social media, if appropriate to their study. In Yarielis and Azucena's projects, popular videos, songs, and a public Instagram added to the soundness of their argument, highlighting that their topics mattered and were relevant. Although this did not come naturally to Daniel, for instance, he also sought sources that could provide him with pictures and maps "para llamar la atención" (call attention) during his presentations.

Critical framing: Reflecting through a critical lens

Critical Sociocultural theory also informed the critical framing through the development of students' reflective critical lens. Developing a critical framing is not a quick process and should run through an entire course and student's career since it is the complex life-long skill of critical thinking that can ultimately create change at the individual, local, and global levels. Thus, this skill should be a teacher's compass that organizes all other goals for students and sustains hope in the future: "We cannot remake the world through schooling, but we can instantiate a vision through pedagogy that creates in microcosm a transformed set of relationships and possibilities for social futures, a vision that is lived in schools" (NLG, 1996, p.72).

At each of the four stages of learning discussed and seen through Figure 27, making connections between contexts, theories, and the students' project was not always smooth as it increasingly involved the unlearning and learning of developing a critical lens. This process was unique for each student, however, taking Yarielis as an example, we can see how sometimes making cross-context connections (moving outside of the US- Puerto Rico into Guatemala) to identify social justice topics of inclusion and belonging was a necessary challenge to deepen her understanding of the morphing and relative construction of power. As her project explored being questioned for one's alliance and cultural identity, she also worked through the process of identifying other instances where, as she states, "identity should only be gained."

Transformed practice: Providing space for student choice and agency

Ultimately through multiliteracies, transformed practice allowed for students and their teacher to reconstruct the expected learning process from linear to spiral. All of the stories recounted in Chapter 5 through the three focal students, Daniel, Azucena, and Yarielis concluded with a sub-section titled "Process Over Product." Fighting my own feelings of discontent with the finished products that at times followed a traditional text-heavy reflection, I had to focus on what mattered and that was the process described where students linked their self-experiences to their academics. This connection was made possible through the support of overt instruction, developed their critical lens, and ultimately students were transformed by applying their learning in both predictable and non-predictable situations by exercising their agency.

Potential Limitations and Significance

Limitations and Significance of the Project

All studies have limitations that need to be acknowledged, especially a qualitative case study such as this practitioner inquiry. The nature of a case study to be bound to a particular

context, aids in deeply examining school practices but also needs to be understood within the specific local context. Therefore, the study, if applied elsewhere, needs to be re-evaluated and largely adjusted to fit its new application. The participants in the study were selected through purposeful sampling (Patton, 2015) within a class where I was also the instructor. Although the benefits outweigh the limitation to my hybrid emic and etic perspective as a teacher-researcher during the Spanish course in which the study took place, it is important to note that the findings could be presented differently by another researcher. In fact, this study would change even if repeated with the experience I now have, as all reflective teaching should produce a work-in-progress. There is also more room left to explore how students can enact their multiliteracies outside of the classroom during the course. However, this study still provides insight into how to integrate multiliteracies and student-centered research in order to validate students' experiences within advanced Spanish courses, particularly centering around SHLLs. Within the limits of time and space, the student and teacher journeys that evolved throughout the course and the focal students in particular, honor both holistic and specific perspectives to capture the learning process within this context.

The Importance of Practitioner Inquiry

This study responds to the need for more educational research from practitioners themselves. Inquiry as stance “is grounded in the problems and contexts of practice in the first place and in the ways practitioners collaboratively theorize, study, and act on those problems in the best interests of the learning and life chances of students and their communities” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 123). It is through inquiry as stance that I was able to identify an educational issue to value SHLLs funds of knowledge within the World Language classroom and use that lens to reconstruct my own course. This stance also allowed me to participate in this

study as a practitioner-researcher and as one that established a partnership with students as they researched their own quandaries and, in the process, learned about themselves. As a co-participant, I was also a co-learner and was able to “blur the boundaries between leaders and followers, between those framing the problems and those implementing the changes in responding to those problems” (Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 123).

What is perhaps most startling about the implementation of practitioner inquiry is that it exists in many ways thanks to its link to higher education and is not used to its potential in the K-12 sector by teachers and administrators. The analysis and reflection of my own work presented here was done in fulfillment of a graduate program, however, much of this work, short of writing this report should be part of a teacher’s practice. The reality is that there exists a “tension between teacher-research and policy mandates to teach better, in the latter those outside of teaching making the decisions” (Lytle, 2008, p. 378). The same way this research study aims to denounce a deficit model towards students, the purposeful inclusion of myself within the study is done so to also claim an asset model for teachers. The message from educational policy is often that teachers need to be told what to do to produce higher test scores. In reality, work from nearly four decades ago about the application of funds of knowledge (Moll, et al, 1995) in the K-12 setting is most beneficial for the inclusion of all learners. Through continued professional development and the corresponding time and compensation, teachers could find a way to formalize the problem-solving potential as highly educated professionals.

Implications for World Language Education

This research study took place in a World Language classroom, where most students were Spanish heritage language learners. Teachers must understand the difference between heritage and second language learners and make their classes more inclusive while allowing for

individualization of learning, where students are able to make decisions about how they apply their learning in real ways. As research indicates, as seen in Chapter 2, that World Language teachers are primarily trained to teach second language (L2) learners. Thus, this study supports the need for more teacher training in supporting and sustaining SHLLs in their classroom by highlighting the importance of the teacher's role. Instead of focusing on correcting the use of translanguaging for instance, students learned the sociolinguistics behind language mixing to situate their language use socially, while gaining new or expanded vocabulary in Spanish. Making decisions about language while knowing how it is perceived is the only way to start taking the reins to make raciolinguistic changes in communities (Rosa & Flores, 2017; Martínez, 2003; Leeman, 2005). Thus, the teacher's understanding of what sociolinguistics truths must be present in the classroom to give students agency over their language use in different contexts. In addition, students, not just teachers, have internalized ideologies that affect their concept of self as multilingual learners. By including students as both learners and active agents in their learning, they can reflect on their sense of self as the root of their learning. It is important to give students the tools that allow them to feel recognized through their experiences and thus empowered to move forward from this foundation.

Ultimately, these shifts in World Language education center heritage language learners as a matter of social justice and it is through critical pedagogies that social justice can be reached. As established in Chapter 2, critical pedagogies and social justice are closely related as the goal of critical pedagogy is to achieve social justice by questioning the normalized status quo. There already is an organic connection between the teaching of languages and cultures through the teaching of social justice (Glynn, et al., 2018); however, we run the risk of reinforcing inequities if we are not actively working to dismantle them. Language classroom practices therefore must

stem from active reflexivity by all stake holders, starting with school administration and teachers to students.

Recognizing students' use of multiliteracies in this study goes beyond teaching the communications standards, from the national World-Readiness Standards (ACTFL, 2015), into including the 5 C's, which also include Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Community. A multiliteracies framework, such as the one used in this study, allows for students to reconstruct their multiple identities (Samaniego & Warner, 2016) by guiding students to connect existing texts outside of the "academically deemed" classroom to concepts that allow them to honor and name their experiences (NLG, 1996). Through this widening of the definition of literacies to include everyday practices, students in this study were able to reconcile their "home selves" with their "academic selves" to work against the social disparities they felt connected to and researched over the course of the year. Lastly, this study also expands the 5 C's into effectively using the Teaching for Justice standards of Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Action to centralize the Spanish-speaking world locally and globally while learners also learn more about themselves through language learning.

Conclusion

In this practitioner research study, I explored how SHLLs and their teacher manage the development of research skills in response to social justice topics of personal interest that are situated in context and in relation with larger society. Outcomes reveal that the role of fostering student agency within a multiliteracies learning process (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) led students to apply their learning in meaningful, personal, and unique ways, which ultimately disrupted the established hierarchy between teachers and students in the learning process. Establishing a reflective inquiry stance (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), I guided students to apply learning

beyond the “known” and “appropriate” into the “new” phases of situated practice by connecting the self to academics; overt instruction by selecting and seeking supports to further their research; critical framing by reflecting and developing their own critical lens; and transformed practice by using their agency to choose what and how to explore a passion topic in the Spanish World Language classroom. With the insights provided by this study, critical pedagogies should continue to inspire other educators to strengthen SHLLs multiliteracies and sense of self in the process of learning.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Course Plan from Syllabus

Unidad 1: La Educación y la identidad

Preguntas esenciales: ¿Cómo valoro mis identidades y mis idiomas y las de otras personas? ¿Cuáles valores se inculcan en el entorno académico? ¿Qué significa pertenecer? ¿Cuál es el efecto de la educación bilingüe? ¿Cómo contribuyo yo a la sociedad multilingüe?

Repaso gramatical: presente perfecto; pretérito/ imperfecto; “como si”

Destreza de escritura: la narrativa personal; la descripción

Actividades:

- crear y presentar “Mi armario lingüístico”
- analizar fragmentos de *Borderlands/ La Frontera* de Gloria Anzaldúa
- comparar la educación bilingüe en EE. UU. y otro país
- identificar partes de una narrativa personal
- usar la descripción con el propósito de capturar a una audiencia
- escribir sobre tus experiencias (y metas) lingüísticas
- entrevistar a otra persona sobre sus experiencias bilingües
- explorar los temas de las cuatro unidades
- escoger y reflexionar sobre el biculturalismo textos audiovisuales (podcast, arte visual y música)

Proyecto de unidad 1: Presentar (de forma multimodal) el tema de tu investigación (Capstone) con conexiones explícitas entre tus experiencias y tu educación

Unidad 2: Corrientes activistas de Latinoamérica y EE.UU.

Preguntas esenciales: ¿Qué corrientes activistas existen en Latinoamérica y cuáles son sus desafíos? ¿Cómo se involucran las artes en estos movimientos? ¿Cómo se comparan estos movimientos inclusivos a los que se encuentran en Estados Unidos? ¿Cómo crees que debes/debemos responder a estas corrientes en nuestro contexto?

Repaso gramatical: mandatos (formal/ informal); el subjuntivo presente y pasado

Destreza de escritura: la escritura argumentativa; la comparación

Actividades:

- identificar temas en textos/artículos sobre la pertenencia en un país
 - y reflexionar sobre los efectos en la audiencia o público
- crear preguntas investigativas
- identificar un recurso válido y relativo a mis preguntas investigativas

- identificar la revitalización de las lenguas indígenas y/o las raíces afrolatinas en un país hispanohablante
- definir las partes de la justicia social: la inclusividad, la empatía, la solidaridad, la acción, el abogar en proyectos sin fines de lucro (non-for-profit)
- investigar y presentar sobre la evolución de tradiciones culturales
- preparar una narrativa argumentativa sobre si se deben mantener las tradiciones o no usando los textos curriculares

Proyecto de unidad 2: Presentar tus preguntas de investigación de Capstone y el comienzo de tu reseña literaria: ¿Cuáles 3 artículos o textos has escogido para tu proyecto y por qué?

Unidad 3: El medio ambiente y la tecnología

Preguntas esenciales: ¿Cuáles son mis observaciones sobre el racismo ambiental? ¿Cómo afectan los avances tecnológicos a diferentes sociedades? ¿Cómo se compara la preocupación por el medio ambiente en Estados Unidos con el resto del mundo hispanoparlante? ¿Cómo puedo contribuir a la justicia ambiental en mi contexto?

Repaso Gramatical: el condicional; el futuro

Destreza de escritura: la descripción (metodología)

Actividades:

- Reflexionar sobre cómo mi ambiente me afecta personalmente
- Identificar problemas ambientales y sus causas
- Identificar soluciones ofrecidos por jóvenes en países hispanoparlantes
- Explorar diferentes métodos de investigación: cuantitativos y cualitativos
- Recopilar datos usando una metodología de investigación (ej. encuesta, entrevista)
- Expresar limitaciones y validez de una metodología investigativa
- Reflexión sobre una unidad de datos de investigación y mi hipótesis

Proyecto de unidad 3: Actualizar tu proyecto (partes 1-2) y presentar tu metodología y reflexión sobre una unidad de datos.

Unidad 4: La salud física y emocional

Preguntas esenciales: ¿Cuáles son los retos en la sociedad para mantener la salud física y emocional? ¿Cómo impacta la tecnología a la salud de una persona u una comunidad? ¿Qué puedo hacer yo para contribuir a un mejor futuro para mi generación y otras posteriores?

Repaso Gramatical: repaso del subjuntivo

Destreza de escritura: el análisis de datos

Actividades:

- Reflexionar sobre el acceso a la salud física y emocional en mi vida y en mi(s) comunidad(es)
- Inferir comprensión de infografías sobre el acceso médico
- Analizar la canción “El Niágara en bicicleta” que critica el sistema de salud médica en la República Dominicana

- Identificar las partes de Capstone (partes 1-4) en artículos, podcasts y proyectos que afectan el bienestar físico/ emocional

Proyecto Final de Unidad 4: Conclusión de Capstone. Proponer o continuar una actividad en mi comunidad.

Appendix B

IRB Approval Documentation

PROTOCOLS



#14217 - El poder de la identidad: Identity evolution in Spanish heritage learners at the secondary level

Protocol Information

Review Type	Status	Approval Date	Continuing Review Date
Exempt	Exempt	May 04, 2022	May 04, 2023
Expiration Date	Initial Approval Date	Initial Review Type	
--	May 04, 2022	Exempt	

Feedback

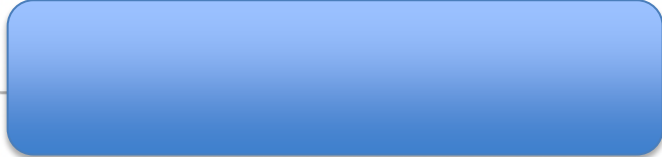
Approval Comment

This research is exempt under the following category:

-Category 1

Appendix C

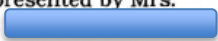
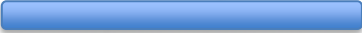
Document of Local Permission



March 27, 2022

Institutional Review Board
Indiana University- Bloomington

Dear IRB Members,

After reviewing the proposed study, "El poder de la identidad: Identity evolution in the Spanish heritage classroom at the secondary level through critical pedagogies", presented by Mrs. Marta Adán, I have granted permission for the study to be conducted at 


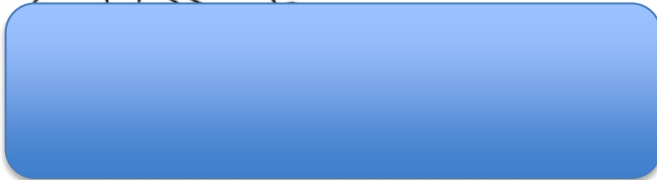
The purpose of the study is to understand what happens when Spanish heritage language learners engage during class with stories centered on social justice themes that affect Latinx communities. The primary classroom activities align with best practices, such as conversation circles between students, class discussions, class presentations, peer reviews, and conferencing between students and teacher. Only students in Spanish for Heritage Speakers and ECE Spanish are eligible to participate.

I understand that class discussions will be recorded once every two weeks for analysis, largely during the Fall 2022 semester during regularly scheduled Spanish classes. I expect that this project will end no later than May 2023. At the start of the school year in September 2022, Mrs. Adán will contact and recruit her students and their parents/ guardians. Data will be collected through normal classroom procedures, but all data analysis will happen outside of her contracted school hours.

Mrs. Adán has agreed to provide to my office a copy of all Indiana University IRB-approved, stamped consent documents before she officially begins her study next school year, 2022-2023. Any data she collects will be kept confidential and transferred to a secured database through Indiana University. Mrs. Adán has also agreed to contribute to the CREC community with her findings to the professional development in the World Language department.

If the IRB has any concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me at the phone number listed below.

Sincerely,



Appendix D

Informed Consent Forms

INDIANA UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT FOR RESEARCH

Sustaining *el empoderamiento* of Spanish heritage learners at the secondary level through critical sociocultural pedagogies

If you decide not to participate in this study, you can change your mind and decide to leave the study at any time in the future. If you decide to withdraw, simply let Mrs. Marta Adán know.

PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT (18 and over)

In consideration of all of the above, I agree to participate in this research study. I will be given a copy of this informed consent document to keep for my records.

Participant's Printed Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____ **Date:** _____

If your student is under 18, you (the parent) may provide consent to participate in the study by signing below. Your student should also provide assent below

Printed Name of Parent: _____

Signature of Parent: _____ **Date:** _____

If you are under 18 years old, you are able to provide **assent** to participate in this study. Please sign here once your parents have provided consent.

Printed Name of Child Participant: _____

Signature of Child Participant: _____ **Date:** _____

INDIANA UNIVERSITY CONSENTIMIENTO de INVESTIGACIÓN

Sostener el empoderamiento de estudiantes de español como lengua heredada al nivel de la secundaria a través de pedagogías socioculturales críticas

Si decide participar en la investigación, puede cambiar de parecer y decidir no participar en cualquier momento en el futuro. Si decide retirarse del estudio, solo comuníquese a la Señora Marta Adán.

CONSENTIMIENTO DEL PARTICIPANTE (18 años o Mayor de edad)

En consideración con las pautas anteriores, estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio investigativo. Sé que recibiré una copia de mi consentimiento para mis propios récords.

Nombre de participante (letra de molde): _____

Firma de participante: _____ **Fecha:** _____

Nombre de quien obtiene el consentimiento (letra de molde): _____

Firma de quien obtiene el consentimiento: _____ **Fecha:** _____

CONSENTIMIENTO DEL PARTICIPANTE (menos de 18 años)

Si su estudiante tiene menos de 18 años, se requiere su consentimiento para que su hijo/a participe en el estudio. Su estudiante también debe proveer su consentimiento después.

Nombre en letra de imprenta de padre/madre/ representante legal autorizado:

Firma de padre(s) o representante: _____ **Fecha:** _____

Nombre en letra de imprenta del participante (estudiante):

Firma del participante (estudiante):

_____ **Fecha:** _____

Appendix E

INDIANA UNIVERSITY STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH

Sustaining empoderamiento of Spanish heritage learners at the secondary level through critical sociocultural pedagogies

Dear parents/ guardians and students,

I am working on my doctorate at Indiana University and doing research on **my own instruction**. I may be recording some of the class sessions during this 2022-2023 school year. Please let me know if you have questions about this.

Additionally, I would like to analyze student work/assignments. This data is protected by FERPA, and I need signed permission in order to do this. Please see the attached consent/ assent form and return this if you are willing to help with this study.

Students are being asked to participate in a research study. Scientists and Educators do research to answer important questions that might help change or improve the way we do things in the future. This consent form will give you information about the study to help you decide whether you want to participate. Please read this form, and ask any questions you have, before agreeing to be in the study.

All research is voluntary. You can choose not to take part in this study. If you decide to participate, you can change your mind later and leave the study at any time. You will not be penalized or lose any benefits if you decide not to participate or choose to leave the study later.

The purpose of this study is to understand how Spanish heritage learners that are taking Spanish courses reflect upon their own identities through the understanding of texts based on social issues that affect the Latinx community. This will involve analyzing how students connect to the curriculum and use these connections to create personalized work for a real, contextual purpose in a variety of modes, such as written, visual and/or audible, within their class participation.

All required components of this research study are already a part of regular class activities required for every student enrolled in Mrs. Marta Adán's Spanish courses. If you agree to be in the study, you will not be required to do anything in addition to or differently from what you would be doing for the course under normal circumstances. No additional work is required outside of regular classroom activities or homework assignments. **The reason an informed consent/assent document is needed is because FERPA requires us to seek authorization for**

the use of student records for research purposes. Mrs. Marta Adán is requesting access to her students' records (assignments and notes based on conversations- conferences) with students for the research study. The study is taking place during the 2022-2023 academic school year.

Before agreeing to participate, please consider the risks and potential benefits of taking part in this study. First of all, you will be completing the same work whether you agree to take part in the study or not. The difference is that I will have access to analyze your work outside of my capacity as a teacher to help me draw conclusions about Spanish heritage education. However, I recognize that at times, participating in a recorded class discussion may feel unnatural or uncomfortable.

Any personal benefit you may gain from this study, you will have access to from the class itself, not the study. However, I hope to learn things that will help researchers in the future.

You will not be paid for participating in this study. There is no cost to participate in the study.

We will protect your information and make every effort to keep your personal information confidential, but we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. No information which could identify you will be shared in publications about this study. Any electronic data will be stored only on encrypted devices and under multiple layers of password protection: computer access code, password-protected Google Drive account, and individual document access codes. Any physical data collected as part of classwork or homework will also be coded omitting individual identifiers.

This study may involve audio or video recording. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the recordings or the transcripts. The recordings will be transcribed by the researcher within two weeks and then erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Only the research team will be able to access the transcripts.

Your personal information may be shared outside the research study if required by law. We also may need to share your research records with other groups for quality assurance or data analysis. These groups include the Indiana University Institutional Review Board or its designees, and state or federal agencies who may need to access the research records (as allowed by law).

Information collected in this study may be used for other research studies or shared with other researchers for future research. If this happens, information that could identify you, such as your name and other identifiers, will be removed before any information or specimens are shared. Since identifying information will be removed, we will not ask for your additional consent.

If you have questions about the study or encounter a problem with the research, contact the researcher, Mrs. Marta Adán, at 908-510-1697 or madan@crec.org. You may also contact Dr. Carmen Medina, professor at Indiana University, cmolina@indiana.edu. **If you decide to**

participate in this study, you can change your mind and decide to leave the study at any time in the future. If you decide to withdraw, simply let Mrs. Marta Adán know.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, to discuss problems, complaints, or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information or to offer input, please contact the IU Human Research Protection Program office at 800-696-2949 or at irb@iu.edu.

Warm regards, Marta Adán, Doctoral Candidate, Indiana University

DECLARACIÓN DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Sostener el empoderamiento de estudiantes de español como lengua heredada al nivel de la secundaria a través de pedagogías socioculturales críticas

Estimados padres/ encargados y estudiantes:

Se le está solicitando que participe en un estudio de investigación. Los educadores hacen investigación para obtener respuestas a preguntas importantes que pueden contribuir a cambiar o mejorar la forma en que haremos las cosas en el futuro.

Puede elegir no participar o abandonar el estudio de investigación en cualquier momento. Si decide no participar o abandonar el estudio de investigación más tarde, esto no resultará en una penalidad ni en la pérdida de beneficios como estudiante.

El propósito de este estudio es investigar cómo estudiantes de español como lengua heredada reflexionan sobre su identidad a través del estudio de textos basados en retos sociales que afectan a las comunidades latinas. Esto involucrará analizar cómo los estudiantes se identifican con el currículum y cómo ellos emplean lo aprendido. Podrán personalizar sus tareas académicas con un propósito que responda a su contexto a través de varios modos de escritura o trabajos audiovisuales, dentro del marco de su participación de clase.

Le estoy pidiendo participar en este estudio porque eres un estudiante en una clase de español como lengua heredada o una clase mayormente compuesta de hablantes de español como lengua heredada. Su maestra, la Señora Marta Adán, está dirigiendo este estudio como parte de sus requisitos para finalizar su doctorado en educación bajo la guía y tutela de su consejera, Dr. Carmen Medina en el departamento de Currículum e Instrucción en Indiana University.

Si acepta participar en este estudio, solo tendrá que completar las asignaciones regulares para este curso durante el año escolar, que incluyen reflexiones escritas, grabaciones audiovisuales y presentaciones. También participará en trabajos de grupo durante la clase y reuniones con la Señora Adán para hablar sobre el progreso de sus trabajos.

Antes de participar en el estudio, debe entender que va a completar el mismo trabajo para la clase si acepta o no formar parte de la investigación. La diferencia es que yo tendré acceso a sus trabajos para analizarlos fuera de mi capacidad como maestra para asistir en presentar conclusiones sobre la educación del español como lengua heredada. No obstante, reconozco que a veces, puede resultar incómodo participar en una clase grabada.

Cualquier acceso a beneficios personales que usted pueda ganar de este estudio viene de asistir a la clase en sí y no por tomar parte del estudio. Sin embargo, espero adquirir información que beneficiará a otros investigadores y estudiantes en el futuro.

No hay ningún costo asociado con su participación en el estudio.

Yo estaré encargada de proteger su información y mantener su información personal confidencial, pero no podemos garantizar una confidencialidad absoluta. Se guardará información para el estudio sin identificación de los participantes. Las grabaciones audiovisuales se guardarán con múltiples contraseñas antes de ser transcritas y luego borradas. Si aparece partes de su trabajo de clase en alguna publicación educativa, no se presentará con información de identidad como nombres y rostros.

Hay posibilidades de compartir su información con otros grupos para asegurarnos de la calidad del análisis. Algunos grupos incluyen la Oficina de Sujetos Humana en Indiana University y mi consejera, Dr. Carmen Medina, u otros profesores/ colegas durante mis estudios en Indiana University.

Si decide participar en este estudio, puede cambiar su decisión en cualquier momento en el futuro. Si decide dejar el estudio, simplemente comuníquese a la Señora Marta Adán.

Si tiene preguntas sobre el estudio de investigación, comuníquese con su maestra e investigadora, la Señora Marta Adán, 908-510-1697 o madan@crec.org. También puede enviarle un correo electrónico a la Dr. Carmen Medina, profesora en la Universidad de Indiana, cmedina@indiana.edu.

Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante de un estudio de investigación, para discutir problemas, quejas o inquietudes o para obtener información u ofrecer comentarios, comuníquese con la Oficina de Sujetos Humanos de IU al 800-696-2949 o en irb@iu.edu.

Saludos cordiales,

Marta Adán, Candidata Doctoral, Universidad de Indiana

Appendix F

Project Timeline

Time (15 Months)	Sept. 22	Oct. 22	Nov. 22	Dec. 22	Jan. 23	Feb. 23	Mar. 23	Apr. 23	May 23	Jun. 23	Jul. 23	Aug. 23	Sept.- Oct. 23	Nov. 23
Activity														
Drafting Proposal	X	X												
Dissertation Proposal Completion			X											
Dissertation Proposal Defense				X										
Complete Research	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Data Transcription					X	X	X	X	X	X				
Finalize Data Transcription										X	X			
Coding and Analysis										X	X	X		
Drafting of Dissertation											X	X		
Revisions Per Peer Reviewer Feedback													X	
Revisions Per Faculty Feedback													X	
Dissertation Completion														X
Dissertation Defense														X

Appendix G

Final Project Instructions

Español ECE ***Proyecto Final***

Fecha límite: 26 de mayo

Presentaciones en clase: 31 de mayo y 2 de junio

Para concluir este año, vas a recopilar todo lo que has aprendido sobre tu tema de Capstone en una presentación multimodal.

- A. **Partes 1-4 en Schoology:** Cada parte (abajo) se encuentra en Schoology en Unidad 4, pero los enlaces van a documentos donde ya tienes información que puedes copiar y ajustar.
- B. **Cada parte representa una sección en tu ensayo multimodal** (en [Wix](#), [Adobe](#), [Canva](#), etc).
 - a. Incluye texto escrito original (palabras de los documentos, Partes 1-3)
 - b. Incluye algún aspecto visual (mapa mental, dibujos, imágenes o fotos) o audio (grabación, video o música)

Parte 1: Introducción (*ver "[Proyecto parte 1](#)", Q1-2)

- Incluye un título y explica el tema/ problema
- Explica tu interés con tus preguntas de investigación
 - Incluye tu hipótesis (lo que pensabas encontrar con tu investigación)
- Describe tu conexión/ interés personal usando una narrativa personal

Parte 2: Investigación

- Fuentes secundarias (*ver "[Registro de investigación](#)," Q2-3)
- Explica cómo se relacionan las fuentes (3-6 fuentes)
 - ...y cómo se relacionan a tus experiencias, investigación y/o experimento
 - Referencias en APA

Parte 3: Metodología

- Posicionalidad (*see "[Posicionalidad de investigador/a](#)", Q1)
- Recopilación de datos (*ver "[Mi recopilación de datos](#)", Q4)
- Explica cuándo y cómo recopilaste tus datos. (* ver "[Mi calendario](#)", Q4)
- Incluye una tabla, gráfica o infografía sobre tus datos (*ver "[Análisis de datos](#)," Q4)
- Explica la validez, fiabilidad y ética de tus datos (*ver "[La validez-Reflexión y plan](#)", Q4)

Parte 4: Conclusiones/ Reflexión

- Resumen de tus resultados: ¿Qué confirmaste? ¿Qué aprendiste? ¿Qué te sorprendió?
- Describe tus próximos pasos y cómo se conectan a los resultados
 - ¿Qué acción quieres o te gustaría tomar con esta información?
 - ¿Qué pueden hacer otras personas con tu información?
 - ¿Qué le añade tu estudio a las fuentes en la parte 2?
- Describe las limitaciones del estudio
- Conclusión

Curriculum Vitae

Marta M. Adán

Education

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN; Ed.D December 2023

Literacy, Culture, and Language Education

in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Dissertation: *Sustaining the empoderamiento of Spanish heritage learners at the secondary level through critical sociocultural pedagogies*

Advisor: Dr. Carmen Medina

University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI; Ph.D. (ABD) Spanish. May 2015

University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI; M.A. Spanish. Dec. 2011

DeSales University, Center Valley, PA; *magna cum laude*, B.A. Spanish, May 2009
Minor in Secondary Education

Certifications

Spanish Language and Culture Advanced Placement Certification Aug. 2016

Board Certified in Connecticut: 023 Spanish, 7-12 July 2015

Board Certified in Pennsylvania: Spanish, K-12 May 2009

Honors, Fellowships and Grants

Indiana University, Bloomington

Virtual Literacy Readiness Bootcamp (New Delhi, India) Spring 2021

Researched and created instructional materials for notetaking, academic reading, essay writing, and presentational skills on Google classroom. Advised a group of students through the program and leave feedback on asynchronous tasks.

Research Assistant for Professor Carmen Medina Fall 2019-Spring 2020

Conducted research on Spanish children's literature from Latin America and the US for classroom implementation with pre-teachers through the University of Puerto.

University of Texas- Austin, Honorarium

Awarded \$300 for travel to COERELL's Conference for Heritage Summer 2019

Language Learner

Fund for Teachers, Grant

Teaching Fellow Summer 2018

Awarded \$5,000 for curriculum enrichment and research in Peru to enhance Indigenous and Black voices in teaching materials.

University of Wisconsin, Madison

Honored Instructor, Spanish 204

Fall 2014, Spring 2013

Nominated by students for outstanding classroom instruction

Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship

Summer 2013

Completed summer intensive of Brazilian Portuguese grammar and culture

Master's Examinations: Passes with recommendation in Colonial Literature Fall 2011

Research Assistant for Professor Víctor Goldgel-Carballo

Spring 2014

DeSales University

Member, Kappa Delta Pi (Honor Society for Education Majors)

Academic Employment

“STEM Academy”

High School Spanish Teacher

Fall 2015- present

Courses taught: Spanish II-IV, Spanish Heritage Speakers I-II, AP Language & Culture, Dual Enrollment courses: Intermediate Grammar & Composition, and Intermediate Conversation through the University of Connecticut.

Implement social justice within language instruction, comprehensible input, research skills, feedback and workshop writing methods, and critical language awareness. Highly engaging hyperdocs, Google integration, and use of alternative and authentic texts at all levels of instruction.

Early College Experience Adjunct Instructor (University of Connecticut)

Fall 2016- present

Course certifications: Advanced Grammar & Composition, Advanced Conversation, Spanish for Heritage Speakers, and Introduction to Latin American Studies

Courses taught at Academy of Aerospace and Engineering where students receive course credit on a UConn transcript.

Spanish Curriculum Instructional Designer

Summer 2016- Present

During the summers, I have created curriculum materials under the direction of Elke Hernández, CREC World Language Curriculum Specialist. I have created new courses for concurrent courses through the Early College Experience at the University of Connecticut, Spanish for Heritage Speakers I and II, and revamped Spanish III materials.

Spanish Department Chair

Fall 2018- Spring 2023

Represented the department in team leaders' meetings and plan Spanish department meeting agendas. Gathered projections of course selections for the program and fulfilled order and purchasing for the department. Promoted equity in curriculum and grading/ assessment through instructional practices shared during common planning time.

High School Spanish Teacher, Summer School

Summer 2017

Courses taught: Spanish I-II

Worked with under credited students using hands-on and student-centered experiences to achieve learning and growth.

University of Wisconsin, Madison

Teaching Assistant, Spanish 226 Spring 2015
Intermediate Language Practice with Emphasis on Writing and Grammar

Instructor, Integrated Liberal Studies (ILS 138) Fall 2014
Taught a one-credit seminar for first-year students in Chadbourne Residential College. The course is centered on the dorm's own "common read" to teach broad themes, such as that of diversity, to first-year students.
Attended workshops on Liberal Arts Education workshops; met regularly with a student "peer mentor;" lesson plan; led discussion

Curriculum consultant, Spanish for Heritage Speakers (Spanish 206, 207) Fall 2014
Helped design course syllabus, select covered material, planned lessons, and attended six classes to observe outcomes. Guest lecturer.

Teaching Assistant, Spanish 204 Spring 2012- Fall 2014
Intermediate Spanish Language

Teaching Assistant, Spanish 203 Fall 2010; Fall 2011; Summer 2013
Intermediate Spanish Language

Teaching Assistant, Spanish 101 Fall 2009- Summer 2010

Hispanic Initiative Summer Camp Counselor, DeSales University June 2007, 2008

Languages

English (Native), Spanish (Native)

Membership in Professional Organizations

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)

- Interest Group: Spanish Heritage Language Learners

Connecticut Council of Language Teachers (COLT)

Service (Committees and Administrative Responsibilities)

Spanish Heritage Language Learners Interest Group (SIG), American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Jan.2021- Dec. 2023

Membership and roles as Vice-Chair and current Chair of the interest group for Spanish Heritage Language Learners. I organize and facilitate webinars and help design newsletters about the most recent research in the area. I also arrange an annual business meeting, keep the budget, and foster new events such as “Café con Colegas” and create/ share updates through social media to promote events.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) Workshop 101, AAE Summer 2021
Attended workshop in August 2021 through the Buck Institute. Implemented workshop into Spanish III curriculum update (Food Unit- Recipe Book).

Teaching and Learning Priorities Committee, AAE Fall 2019- Spring 2021
Part of the lead team researching and implementing equitable grading and assessment practices. Collaborating in professional development design and presentations to staff.

Literacy, Culture, and Language Education (ICLCLE) Conference Fall 2020
Indiana University, Moderator

COLT Poetry Recitation Contest Spring 2019- 2021
Coached students to present oral recitation of poetry for two months of the school year. Serve as a volunteer judge for the competition.

Spanglish Writing Contest 2017-2020
Promote the National Spanglish Writing Contest at the High School level which is part of the National Symposium on Spanish as a Heritage Language.
Students placed the following awards:

- 1st place in narrative category 2017
- 1st place in poetry and honorable mention in narrative 2018
- 1st place in narrative 2019

Capstone Advisor, AAE Fall 2019-Spring 2020
Served as advisor to an arts-based research project on the topic of immigration in the US to better understand the impacts of the varied stories offered through media and visual arts in student empathy.

Club Co-advisor: Community Service Club, AAE Fall 2016- Spring 2020
Guided students to become leaders in their communities through social justice in action. Organized field trips, organized logistics of school events, and acquired the necessary permissions to run school campaigns.

Scheduling Committee, AAE 2017-2018
Served in a small research group looking at alternative ways to structure the school day and schedule to maximize student socio-emotional and academic success.

Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) Committee, AAE 2015-2017
Organized and presented PBIS strategies to staff during professional development.

Co-Chair Diversity and Inclusion Workshop, UW- Madison Spring 2015
Led and organized a panel of diversity and inclusion for teaching assistants and professors at the collegiate level.

Language Institute Volunteer, UW- Madison
Panel participant Spring 2015
Hosted visiting High School students in the Spanish classroom Fall 2014

Graduate Student Mentor Fall 2014- Spring 2015
Met regularly with first-year Master's student

Publicity Chair Kaleidoscope Conference, UW- Madison Spring 2013- 2015
Printed and distributed posters to various departments on campus
Prepared welcoming materials for conference attendees

Teaching Assistant Review Committee, UW- Madison 2012- 2013
Liaison for TAs and coordinators
Attended committee meetings (monthly)
Co- organized an annual Spring semester workshop for TAs (April 2013, 2014)

Professional Development (Presentations and Articles)

Articles

Adán, M. (2023). "Is this class really for me?" Developing a Heritage Language Curriculum at the Secondary Level to Empower Student Agency. *The Language Educator*. American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL), 18 (2), p. 19-24.

Professional Development Presentations

"Empowering Spanish heritage Learners Through Research-based Capstone Projects," American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Convention. (Accepted) Fall 2023

"Developing a Heritage Language Curriculum at the Secondary Level to Empower Student Agency," Bristol Board of Education. Spring 2023

"Standards Informed Grading Practices in the Spanish Classroom," Teacher's Choice. Capitol Region Education Council. 2022-2023

"Engineering Social Change: Approaches in the Spanish Heritage Classroom," American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Annual Convention. (Accepted) Fall 2022

"World Language through a Social Justice Lens," Capitol Region Education Council. Fall 2020

"Shifting the Grading Mindset in the Language Classroom," Capitol Region Education Council. Spring 2021

“Comprehensible Input and Storytelling,” Launch, Capitol Region Education Council. Fall 2019

“Comprehensible Input: Collective Storytelling in the World Language Classroom,” Teacher’s Choice, Capitol Region Education Council. 2018-2019