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Los Angeles

Let Us Speak:
Chicana Teachers on Teaching[1]

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for a degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Education

by

Elexia Reyes McGovern

2013

[1] This title is influenced by *Let me speak! Testimony of Domitila: A Woman of the Bolivian Mines* (1978) and *Black Teachers on Teaching* (1998).

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2013

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Let Us Speak: Chicana Teachers on Teaching

by

Elexia Reyes McGovern

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles 2013

Professor Kim Gomez, Co-Chair

Professor Daniel Solórzano, Co-Chair

This study centers the lived experiences of Chicana K – 12 teachers from Southern California who see themselves with defined ethnic and political identities, and view Students of Color from an assets-based perspective. The dissertation documents how Chicana teachers explain connections between their life experiences and classroom practices. Through a Chicana Feminist sensibility, I collect information with the teachers in qualitative ways: (1) pre-interviews, (2) life-history interviews, (3) classroom observations, and (4) portraiture. This study works under the hypothesis that Chicana teachers employ a broad range of pedagogical approaches influenced by their own lived experiences. The findings are presented as portraits of the individual Chicana teachers, framed by their socio-historical context. This study provides insight into the implementation of culturally relevant practices with

Students of Color. Additionally, this work offers considerations on the development of a critical, “home-grown” Teacher of Color pipeline.

The dissertation of Elexia Reyes McGovern is approved.

Dolores Delgado Bernal

Concepción Valadez

Kim Gomez, Committee Co-Chair

Daniel Solórzano, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

DEDICATION

Mariluna, you are the best teacher I have ever had. Thank you for your patience, insight, and love. I pray you are also blessed with great teachers who value your cultura.

I love you.

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La lucha sigue.

VITA

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CEREMONY

I will tell you something about stories
[he said]
They aren't just for entertainment.
Don't be fooled.
They are all we have, you see,
all we have to fight off
illness and death.

You don't have anything
if you don't have the stories.

Their evil is mighty
but it can't stand up to our stories.
So they try to destroy the stories
let the stories be confused or forgotten.
They would like that
They would be happy
Because we would be defenseless then.

He rubbed his belly.
I keep them here
[he said]
Here, put your hand on it
See, it is moving.
There is life here
for the people.

And in the belly this story
the rituals and the ceremony
are still growing.

What She Said:

The only cure
I know
is a good ceremony
that's what she said.

-Leslie Marmon Silko, 1977

CHAPTER 1

DIRECTIONS: JOURNEY TO THE FOUR CORNERS

"You don't have anything/if you don't have the stories", writes Leslie Marmon Silko (1977). Stories produce cultural and historical memories, and create meaning in our human lives. This dissertation is a story - a story about Chicana[2] teachers who have lived and taught within the last 80 years.

Good storytellers paint a rich background. I, as the writer of this dissertation, and in an attempt to tell an interesting story, will attempt to set up a clear backdrop for you, my dear reader.

Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (1985; 1995) in her work on portraiture provides a concrete, deliberate, and creative way to paint a backdrop. She weaves aspects of context throughout portraits of individuals and schools. There are four elements to context, argues Lawrence-Lightfoot: the personal context, the historical context, the internal context, and the shape of the context. Briefly, the personal context highlights the position of the portraitist (researcher); the historical context describes political, demographic, socio-historical attributes of a place; the internal context illustrates the physical description of the research site; and shaping the context refers to the dynamic nature of human interactions with place. The stories in this dissertation are written as portraits of the storytellers.

In staying true to the art of portraiture, the chapters in this dissertation also act as contextual elements. Chapter 2 focuses on the personal context; chapter 3

[2] While teachers in this study identified in a variety of ways (i.e. Mexican-American, American, Chicana, Latina, Mexicana, etc.), I use "Chicana" to refer collectively to the women – highlighting the diversity of women who all identify with a common Mexican heritage (Zavella, 1991).

frames the historical context; chapter 4 addresses the educational context of scholarship that supports this work; chapter 5 discusses portraiture as a research methodology; and chapter 6 explains how the research was carried. Three portraits of Chicana teachers comprise chapter 7, and the dissertation concludes with implications of this research, specifically within teacher education.

The storytellers are women of Mexican descent, born on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border. They describe themselves in a myriad of different ways: Mexican, *mexicana pero americanizada*, Mexican-American, Chicana, Latina, and American. This is a multigenerational group of women. Their births span generations from the late 1930's to the early 1980's. The teachers were born, raised, and have taught in communities such as: Boyle Heights, San Bernardino, Pasadena, South Central Los Angeles, Huntington Park, Central Los Angeles, San Diego, Oxnard, Anaheim, and Pomona. Their professional experiences in public schools range from 2 years to over 40 years of teaching in K-12 classrooms with students of color.

This dissertation explores the following questions with this diverse group of Chicana teachers from Southern California:

1. What connections do Chicana teachers perceive between their cultural intuition (lived experiences) and their K – 12 classroom literacy practices?

2. How are those perceived connections represented in the classroom?
    a. What types of literacy practices does the teacher use and encourage in her classroom?
    b. How do these practices reflect her overall approach to literacy?

Now, let us step into the storytellers' world…

CHAPTER 2

PERSONAL CONTEXT: THE RESEARCHER'S PERCH & PERSPECTIVE

This study is an exploration of the life stories of Chicana teachers. I begin this study through my stories as a: Chicana-Tejana-Irish mother, and former classroom teacher. My life informs the cultural intuition that led to the development of this research. Cultural intuition is "the unique viewpoint that many Chicanas bring to the research process" (Calderón, Delgado Bernal, Perez Huber, Malagon, Velez, 2012). It is an evolving concept that deliberately "produces a critical, social justice approach" (p. 516), and forms a way of knowing that is reflexive, collective, and centered in lived experience. Delgado Bernal (1998a) suggests that cultural intuition comes from: (1) our personal and collective experiences, (2) specific bodies of literature, (3) professional experiences, and (4) the relationships we build with our research participants[3].

I begin here with a few brief personal stories to frame a partial context of the cultural intuition I bring to this dissertation. This offers readers a glimpse into my positionality as a Chicana educational researcher and grounds a Chicana Feminist lens. It is what Sarah Lightfoot-Lawrence (1997) names the "personal context", in which the portraitist (researcher) "sketches herself into the context" (p. 50).

My interest in teaching came in the first grade with my friend Marky Rodriguez[4]. Most days, I completed my work early, and Ms. Parker would have me "help" Marky to finish. Marky was a quirky, ridiculously funny, skinny Mexican boy

[3] I will also use the terms "actors", "subjects", and "informants" to collectively refer to the women who graciously shared their stories and classrooms with me.

[4] All names in this dissertation have been changed to protect the anonymity of the actors.

whose stressed-out mom was always being summoned to the principal's office to collect Marky in the middle of the day for something he said or did in class. Once in 2nd grade Ms. Parker literally had to pull Marky to the office; his shoes must have been worn smooth because he appeared to glide down the hallway. Realizing this, Marky wriggled one hand loose from the teacher's gladiator grip and turned to wave to our class, shouting, "Look! I'm skiing!" I laugh with that memory, but also lament at how Marky was misunderstood by teachers and administration because of his high energy love for life and mistreated for his ethnic background.

Through my schooling experiences, I slowly became aware of differences – differences in classroom practices, school punishment policies, curriculum, the Advanced Placement (AP) class make-up, the free and reduced lunch line, and the distinct "color-line" (Du Bois, 1903) governing these differences. I come from a middle-class, Mexican and Irish household. I hold my dad's last name (McGovern) last and my mom's last name (Reyes) second to last. Upon birth, my full name read Elexia Marie Reyes McGovern. My Mom had originally wanted my last name to read Reyes-McGovern, but the white nurse filling out her paperwork in the hospital declared it impossible. Consequently I have two middle names: Marie and Reyes. I soon became nicknamed and passed my K-12 career as "Lexie McGovern"[5].

[5] Kholi and Solórzano (2012) argue that names are important to the self-perceptions and worldviews of a child. The authors maintain that the mispronunciation or renaming of an individual in K-12 settings is a form of racial microaggressions – "subtle daily insults that, as a form of racism, support a racial and cultural hierarchy of minority inferiority".

I state these facts upfront because they enabled my relatively easy transition through the Chicana/o[6] educational pipeline (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006). I was placed and remained in AP classes throughout my secondary education. While my junior and high schools were predominantly working class and Mexican, I was one of a small handful of Mexican students in AP classes, which were mainly populated by white and Asian students who were attracted to the neighborhood schools through magnet programs. It is what a counselor working in my former high school describes as, "two schools in one": a college preparatory academy for high-achieving white and Asian students and a "push-out factory" for Black and Brown students (S. Martínez, pilot interview, July 22, 2011).

In reflecting on my schooling experiences, I have realized in many instances, I passed as white. I did not know how to speak about my interracial identity and did not find opportunities in my classes to discuss my ethnic or cultural identity. I always thought people would, of course, know I was Mexican: how could they not? As comments slipped out, I would often remind "my friends" that I was Mexican. But, "you're not like *those* Mexicans" they replied while defining all Mexicans as chola/os, dumb, and lazy.

By the time I attended college, I was craving knowledge of self and the world. Dr. Jean Wu was my first teacher who encouraged me to tease out the cultural, ethnic/racial, class, and gendered intersections of my personal experiences in a systematic way. We journaled together - healing from pain and trauma and growing

[6] "Note the placement of the 'a' in front of the 'o' in Xicana/o to acknowledge the powerful role women have played in all aspects of the Xicana/o experience" (Rios, 2008, p. 9). I will continue to use this for other terms like Latina/o, Mexicana/o, Chicana/o throughout the dissertation.

into more complete human beings through an Ethnic Studies and Freirean model of schooling.

I entered my first year of teaching in the Boston Public Schools (BPS) as a secondary Humanities[7] teacher while continually growing my own political education with various community-based organizations. My students reflected the rich diversity of forced and voluntary migration to the East Coast. While many disregarded the school as a racially, homogenous "Black" school, I was constantly amazed at our ethnic, national, and linguistic diversity. I catered my curriculum to the ethnic and racial backgrounds of my students and tried to facilitate their voice into the curriculum and into various decision-making processes. My school was a Sheltered English Immersion site for Haitian-Creole speakers; the majority of our students came from the island of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, but we also represented nations like: Jamaica, Colombia, Barbados, Puerto Rico, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago, Nigeria, Cape Verde, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

Upon discovering this, I adapted the 11th grade standards to include Caribbean history and literature, with a focus on the students' "funds of knowledge"[8] (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Students framed the curriculum

[7] The Humanities class reflected a change in some BPS high schools where English and History standards were combined into one class while using a block schedule. This change was possible through funds from the Gates Foundation and also facilitated the transition of the once large high school into four small learning communities, which were recently transition back into two large schools.

[8] "We use the term '"funds of knowledge"' to refer to these historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). "Funds of knowledge" specifically refer to the wisdom that low income, students of color bring from home and community into formal school settings. This will be elaborated upon throughout the dissertation.

with stories about their family, friends, neighborhoods, the islands, and about themselves. Specific skill-building activities like reading, writing and oral expression were woven throughout the curriculum encouraging students to analyze text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. Our daily practice of a 10-minute free-write operated as a journal. It was through these unmonitored - use the language that you speak and you feel comfortable in because I'm not grading spelling or grammar - writings that I was able to hear the voices of my students *(*see *Appendix 1)*[9].

I was by no means a teacher without faults and I still mull over moments in the classroom where I could have made better decisions. I was one of a handful of teachers of color in my school, one of two Latinas, and the only Chicana. I had one student in my entire four years of teaching who shared a similar ethnic background with me as a person of Mexican ancestry. In the back of my mind, I wondered if and how my teaching approach would change if my students and I shared a similar ethnic background. Would my political activism and call to teaching shift? These questions and reflections propelled me into this doctoral dissertation to explore the life stories of Chicana teachers who see teaching as a political, moral, and spiritual act. The stories that I share from my cultural intuition as a Chicana researcher, are at the heart of how I understand and collectively create knowledge through storytelling.

[9] This is an example of a student free-write from my first year of teaching.

CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS

In this chapter, I frame the Mexican[10] experience in the U.S. through an explicit focus on the legacy of colonization. Colonization contextualizes the Mexican experience in the United States through its explicit and intentional impact on U.S. schooling ideologies, practices, and outcomes for students of Mexican descent (Duncan-Andrade, 2005). In this chapter, I discuss U.S.-Mexican patterns of colonization through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; Mexican student experiences in U.S. schools; demographic trends in Southern California[11]; and the political environment regarding teaching and learning, particularly with students of color.

Colonization: A Theoretical Framework

> *Our race, our unfortunate people will have to wander in search of hospitality in a strange land, only to be ejected later. Descendants of the Indians that we are, the North Americans hate us, their spokesperson depreciate us, even if they recognize the justice of our cause, and they consider us unworthy to form with them one nation and one society, they clearly manifest that their future expansion begins with the territory that they take from us and pushing [sic] aside our citizens who inhabit the land.*
>
> *- Manuel Crescion Rejón, Mexican diplomat, 1848 (de la Peña y Reyes, 1930)*

Colonization operates through ideologies, institutions, and practices to ensure the economic, social, and political supremacy of a ruling elite, and conversely the dependent state of the masses. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, a seminal piece that explores the psychological impact of colonization, Franz Fanon (1961) describes how the psyche of the oppressed is manipulated and controlled by the oppressors

[10] When I use "Mexican" in this dissertation, I mean people of Mexican ancestry living in the United States, regardless of generational status, unless directly stated otherwise. I also use terms such as "Mexican-American" and "Chicana/o" to refer to the same people.

[11] Southern California includes the six counties of: Los Angeles, Orange County, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura. These are the most populous counties of the region.

through colonial domination. “Colonialism is not content merely to impose its law on the colonized country’s present and future. With a kind of perverted logic, it turns its attention to the past of the colonized people and distorts it, disfigures it and destroys it” (p. 149). Historically, the logic of colonization has tried to established new norms based on Western values within Communities of Color. The colonized are “made to feel inferior” (Fanon, 1961, p. 16) through psychological warfare and cultural genocide that only values European culture.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo offers a historical example of how colonization has historically operated and created a legacy of inequitable conditions for Mexicans on both sides of the border. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) forcefully rendered more than half of Mexico’s land into U.S. land, directly affecting Atzlán[12], or the present-day states of California, New Mexico, Nevada, Colorado, Arizona, Utah, and Wyoming. The ideology behind the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo regarded people of Mexican descent as inferior, unfit to govern, and devoid of intelligence (Acuña, 1988). This speaks to the type of psychological warfare that has been enacted on people of Mexican ancestry through colonization, as the Mexican diplomat, Manuel Crescion Rejón suggests in the above quote, while also securing natural resources, land, and capital for U.S. interests (Mills, 1997).

Colonial forms of deficit thinking permeate many facets of life. For our purposes, we will focus on how the ideological residue of colonization, deficit thinking, infiltrates the schooling conditions and educational opportunities for

[12] I use this term to recognize the roots of this region as Indigenous land. “Atzlán was the name used by the Aztecs to refer to the place of their origin. Since the Aztecs had migrated to central Mexico from ‘somewhere in the north’, Chicano activists claimed that Aztlán was all the southwestern United States taken from Mexico as a result of the Mexican-American War” (Muñoz, 1989, p. 77).

Mexicans in the United States, through the concept of educational oppression (Valencia, 1997, 1991, 2002).

Educational Oppression: A Mexican Experience

Richard R. Valencia (2002) conceptualizes the schooling conditions and experiences of Mexican-American students through "educational oppression". He describes three forms of evidence to develop this concept: (1) personal attitudes or values, symbol systems and ideology; (2) institutional processes, systems of practice that lead to differential advantages and privileges; and (3) effects, unequal outcomes. These types of evidence are discussed more fully below. He describes these conditions as historically "persistent and pervasive" for Mexican-American students.

Educational Ideology

Contemporary deficit ideology can be categorized into three major strands: genetic deficiency, "culture of poverty", and "at risk" (Valencia & Solórzano, 1997; Valencia, 2010). Centuries of educational research have used these models to justify the difference in educational conditions and outcomes between students of color and white students.

Research based within a genetic deficiency model rationalized the genetic and mental inferiority of Black students (Garrett, 1973; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994; Jensen, 1969; Shuey, 1966) and Mexican and Puerto Rican students (Dunn, 1987). "Culture of poverty" frameworks perpetuate a majoritarian belief that poor people of color behave, and thus receive outcomes, that reflect their value system (Singh, 1994); this model is also referred to as "blaming the victim." Finally, "at risk" models

promote ideas of the culturally deprived family, home, and child, which draw attention to presumed shortcomings, rather than student and familial assets and promise. Much of this research has blamed Latina/o parents and communities for not caring about education (Dunn, 1987; Sowell, 1981), when history, in fact, demonstrates the exact opposite (Acuña, 1988; Muñoz, 1989; Urrieta, 2004).

The Mexican-American research community has historically resisted the ideologies and conditions of educational oppression. For example, George I. Sánchez and M.T. Manuel, during the 1930's, re-examined I.Q. tests as a culturally biased test and critiqued the myth of equal opportunity, while furthering bilingual education and desegregation (Acuña, 1988; Guzmán, 1976; Vaca, 1970). Such efforts by middle-class Mexican-Americans sought to counter dominant, majoritarian deficit myths about the "deviant," "unintelligible," "lazy" Mexican.

Institutional Practices in Education

Scholarship by Chicana/o academics has documented historical and current schooling conditions for students of Mexican ancestry (Acuña, 1988; Donato, 2010; San Miguel, Jr., 2003; Valencia, 2011). Numerous studies have described complex systems of practices that lead to differential advantages, which privilege white, middle-class students over students of color from working-class backgrounds. Unequal conditions such as overcrowded, high-poverty, segregated schools have been documented for Mexican-American students (Garcia, 2001; Noguera, 2003; Oakes, 2004; Orfield, 2001). Students of Mexican ancestry face less qualified and less effective teachers and confront higher chances of being tracked into classes that does not offer college preparatory material. This is in direct contrast to the

experiences of white, middle to upper class students (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Howard, 2010; Lankford, et. al., 2002; Oakes, 1985; Valenzuela, 1999).

Educational Outcomes

Deficit thinking and differential schooling conditions have led to unequal outcomes for Mexican students. Suspension rates, special education designation, and push-out rates[13] are higher among Mexican students than white students, and the percentages of Mexican students who are promoted to honors and gifted classes, high school graduation rates, and college entry remain low (Garcia, 2001; Meier et al., 1990; Noguera, 2003; Oakes, 1985).

Educational attainment[14] becomes a useful tool to understand the unequal outcomes for Mexican students currently. Overall, students of color (i.e. Latina/o[15], Black, Native American, Pacific Islanders, and some groups of Asian students[16]) trail

[13] The term "drop-out" has commonly been used to describe students who leave school, however an increasing number of scholars, community based organizations, and school officials are using "push-out". "Drop-out" suggests that people leave school because of individual mistakes; "push-out" describes larger, systematic factors that lead young people to leave school.

[14] Educational attainment refers to the highest level of school a student has attended and completed. The U.S. Census measures educational attainment on individuals 25 years and older.

[15] The "Latina/o" label defines people from a variety of different racial, ethnic, linguistic, and national origins (Gonzalez, 2000; Vaughn, 2005; Urrieta, 2003). As such, the term Latina/o can be useful for pan-ethnic political movements and problematic when seeking to understand patterns within a particular ethnic group.

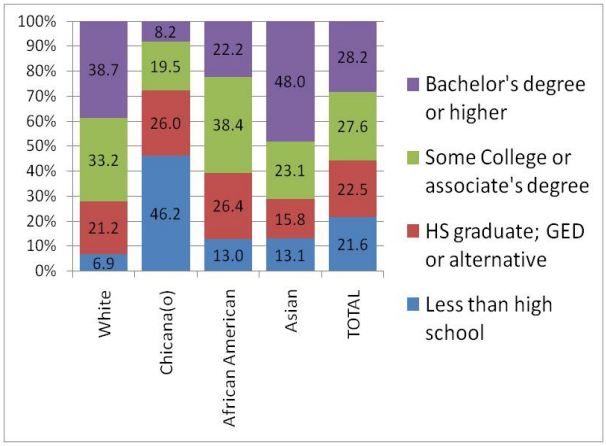
[16] It is important to note here that Asian Pacific Americans (APA) as an aggregated racial group, generally perform at the same rates and sometimes surpass white students in markers of traditional academic success (high school graduation rates, college attendance and completion rates, etc); there is, however, a bimodal relationship to these markers of success and APAs of certain ethnic and national backgrounds (i.e. Hmong, Vietnamese, etc.) perform much closer to the schooling outcomes of Black and Latina/o students. This suggests a need for disaggregated ethnic group data in order to fully understand the needs of APA students (Pang, et al. 2004).

behind educational attainment for white and some groups of Asian students (U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2007 – 2009).

According to national data, 39.3% of all Latinas/os, age 25 years and older, have less than a high school diploma - marking the lowest rates of educational attainment of all major racial and ethnic groups nationally. Disaggregating "Latina/o" for those who identify as Mexican, we discover even lower rates of educational attainment. Forty five percent (45.3%) of all Mexicans have less than a high school diploma and 6.4% hold a bachelor's degree (US Census, 2007 – 2009).

In Southern California, approximately 46% of Mexican-Americans have less than a high school diploma (*see graph 1*). As seen in national trends, people of Mexican, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Nicaraguan ancestry have the lowest rates of educational attainment in Southern California (US Census, 2006 – 2008). This confirms a consistent pattern in the educational attainment of Chicanas/os, as illustrated in earlier research (Yosso & Solórzano, 2006).

Graph 1: Educational Attainment in Southern California[17], 2006 - 2008



Data Source: US Census, Community Survey, 2006 – 2008

[17] This graph comes from a class project (2009 – 2010) with Alejandra Priede. "Chicana/o" denotes people of Mexican descent from all generational statuses.

A History of Resistance

Mexican-Americans have continually fought educational oppression in a variety of different ways through academic research, court proceedings, youth organizing, and political action. Mexican-Americans have historically experienced segregation (i.e. schools, cemeteries, restaurants, swimming pools), which designated a second-class citizenship, despite being racially defined as "white" (see *Hernandez v. Texas*, 1954)[18].

Resistance to these conditions has historically occurred around issues of education. Mexican-American initiated desegregation lawsuits have exceeded litigation in other categories related to schools, such as school finance, bilingual education, and high stakes testing. The first Mexican-American-initiated school desegregation case, *Romo v. Laird* (1925) filed in Tempe, AZ, addressed the inferior and inexperienced teaching instruction at the segregated "Mexican" school. In some desegregation cases (i.e. *Keyes v. School District No. 1 of Denver*, 1973), Mexican plaintiffs joined forces with African-American efforts to address the disparities within segregated schooling facilities and conditions (Valencia, 2008). The other 35 documented, Mexican-American initiated desegregation cases, and in particular, *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946), served as precedents for the wide-reaching *Brown v. Board* (1954) Supreme Court school desegregation decision.

Mexican-Americans have never had wide access to higher education. In the years after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, once privileged Mexican

[18] This court case was decided at the Supreme Court and found that Mexican Americans, as a group, were protected under the 14th Amendment, in keeping with the theory that they were indeed "a class apart" (Sandoval & Miller, 2009).

gentry lost social status and thus educational opportunity. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, access to white universities and colleges was open to a very small, Mexican-American upper-middle class community that often had to pass as culturally and phenotypically "white" (Muñoz, 1989).

As more Mexican-Americans were able to gain access to higher education, a plethora of student-led organizations and later middle-class professional organizations were born - promoting the interests of the Mexican-origin population. During the 1930's, U.S. government-initiated programs attempted to "Americanize" (read: culturally "whiten") Mexican-American communities, in order to address the cause of Mexican-American poverty. The origin of Mexican-American poverty, such Americanization programs argued, was the inferiority of Mexican epistemology and culture. As such, U.S. schools began systematic acculturation and assimilationist strategies in classrooms. For example, many of the older participants in this dissertation discuss deliberate Spanish-language eradication programs throughout the Southwest.

Some of these efforts, however, offered some financial funding for Mexican-American youth to begin other programs. The YMCA, during the 1930's, recruited many Mexican-American youth – providing the financial and structural roots that led to the development of the Mexican Youth Conferences in the 1930s. Many young Mexican-Americans involved in these programs went on to college and then later founded the Mexican-American Movement (MAM) in the 1940s. This particular organization saw the solution to many social inequities as education. Many from MAM became teachers and formed the Association of Mexican American Educators

(AMAE)[19]. These organizations, along with others, such as, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)[20] and the American G.I. Forum[21], linked together in the 1950s to promote Mexican-American interests around education, housing, and social services, albeit through assimilationist means (Muñoz, 1989).

Efforts to dismantle segregation and second-class citizenship were particularly heightened in this era, which directly followed World War II. Many Mexican-American soldiers returned from WWII expecting a change from their second-class citizenship (Klarman, 2004). Instead, they came home to the same ethnic and cultural discrimination. The permanence of racism (Bell, 1992) gave Chicana/o veterans great motivation "to struggle as never before for their rightful place as citizens of the United States of America" (Ramos, 1998, p. xvii). The ensuing G.I. Bill of 1944 provided some Chicana/o veterans with the opportunity to attend post-secondary institutions.

Other government actions during this era, such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which authorized passage of the 1965 Higher Education Act, opened up more opportunities for low-income and minority students to enter higher education (Cuádraz, 2005). By the late 1960s a small, but growing number of Mexican-American students were attending colleges across the Southwest. Programs such as the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 and the Higher Education Act of

[19] Many within MAM also became social workers and developed the Community Service Organization (CSO) during this same period.

[20] "The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), founded in 1929, is the oldest and most widely respected Hispanic civil rights organization in the United States of America" (LULAC, 2012).

[21] The American G.I. Forum was created by and for Mexican American World War II veterans who had been denied veteran's benefits (Allsup, 1982).

1965 - financial aid and higher education recruitment programs - led to the largest historical increase of low-income and Chicana/o students into colleges and universities (Gándara, 1985). However, by 1975, these types of increases had peaked, and have not been matched since.

By the early 1960's, students had been discussing the need for separate Mexican-American student organizations on college campuses throughout the Southwest. In Texas and California, organizations[22] shared a "progress through education" goal, like earlier groups from the 1930's and 1940's (Gómez-Quiñones, 1978; Muñoz, 1989). These organizations stressed the need for educational scholarships from Mexican-American professional organizations for low-income students.

International youth movements[23] of the 1960's and 1970's, addressing colonialism, poverty, and cultural revival, influenced Chicana/o student organizations of this era. In particular, the Chicana/o movement of the 1960s and 1970s provided a cultural platform for people of Mexican descent to critique the capitalist economic system and direct special attention to Chicana/o education (Gutiérrez, R.A. 2004). Through political action, such as school blowouts[24], and

[22] Organizations like: Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO), Mexican American Student Organization (MASO), United Mexican American Students (UMAS), Mexican American Student Association (MASA), and Mexican American Student Confederation (MASC). During the meetings of *El Plan de Santa Barbara,* various Mexican-American student organizations became consolidated under *Movimiento Estudiantil Chican@ de Aztlán* (MeCha).

[23] I am referring to 1960's and 1970's movements like: Civil Rights, anti-war, Chicana/o movements, international student movements, Black Power, pan-African independence movements, farm workers rights, international land recapture campaigns, Ethnic Studies, etc.

[24] These walkouts intended to draw attention to inequitable schooling conditions for Chicana/o youth. Notable walkouts include: Los Angeles, CA and Rio South Valley, TX in 1968 and Denver, CO and Crystal City, TX in 1969. While walkouts have become symbolic of the 1960s, 1970s Chicana/o

scholarship, such as *El Plan de Santa Barbara*[25], attention was focused on the need for culturally relevant curriculum (Urrieta, 2004; Muñoz, 1989). The oldest generation of Chicana teachers in this dissertation describe attending college during these times. They all describe the impact of being involved in: anti-war marches, student sit-ins for Ethnic Studies, and encountering culturally-relevant practices in school for the first time, in college. Such experiences led the teachers in this study to become teachers. Previous research suggests that this is a common trend for Chicanas/os who entered and completed college at this time. Many had political aspirations to go back and help their community, leading some into a life-long teaching career (Burstein & Montaño, 2011).

Mexican Teachers in the United States

Historically, there have been low numbers of teachers who are of Mexican heritage, given limited access to higher education, as discussed earlier. In fact, there are few teachers of color in U.S. public schools, despite the growth of students of color in the U.S. school population[26]. Currently, Latina/o teachers make up 7.5% of all teachers in U.S. public schools, Black teachers make up 7%, and Asian, Native

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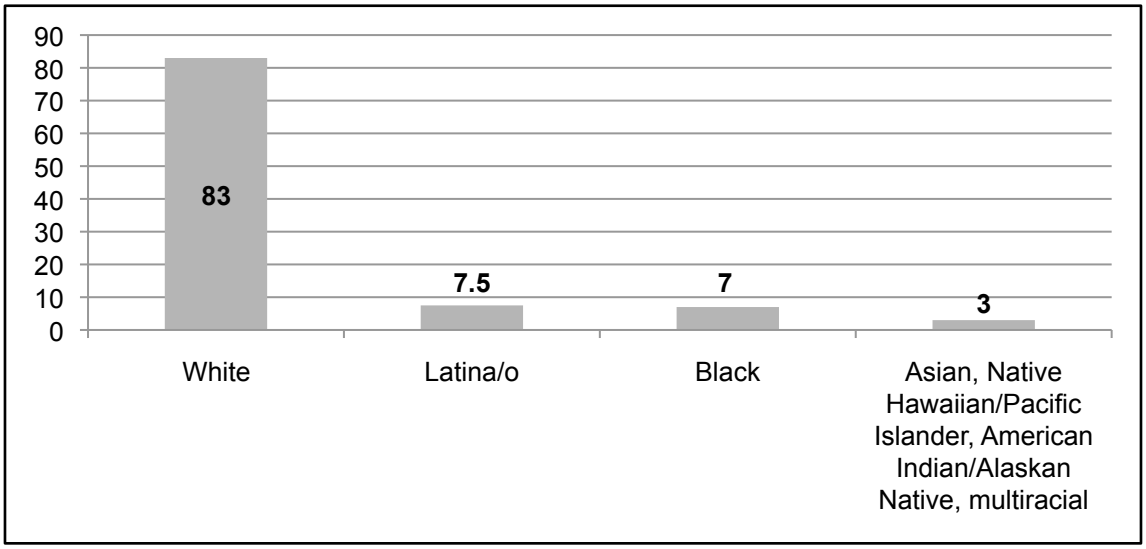
movements and the student movement, one of the earliest documented example of this particular action occurred in 1910 in San Angelo, TX by parents to protest conditions in the segregated "Mexican" school and to demand that Mexican children attend the better-equipped white schools. Parents even went so far as to boycott the "Mexican" school until 1915. Ultimately no changes were made and Mexican children attended the local Catholic school and the Mexican Presbyterian Mission school (De León, 1974).

[25] *El Plan de Santa Barbara* also marks the birth of Chicana/o studies (Muñoz, 1989).

[26] In the 2007-2008 school year, about 44% of all public school students (elementary and secondary) identified themselves as students of color; within urban public schools, students of color made up 67.2% of all students. Latina/o students accounted for 32.2% of all public school students in urban public schools (NCES, 2008). This marks an overall trend in US demographics, which is seeing an increase of communities of color, particularly among Latina/os and Asians (US Census, 2010).

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and biracial teachers collectively make up 3% (see *graph 2*).

Graph 2: Racial/Ethnic Background, United States Public Schools, Elementary & Secondary Teachers, 2007 – 2008



Data Source: NCES, 2010

Within the state of California, we see slightly different trends for Latina/o teachers. For example, during the 2004 – 2005 school year, 14.5% of all teachers identified as Latina/o. This reflects higher numbers of Latina/o teachers in California than the national average. In examining this data over a 20-year period, one notes the number of Latina/o teachers steadily increasing (*see table 1*), mirroring larger demographic changes in the state and nation (US Census, 2010). Such trends hold great implications for teacher education programs, a point that will be addressed in the final chapter.

Table 1: Racial/Ethnic Background of California Teachers, 1981 - 2005

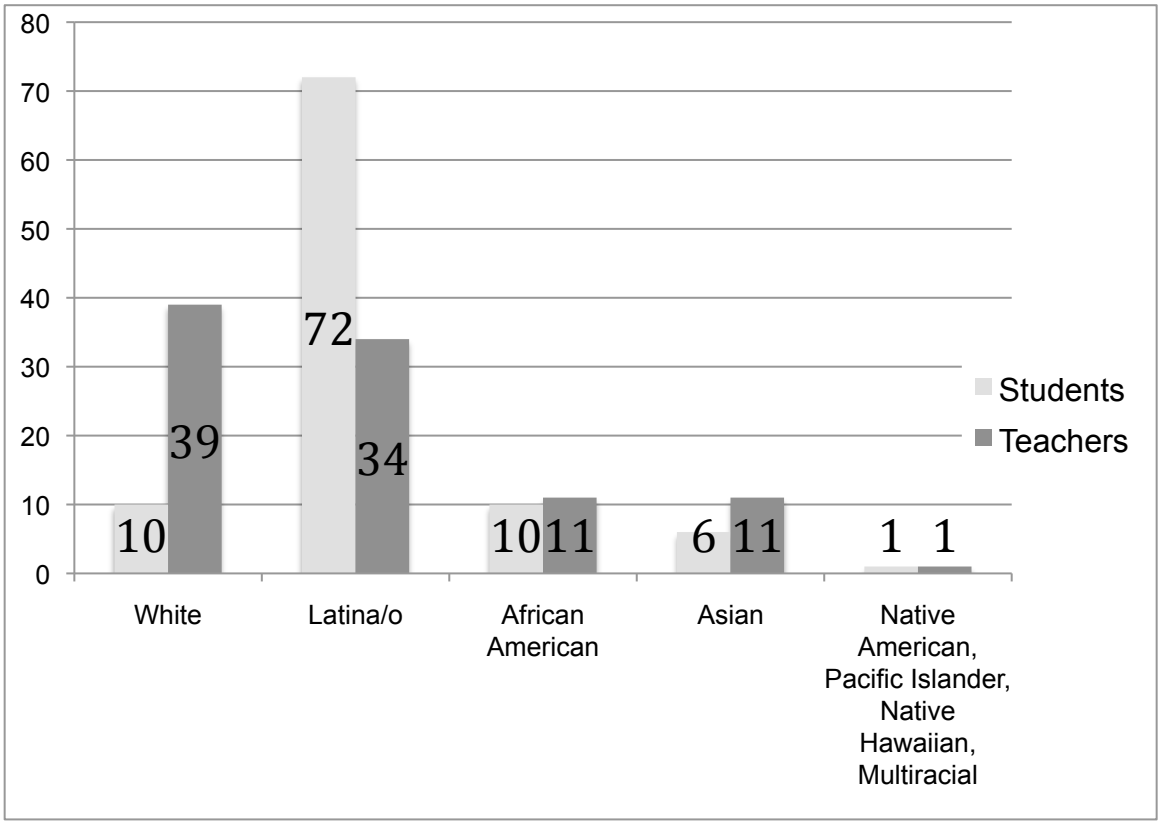
	1981-1982	1986 - 1987	1990 - 1991	1996 - 1997	2000-2001	2004 - 2005
Latina/o	5.9	6.7	7.5	10.6	12.9	14.5
White	83	82.1	81.0	78.8	74.5	72.1
Asian	4	4.1	4	4.6	5.2	5.8
African American	6.2	6.2	5.6	5.1	5.1	4.5
American Indian/Alaskan Native, Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian, Multiracial	0.9	0.9	0.8	.10	2.4	3.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Data Source: California Basic Educational Data System

The Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA Metro area, the second largest metropolitan area in the U.S., boasts a multi-racial society with the largest urban Latina/o community in the nation (US Census, 2010).

As one may expect given these demographics, Los Angeles United School District (LAUSD) presents an example of one city with a high number of Latina/o teachers, relative to state and national statistics. Additionally, nearly three fourths of all school-age children within LAUSD, the second largest school district in the U.S., identify as Latina/o. While there are a significant number of Latina/o teachers in this district, there still exists an over-representation of white teachers to the number of Latina/o students (*see Graph 3*). LAUSD offers a particular school district to explore the schooling and teaching experiences of Chicana teachers.

Graph 3: Racial/Ethnic Background, Los Angeles Unified K-12 Student Enrollment & Full-time Teachers 2010 - 2011



Data Source: Dataquest, 2010

LAUSD and Southern California are important to explore, given that they employ one of the most diverse teaching staffs in the nation. Understanding the growing needs of teachers of color is critical. Currently, close to 50% of new teachers leave within their first five years (Darling-Hammond, 2007) and recent scholarship suggests that teachers of color experience higher turnover rates than white teachers (Ingersoll & Connor, 2009). Chicana teachers who dedicate their professional lives to teaching provide implications for teacher education programs on how to best prepare Latinas/os for a life-long teaching career – a significant contribution given the steady increase of Latina/o teachers (see *table 1*).

I want to clarify that this dissertation is not making the argument that more Latina/o teachers, serving the interests of Latina/o students, will disrupt poverty and current patterns of educational attainment. Rather, this dissertation is examining Chicana teachers who see their teaching as a political, moral, and/or spiritual act; teachers who have "political clarity" (Freire, 1998); teachers who see a component of their work as developing the critical consciousness of their students in order to challenge the status quo through culturally relevant approaches. This purposeful sample will be discussed further in the methods chapter (see *Chapter 5, Table 3: Participant Selection Criteria & Rationale*).

The Political Context of Teaching and Learning

This section offers examples of federal and state policies that impact teachers of Latina/o students who employ culturally relevant classroom practices. While research demonstrates the variety of ways that teachers interpret government policies in creative ways to best fit the needs of their students (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), government legislation does impact school ideologies, discourses, and practices.

Federal Legislation

The political environment regarding teaching and learning is inundated with legislative efforts that seek to promote standardization, accountability, and privatization. While legislation has sought to improve the educational outcomes of students of color, these policies have created conditions that are counterproductive. For example, the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001 further infused a high stakes testing culture to measure student achievement and teacher

effectiveness as a way to combat low educational achievement in students of color. Numbers have become central in deciding how teachers teach and encourage the use of scripted curricula that cater to standardized tests – such tests disregard the cultural backgrounds of Latina/o students (Lomax, et. al., 1995; Luna & Turner, 2001).

Test scores have been used to threaten entire school communities through attacks on school and teacher autonomy, the withholding of federal funding, and state takeover of schools (Au, 2009). Such a culture contributes to the deintellectualization and the apoliticalization of the teaching profession (Giroux, 1988) while ignoring larger structural concerns like poverty and racism. This dissertation seeks to directly counter such a culture by honoring Chicana teachers as intellectuals, as "knowledge holders and creators" (Delgado Bernal, 2002) who use culturally relevant practices within the current standardized assessment era.

Neoliberal policies have ushered in standardized tests and the creation of charter schools, under the guise of promoting educational achievement in students of color (Lipman, 2009; Tough, 2008). Critics of neo-liberalism worry that such an agenda seeks to undermine public education through privatization and the dismantling of teachers' unions (Giroux, 2010). This is particularly important within the context of Southern California where many LAUSD schools are being or have been turned into charters, and where new charter schools are constantly being developed. The sample in this study represents the professional lives of Chicana teachers who are employed at these different types of schools: public, charter, and pilot.

State Legislation

Within California, three voter-initiated propositions of the 1990's (Prop 187, Prop, 209, and Prop 227) have detrimentally impacted the educational outcomes and experiences for Latina/os, particularly in slowing and evening stopping the implementation of culturally relevant approaches. Gutierrez, Asato, Santos, and Gotanda (2002) argue that these three pieces of California legislation demonstrate backlash politics. Such policies, contextualized through a socio-historical framework, are a response to: (1) state economic recession in 1980s and 1990s, (2) rapidly shifting demographics, (3) increasing political and social presence of People of Color, (4) loss of entitlement in terms of educational institutions and marketplace, and (5) highlight sentiment of diversity as deficit.

Proposition 187 and Proposition 209 had educational ramifications, namely in deciding who has "rights" to public education and access to higher education. These two propositions attempted to undo previous practices and legislation, which provided social services to undocumented migrants and considered race, ethnicity, or sex when granting access to public education, public employment, and public contracting. While Proposition 187 was found unconstitutional, its racist nativist (Perez Huber, 2009) philosophical precedent had ramifications for Proposition 227, which directly impacted K-12 teaching practices with Latina/o students. The passage of Proposition 209, worked in concert with other factors, decreased the number of students of color attending public universities from earlier years.

Proposition 227 formally ended bilingual education in 1998. This continued an anti-immigrant ideology firmly established through the precedent of Proposition

187, suggesting that Latinas/os were unworthy of effective, culturally relevant teaching instruction (Gutiérrez, et al., 2002). Latina/os, and the Spanish language, were a specific target of Prop 227. Language is a powerful social element of culture. Sociocultural theorists argue that communicative acts within a social context provide an opportunity for learning, a point discussed in the next chapter. As such, home-language instruction is critical for students who speak a language other than English. Furthermore, research has demonstrated the social, emotional, cognitive, and economic benefits to bilingualism in today's globalized society. Despite such research, Proposition 227 attempted to end a linguistically, and thus culturally, relevant approach for students who are speakers of languages other than English.

Arizona Legislation

Arizona policymakers have taken racist nativism a step further through House Bill 1047, which has dismantled a culturally relevant K-12 program aimed to address educational concerns within the Latina/o community. HB 1047 (2011) has attempted to destroy the only K- 12 Ethnic Studies program in the U.S. The Ethnic Studies program in Tucson Unified School District's (TUSD), mandated as a result of a 1978 desegregation case, had flourished into four departments: African American Studies, Raza/Mexican-American Studies, Pan Asian Studies, and Native American Studies (Duncan-Andrade & Stovall, 2007). The positive academic achievement of student participants from the Mexican-American Studies program relative to their peers, has been documented as the program strives to provide "culturally relevant pedagogy with instruction aimed at developing traditional academic skills"

(Duncan-Andrade & Stovall, 2010, p. 14). However, conservative politicians misunderstand the program suggesting that it breeds hate of others[27].

I briefly explore these federal and state policies as they impact culturally relevant classroom approaches with Latina/o students, a focus of this dissertation. Legislation, at national and local levels, is marked by a "pedagogy of control" that seeks to deintellectualize and apoliticize teachers and students (Burstein & Montaño, 2011).

This is a pressing moment for Latina/o education in the United States. Latinas/os are the fasting growing ethnic/racial group in the United States and have the lowest rates of educational attainment in the U.S. Despite evidence of student academic successes in Ethnic Studies programs that employ culturally relevant practices, few teachers adopt such an approach because of the increased pressure from neoliberal policies, such as standardized tests and charter school takeover. This dissertation thus seeks to understand the development and implementation of culturally relevant practices with Chicana teachers.

It is through a historical understanding of the attempted colonization of Mexican and Chicana/o culture that I explore the stories of life and teaching with Chicana teachers in Southern California, who see teaching as a political, moral, and/or spiritual act.

[27] In 2012, the American Educational Research Association publicly condemned the actions of AZ HB1074, and the specific act of banning and removing texts from classrooms.

Key Research Questions

This dissertation explores the following questions:

1. What connections do Chicana teachers perceive between their cultural intuition (lived experiences) and the K – 12 classroom literacy practices and pedagogies they employ?

2. How are those perceived connections represented in the classroom?
    a. What types of literacy practices does the teacher use and encourage in her classroom?
    b. How do these practices reflect her overall approach to literacy?

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE CONTEXT OF SCHOLARSHIP

Let Us Speak: Chicana Teachers on Teaching explores the cultural intuition (lived experiences) of 11 Chicana K – 12 teachers from Southern California who view their teaching as a political, spiritual, and/or moral commitment. This sample of Chicana teachers has defined ethnic and political identities and view Students of Color students from an assets-based perspective[28]. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the racial/ethnic demography of Southern California is largely Latina/o. Within the school communities of these 11 teachers, the vast majority of students identify as Latina/o. This sample of Chicana teachers is purposefully positioned as school professionals who share a similar ethnic and cultural background with their Latina/o students.

The research questions that guide this investigation examine the connection between lived experiences and classroom literacy practices among teachers who share aspects of a pan-ethnic and cultural identity with their students. This chapter will frame the inquiry within literature regarding culturally relevant practices with Students of Color. I describe literacy from a variety of theoretical approaches, which provides the codes and analysis of the oral history interviews and classroom observations with Chicana teachers. This chapter concludes with educational

[28] Assets-based refers to a perspective that sees the knowledge, skills, resources, and potential that Latina/o students bring to school (Yosso, 2005). This stands in stark contrast to dominant deficit ideologies of Latina/o communities that assumes inferiority, pathology, and at-risk (Solórzano & Valencia, 1997).

research that centers the lives and classrooms of Teachers of Color, with a particular focus on teachers who identify as Women of Color and as Chicana/o.

Culturally Relevant Practices

Briefly, teachers who demonstrate culturally relevant practices[29]: build on students' "funds of knowledge"; hold high academic expectations; believe in their students' potential; value students' communities (i.e. ethnic, racial, linguistic, class, cultural); offer appropriate academic support (i.e. scaffolding); reshape curriculum to build on students' "funds of knowledge"; establish relationships with students and their homes based on asset and caring philosophies; and cultivate students' critical consciousness regarding power relations (Freire, 1970; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Moll, et al., 1992).

Culture

Culture plays a vital role in teaching and student learning (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Howard, 2010; Nieto, 1999). The literature exploring culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive pedagogy addresses culture as a constellation of social characteristics that include: race, gender, class, language, religion, geography, migration patterns within a specific socio-historical context (Howard, 2010).

Yosso (2005) notably reminds us that within dominant society, the cultural selves and lives of People of Color have been historically devalued and colonized. Such deficit ideologies have dehumanized, pathologized, and patronized

[29] As evidenced by the examples in this paragraph, "classroom practices" and "culturally relevant classroom practices" include curricular and pedagogical approaches.

Communities of Color and our culture (Solórzano & Valencia, 1997). Within educational scholarship, culture is a dynamic social phenomenon that interacts in complex, contradicting, and overlapping patterns. Culture builds resiliency, strength, and academic skill sets (Cabrera, Milem, & Marx, 2012).

Culturally Relevant Approaches with Students of Color

African American scholarship has long documented the importance of culturally relevant curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogies as a means of survival and a practice of freedom (Huggins, 2013; Perry, et al., 2003). In a controversial article, renowned sociologist and historian W. E. B. Du Bois (1935) argued for racially separate, rather than integrated schools. While this sentiment proved unpopular with integrationists of this era, Du Bois maintained that the main problem of African American education would "not be segregation but self-knowledge and self-respect" (p. 331). To this end, Du Bois argued that the humanity of African Americans is restored and honored through an authentic portrayal of the African experience nationally and globally through the Black perspective. Carter Godwin Woodson (1933), an intellectual contemporary of Du Bois, furthered this work by developing the concept of "mis-education" – a systematic and deliberate failure of U.S. schools to represent an authentic portrayal of African people and their history. Woodson's research demonstrated that references to African American people in history books were both scarce and demeaning; and as such, a form of manipulation to convince African American students of their supposed inferiority through the schooling process.

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I introduced the psychological impacts of colonialism. Fanon (1961) states: "[c]olonialism is not content merely to impose its law on the colonized country's present and future. With a kind of perverted logic, it turns its attention to the past of the colonized people and distorts it, disfigures it and destroys it" (p. 149). This concept aptly describes the devastating psychological impact of schooling that is not culturally relevant.

Chicana/o students in U.S. have endured schooling under similar conditions, "that too often reduces their role in historical development of the modern world to that of a conquered people whose contributions are hardly worth mentioning" (Duncan-Andrade, 2005, p. 593). Scholars, such as: Acuña (1998), Martínez (1991), Padilla (1993), Rendón (1971), Takaki (1993), Villaseñor (1991) and Zinn (1995), have described a single, dominant historical view in school curriculum that has, in part, produced the alienation and disempowerment of Chicana/o students.

While Chicanas/os have the lowest rates of educational attainment of any major racial/ethnic group (Valencia, 2010; US Census, 2010; Yosso & Solórzano, 2006), it is significant to note that some Latina/o students do experience academic success in regards to educational attainment and achievement (Antrop-Gonzales, Velez, & Garrett, 2005; Conchas, 2006; Gándara, 1995; Irizarry & Antrop-Gonzalez, 2007). Scholarship suggests that caring relationships between students and school adults (i.e., teachers, counselors, administrators, staff, etc.) predict academic

achievement for Latina/o students[30] (De Jesus & Antrop-Gonzalez, 2006; Flores-Gonzalez, 2002; Irvine, 2003, Noddings, 1992; Rolon, 2000; Rolon-Dow, 2005).

Angela Valenzuela (1999) describes caring relationships with Chicana/o youth through an in-depth ethnography of a Houston public school. She reports:

> The best teacher or counselor, they [Mexican-Americans] tell me, is one who 'helps you to be a better person book-wise and social-wise,' and '*loves* Mexicans and the Spanish language we speak.' These definitions embody the essential elements of authentic caring: connection, unconditional love, and a comprehensive apprehending of 'the other'.
>
> Valenzuela, 1999, p. 157

This work suggests the pedagogical importance of caring through a holistic approach to students as cultural, social, emotional, and academic beings. Such an approach requires that teachers abandon deficit ideas of Mexicans as "a conquered people" and Mexican culture as "inferior". As such, caring pedagogies are explicitly linked to culturally relevant pedagogy in that both seek to build upon students' lived experiences as cultural, social beings.

Central to caring pedagogies is the development and implementation of culturally relevant and responsive teaching, or Ethnic Studies (Sleeter, 2011). Through classroom observations and life history interviews, this sample of Chicana

[30] Communities of color have remained resilient in spite of dehumanizing school conditions. Low rates of educational attainment for students of color does not suggest that Students of Color are simply victims of the system. Rather, students exhibit resistance to schooling conditions in a multitude of ways. Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) suggest as much: "Resistance theories demonstrate how individuals negotiate and struggle with structure and create meanings of their own from these interactions" (p. 315). The authors lay out four different types of oppositional behavior: (1) reactionary behavior; (2) self-defeating resistance; (3) conformist resistance; and (4) transformational resistance. Through this framework, students who make conscious and unconscious decisions to leave school, or are systematically pushed out because of "reactionary" or "self-defeating" behaviors, are framed as active agents. Such a framework demands that we question – what does academic achievement and success look like for Latina/o students in the absence of a high school education?

teachers demonstrates and describes ways of developing student literacies that are built on the principles of caring culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies.

Eminent scholars Geneva Gay and Gloria Ladson-Billings have interrogated the relationship between student culture and academic achievement. Gay (2010) defines culturally responsive pedagogy as teaching "to and through [students] personal and cultural strengths, their intellectual capabilities, and their prior accomplishments" (p. 26). She stresses the importance and the intertwined relationships between ethnic identity, cultural background, and student achievement by maintaining that cultural skills and students' ways of knowing are vital for academic success.

In a similar vein, Ladson-Billings (1995) proposes three dimensions of culturally relevant pedagogy. These include: (1) holding high academic expectations and offering appropriate academic support, like scaffolding; (2) reshaping curriculum to build on students' "funds of knowledge" and establishing relationships with students and their homes; and (3) cultivating students' critical consciousness regarding power relations.

Key to culturally relevant pedagogy is an additive teacher perspective in which students' culture guides the teacher's curriculum and approach (Moll, et al., 1992). Educational researcher thus maintain that teachers who view students from an asset-based perspective are more likely to employ a broad range of pedagogies that connect content to students' lived experiences. This scholarship suggests a culturally relevant, critical Ethnic Studies approach yields higher levels of student engagement and improved markers of traditional academic success – a significant

factor when considering the Chicana/o academic experience (Cabrera, et al., 2012; Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Moll, et al., 1992; Sleeter, 2011; Umbach, 2006; Yosso, 2005).

Critical Literacy: Building Critical Consciousness with Students

A central characteristic of culturally relevant practices involves the strategic development of a critical consciousness. Culturally relevant teachers: (1) help students make connections among their community, national and global identities; (2) aid students in analyzing the world as it is; and (3) equip students with the necessary tools to change society (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Freirean pedagogy (1970) centralizes the development of a critical consciousness and political action to enact real change through praxis. "To achieve this goal [liberation], the oppressed must confront reality critically, simultaneously objectifying and acting upon that reality" (p. 37). Freirean pedagogy combines the development of a critical consciousness, literacy skills, and the tools within which to take concrete action. This is similar to Ladson-Billings (1994): culturally relevant teachers aid their students to read the word and the world, that is to acquire literacy skills while developing a critical consciousness to critique power relations in society.

> An emancipatory theory of literacy points to the need to develop an alternative discourse and critical reading of how ideology, culture, and power work within the late capitalist societies to limit, disorganize, and marginalize the more critical and radical everyday experiences and common sense perceptions of individuals.
>
> Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 6

In this way, one's everyday lived experiences become a unit of analysis in which to read the world. Viewing students' lives as a legitimate unit of analysis is one way that teachers address students' culture.

Through this approach, knowledge is shared between teacher and students, a fundamental principle of culturally relevant pedagogy. Freire (1970) explains:

> [P]roblem-posing education, which breaks with the vertical patterns characteristic of banking education, can fulfill its function as the practice of freedom only through [dialogical relations]…Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with student-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.
>
> Freire, 1970, p. 67

Culturally relevant, Freirean pedagogies view knowledge as dynamic, recreated, recycled, and shared by students and teachers. Developing critical consciousness requires the reading of the word and the world. Growing critical literacy means acquiring skills to democratically function while decoding micro and macro systems of domination and manipulation.

Critical literacy is a "humanizing literacy" (Camangian, 2010; Freire, 1970) where:

> Reading is not exhausted merely by decoding the written word or written language, but rather anticipated by and extending into knowledge of the world. Reading the world precedes reading the word, and the subsequent reading of the word cannot dispense with continually reading the world. Language and reality are dynamically intertwined. The understanding attained by critical reading of a text implies perceiving the relationship between text and context.
>
> Freire, 1981, p. 1

Decoding is essential to reading the word. Decoding written words is the skill of applying the letter sound to pronounce written words; the key is understanding the

relationship between letter sounds and written words. Decoding is also central to reading the world. It requires understanding the relationship between power and lived conditions within a specific cultural and social context (Gutiérrez, 2008).

Sociocultural Literacy Learning: Third Space as Nepantla

Sociocultural theorists highlight the transformative possibility of collaborative learning. Vygotsky (1978) suggests that "experts" guide "novices" into their zone of proximal development. The novice members learn from expert members through semiotic mediation – a "socially communicative act and a medium for the internal organization of experiences…a dialectical interaction in specific cultural, social, and historical contexts" (Lee, 2000, p. 192). Learners, both novices and experts, enter into the "zone of proximal development" through a communicative act, where dialectical relationships and interactions can produce meaningful literacy learning.

Zones of proximal development (or zo-peds) are often described as free from contestation and conflict. More recent scholarship, however, "highlight[s] that zo-peds are also disharmonious and hybrid" (See Griffin & Cole, 1984, for more discussion on zo-peds as sites of contestation; Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Tejada, 1999, p. 287). Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Turner (1997) indicate that learning activities are filled with tension and conflict. Theorizing zo-peds as Third Spaces offers learning opportunities where "alternative and competing discourses, and positioning transforms conflict and difference into rich zones of collaboration and learning" (Gutiérrez, et al., 1999, p. 286-287).

The Third Space is “a transformative space where the potential for an expanded form of learning and the development of new knowledge are heightened” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 152). Learning within the Third Space “attends to both vertical and horizontal forms of learning, resulting in more robust and historicizing literacies” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 149). As such, the Third Space relates very closely to critical literacy, in which an analysis of power relations includes the naming and transforming of ideological and material conditions that, “undermine the possibility for forms of community and public life organized around the imperatives of a critical democracy” (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 5).

Third Space was developed as a sociocultural learning theory through Chicana Feminist concepts (Gutiérrez, et al., 1999). Eminent Chicana Feminist, Gloria Anzaldúa, has theorized learning in the Third Space through the concept of Nepantla. Nepantla is a Náhuatl word meaning in the middle. Nepantla can be understood, conceptually, in two ways: (1) the land between the middle of two volcanoes, or the land between the mountains and valley, and (2) to be in the middle of two cultures, two languages, two epistemologies, etc (de la Maza, 1995).

Anzaldúa (2002) describes Nepantla as a space that individuals may enter willingly or under duress, like “una herida abierta” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 25). Within Nepantla, one faces the conflict of memories and trauma, and is literally between two places. Nepantla plays an important part in activating a critical consciousness development (Anzaldúa, 2002). It is through the conflict of Nepantla, within a Third Space, that the tension of “multiple stances” offers “possible confluence and transformation” (Franquiz & de la Luz Reyes, 1998, p. 217).

Multiliteracies

The growth of multicultural, multilingual, and multiliterate students in today's public schools is an international phenomenon. Multiliteracies scholarship documents this demographic, empirical, and theoretical work across the continents of South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, The United Kingdom, Asia, and North America (see Banda, 2003; Bjorgen, 2010; Callow; 2006; Koh, 2001; Lam, 2009; Morrell, 2002). This global perspective is important to consider within this study of Chicana teachers working with predominantly Latina/o students. Latina/o communities are transnational and bi-cultural (Darder, 1991; González 2000). A Multiliteracies framework offers a way to describe literacy that is multimodal and shaped by a dynamic, transnational culture.

The New London Group (1996) maintains that such a framework address: (1) the multiplicity of communications channels and media, and (2) the increasing global cultural and linguistic diversity throughout global and local public schools. The growth of new communication systems, technology, and human migration reflects a historical and contextual literacy perspective that see literacy as "much broader than language alone. These differ according to culture and context, and have specific cognitive, cultural, and social effects" (New London Group, 1996, p. 64). Within this framework, the authors discuss six design elements: linguistic meaning, visual meaning, audio meaning, gestural meaning, spatial meaning, multimodal patterns of meaning that relate the first five modes of meaning to each other. These six design elements have shaped the literacy codes used to analyze the

ethnographic classroom observations of the Chicana teachers in this study (see *Table 7: Codes for Literacy Modalities in Classroom Practice*).

The pairing of Multiliteracies with culturally relevant teaching and critical literacy offers a framework that considers multiple ways of creating meaning with the world while reading the word. Sociocultural learning theories provide considerations for how this learning takes place within classrooms where teachers report to be culturally responsive.

Chicana Teachers as Women of Color

There is some research demonstrating that when students and teachers come from the same racial or ethnic background, student achievement improves (Fairlie, et al., 2011). Notable research finds academic improvement for all students when there is a racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse teaching staff within a school (Clewell, Puma, & McKay, 2001; Dee, 2004, 2005; Diamond, et al., 2004; Franquiz & de la Luz Reyes, 1998; Irvine, 2003). This research suggests that a racially and ethnically representational diverse teaching force is beneficial for overall student achievement; it also implies the need for more scholarship on the contributions of teachers of color who share similar racial/ethnic and cultural backgrounds with their students.

Historical educational research has documented the important ways that teachers of color have combated deficit and essentialist notions throughout their teaching practices with students of color (see Donato, 2010; Foster, 1997; Henry, 1992, 2006; Lomawaima & McCarthy, 2006). Much of this research has focused on student-teacher interactions in segregated African American, Native American, and

Mexican schools in the U.S. and Canada. Given the distinct legal nature of African American segregation patterns, much of this research has focused on the Black community. Historical accounts of segregated schools highlight humanizing and loving pedagogies that occurred between students and teachers from the African American community despite limited material resources (Morris & Morris, 2002). Many of these teachers were products of a historically strong African American middle class, post Reconstruction. Their children were educated at historically Black colleges and universities, and came to form a professional class, albeit segregated, which included teachers who taught at African American schools.

This is different from the Mexican experience in the U.S. As mentioned in the first chapter, Mexican-Americans never have had wide access to higher education. In the years after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, even once privileged Mexican gentry lost social status. Access to the white universities and colleges were open only to a very small, Mexican-American middle class community who many times had to pass as "white" to attend (Muñoz, 1989). As such, "Mexican schools", segregated by custom, were mostly populated with white teachers. Since the 1960's, more Latinas/os have been granted access and are attending and graduating from college. Demographic patterns suggest that the number of Latina/o teachers is growing, particularly in the state of California. This research, thus, stems from the need within the Latina/o community to study Latina/o teachers as has been done in historical and contemporary contexts for African American teachers.

The work of Michele Foster (1997) is highly influential to this dissertation. Foster continues a long tradition of honoring the voices of excellent African

American teachers through her book *Black Teachers on Teaching.* This book centers the perspectives, values, and pedagogical insights of a group of excellent, generational, African American teachers from diverse communities throughout the U.S. It is the first book to give a narrative account of the experiences of Black teachers by highlighting the stories of 20 educators, born from 1905 to 1973 and "allows narrators to speak their words" (p. xx).

Within the last 20 years there has been an extraordinary body of literature that focuses on the lives of African American female teachers (see Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Case, 1997; Noblit, 1993). This literature describes Black womanist[31] (Walker, 1983) epistemologies and pedagogies. A concept that comes out of Black Feminist thought, a central epistemology within this body of scholarship, is other-mothering, Other-mothering (Hill Collins, 1991) and activist-mother (Naples, 1992) are central to this work with Chicana teachers. Hill Collins describes other mothering, within Black motherhood, as "women who assist blood mothers by sharing mother responsibilities" (p. 178). Other-mothering in the context of a culturally relevant, caring approach offers a framework in which to understand how Chicana teachers in this study view their student as "their children".

Teaching has long been seen as women's work. Primary and later secondary teaching have generally been staffed by women as an assumed cheap and submissive labor force within the growing U.S. public school system beginning in the 19th century (Apple, 1989; Vaughn-Roberson, 1992). "Teaching [however] was

[31] Alice Walker (1983) characterizes *womanist* as women who are voiceful, inquisitive, and socially active and guided by empathy, inclusiveness, and fairness.

never meant to be a transgressive or subversive activity for female educators or their students" (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2005, p. 436). Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2005) suggests that the feminization and denigration of teaching intentionally created a white, female, middle-class teaching force to ensure limited attempts of individual and collective transformation through education. Within this value system, part of being a "good" woman was remaining docile and quiet to structural inequalities – maintaining the status quo.

Chicana Teachers as Chicanas/os

There is scholarship that explores the lives and teaching practices of Chicana/o teachers. In many ways, this study responds and calls from this literature to further interrogate the contributions of Chicana/o teachers. Within the scope of this study, I sought to attract Chicana teachers who saw their teaching as a political, moral, and/or spiritual commitment. By specifically delineating this population, I assume an intricate connection between race, ethnicity, class, gender, political identity and classroom practices (Lynn, 1999, 2002).

Political identity and activism takes many shapes and forms, particularly for Chicanas, as women of color (Delgado Bernal, 1998a & b; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). I sought to capture the diversity of Chicana teachers by putting forth a participation flyer that drew women with political, moral, and/or spiritual commitments to teaching. The development of a political, moral, and/or spiritual commitment to teaching is central to this study. Educational research terms such teachers, "activist-teachers" (Urrieta, 2009). The following research studies follow a similar participant sample in attracting Chicana/o "activist teachers". The findings

from these studies were instrumental in developing this and in particular, the open-ended oral history interview questions (see *Appendices 5 and 6*).

Luis Urrieta (2007), through an in-depth ethnographic approach, explores the identity development of Chicana/o activist educators. Using a figured world theoretical lens, Urrieta describes the importance of activity within Chicana/o activist spaces (i.e. ethnic student organizations, courses, work training in ethnic or multicultural orgs, peer groups, orientation programs for poor and minority students) to positive ethnic identity development. Urrieta found that most participants were formally exposed to such experiences in college and universities, a finding similar to Burstein and Montaño (2011) in their study of Chicana activist-teachers. Urrieta argues that certain people tend to be drawn into Chicana/o activist figured worlds. He suggests that individuals who: (1) view religion is important; (2) have had previous experiences with oppression; (3) hold great value in familial relations; and (4) are in particular spaces at specific times are more likely to enter into Chicana/o activist spaces and develop Chicana/o activist educator identities. This study greatly influenced the open-ended questions of the oral history interview, in which I ask about the women's lived experiences in schooling, familial (which includes religious spaces), and professional settings.

Berta-Avila (2004) extends the role of an ethnic and political teacher identity into the classroom with Chicana/o teachers. Her research finds that such educators validate Latina/o students through the co-construction of knowledge and stress the importance of sharing linguistic and cultural backgrounds with students. The teachers in this study insist on the development of a critical consciousness in all

teachers in order to act as change agents and prevent the replication of an oppressive colonial classroom. These findings concretely describe how Chicana/o teachers used culturally relevant practices within their classroom and aided in the coding and analysis of the classroom observations in this study.

Burstein and Montaño (2011) investigate the *testimonios* of veteran Chicana activist teachers who have taught more than 15 years and challenge federally mandated scripted and standardized classroom practices – what the authors term "a pedagogy of control". The teachers in this study validate and encourage students to retain their Chicana/o language, culture, and identity – an act of subversion to standardized curricula. Furthermore, the authors discover that veteran Chicana teachers realized their Chicana identity in college, are seen as radical and vocal by their administration, and see teaching as a way to give back to their communities. Montaño and Burstein's study helped to develop further my notion of leadership and activism through the perspective of Chicana teachers.

Research has documented the difficulty in retaining teachers, especially teachers of color. Montaño and Burstein (2006) address the retention strategies of seven Chicana activist teachers. Findings demonstrate that Chicana activist teachers develop strategic relationships with colleagues who share a common ideological framework, enact activism and identity in their classrooms, and share these strategies by networking with new teacher activists.

This research has implications for teacher education, teacher retention, and preparing teachers of color for urban[32] classrooms. Urrieta (2007) suggests that colleges of education should: (1) recruit college graduates from Ethnic Studies departments (2) position teachers of color to serve students of color and (3) that teacher education programs with social justice goals must require pre-service teachers to take Ethnic Studies classes to complement teacher education coursework. In an article that follows closely along the same line, Rios (2008) suggests that: (1) researchers explore the assets of critically conscious Chicana/o educators; (2) teacher education and school leadership programs incorporate critical thinking in pre-service and professional development work; and (3) the crucial need for the development of advocacy and negotiation skills among teachers of color.

In many ways, this study seeks to address the recommendations made within this body of literature about Chicana/o teachers. The dissertation documents the connections that Chicana teachers perceive between their life experiences and classroom practices. While research identifies the cultural, social, emotional, and academic benefits of culturally relevant classroom practices, less is known about how one's lived experiences impact instructional decisions. Previous scholarship does describe that teachers' beliefs can play a significant role in teacher behavior in the classroom (see Gomez, 2009; Pajeres, 1992).

This dissertation explores these connections with Chicana teachers through an intersectional lens that examines race, ethnicity, class, and gender situated in a

[32] By urban I mean schools located in working-class, predominantly communities of color within a large metropolitan area, i.e. Southern California.

specific geographic, socio-historical, and scholarship context (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 1999).

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW

> Necesitamos teorías that will rewrite history using race, class, gender, and ethnicity as categories of analysis, theories that cross borders, that blur boundaries-new kinds of theories with new theorizing methods.
>
> - Gloria Anzaldúa, *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras* (1990)

The study centers the lived experiences of Chicana K – 12 teachers from Southern California who view their teaching as a political, spiritual, and/or moral commitment. This sample of 11 Chicana teachers has defined ethnic and political identities and view Students of Color students from an assets-based perspective[33]. Through (1) pre-interviews, (2) oral history interviews, and (3) classroom observations, I document how Chicana teachers explain connections between their lived experiences and their literacy pedagogies and practices in the classroom.

Key Research Questions

This dissertation explores the following questions with Chicana teachers in Southern California:

1. What connections do Chicana teachers perceive between their cultural intuition (lived experiences) and the K – 12 classroom literacy practices and pedagogies they employ?

2. How are those perceived connections represented in the classroom?
    a. What types of literacy practices does the teacher use and encourage in her classroom?
    b. How do these practices reflect her overall approach to literacy?

To rigorously explore these questions and triangulate the data, a variety of

[33] Assets-based refers to a perspective that sees the knowledge, skills, resources, and potential that Latina/o students bring to school (Yosso, 2005). This stands in stark contrast to dominant deficit ideologies of Latina/o communities that assume inferiority, pathology, and at-risk (Solórzano & Valencia, 1997).

methodological tools were employed for this inquiry. I used the methodological tools of pre-interviews, oral history interviews, classroom observations, and portraiture in order to provide triangulation and present the data.

This chapter's intent is to offer the epistemological orientation for the methodologies and methods utilized in the study. I describe the connections and distinctions between epistemology, methodology, and methods. The three elements of epistemology, methodology, and methods are braided together in interrelated, yet separate strands throughout the research process (Delgado Bernal, 1998b; Harding, 1989; Diaz Soto, Cervantes-Soon, & Campos, 2009). Oral history interviews, guided by a Chicana Feminist sensibility, provide a research tool that disrupts dominant ways of knowing and remembering Chicana teachers. Portraiture, as a final product, offers a contextual frame of phenomenon within individual lives.

Chicana Feminism as Epistemology: "Girl, it's just knowledge"[34]

The cultural intuition I bring to this work as a Chicana-Tejana, former classroom teacher, and mother, informs the guiding epistemology for this study. My work is strategic and purposeful in centering Chicana teachers as Women of Color, "knowledge holders and creators", in the teaching profession. While positivist scholarship may criticize the insertion of the researcher's experiences into her empirical study, Chicana feminist epistemology welcomes and honors the

[34] Throughout graduate school, it had been challenging for me to think about epistemology and ways of knowing. I didn't even know what "epistemology" meant until the end of my first year. During the summer that followed, I met Cherie Moraga at UCLA's La Familia conference (2010). I was still struggling just to pronounce the word, "epistemology". She responded to me by saying, "girl, its just knowledge". *De repente*, it made sense.

researcher's cultural intuition throughout the research process. It is akin to what Lightfoot-Lawrence terms "personal context". Cultural intuition offers a particular standpoint from which to understand the life history interviews and classroom observations of Chicana teachers. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) maintains that "noting the perch and perspective of the portraitist, the reader can better interpret the process and product of her vision" (Lawrence – Lightfoot, 1997, p. 50). For this reason, I try to be transparent about who I am as an educational researcher and how my cultural intuition informs this study.

Delgado Bernal (1998a) describes Chicana Feminist epistemology within the tradition of other U.S. Third World feminist literature and recognizes specifically the contributions of Patricia Hill Collins (2000), bell hooks (1989), and Aida Hurtado (1996). Centralizing these feminist epistemologies critiques the failings of traditional, liberal educational scholarship to explore the intersections of race, class, and gender (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Solórzano, 1998). Such intersections are central to understanding and theorizing with Chicana teachers[35].

[35] As such, Critical Race Theory (CRT) offers a theoretical framework for this dissertation study. Bell (1995) defines CRT as a "body of legal scholarship, now about a decade old, a majority of whose members (Critical race theory's founding members are usually identified as Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Charles Lawrence, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia Williams) are both essentially people of color and ideologically committed to the struggle against racism, particularly as institutionalized in and by law" (p. 898). Within this legal tradition, six unifying themes of CRT emerge (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993):

1. CRT recognizes that racism is endemic to American life, and some discuss the permanency of racism to the U.S. and world (Bell, 1993).
2. CRT critiques claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy.
3. CRT demands a contextual/historical analysis (of the law and education).
4. CRT recognizes the experiential knowledge of people of color and communities of color
5. CRT is interdisciplinary.
6. CRT works to end racial oppression as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of oppression, which some CRT (and LatCrit) scholars use an intersectional framework as a way to address other forms of oppression and experiences.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), in one of the first pieces that extends CRT from the legal field to education, remind us that race is significant in explaining property rights and inequity in the U.S. (as

Chicana Feminism allows for the complexities, connections, and contradictions within the lived experiences of Chicana teachers, particularly surrounding issues such as immigration, migration, generational status, language, Catholicism, and phenotype (Delgado-Bernal, 1997; Johnson, 1998; Montoya, 1994; Perez Huber, 2010; Trucios-Haynes, 2000)[36]. Delgado Bernal (1998a) maintains:

> It [Chicana Feminist epistemology] questions objectivity, a universal foundation of knowledge, and the Western dichotomies of mind versus body, subject versus object, objective truth versus subjective emotion, and male versus female. In this sense, a Chicana epistemology maintains connections to indigenous roots by embracing dualities that are necessary and complementary qualities, and by challenging dichotomies that offer opposition without reconciliation.
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> p. 560

Such ideologies are important in a world filled with complex contradictions and inconsistencies. Delgado Bernal explains that embracing dualities as both necessary and complementary is an important ideological principle of Chicana Feminism.

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prophesized by Du Bois (1903) through the "color line"). Race, conceptually, however remains undertheorized. CRT has since burgeoned within the field of education. And many CRT in education scholars now cite the following five tenets (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano 1998):

1. The importance of transdisciplinary approaches.
2. An emphasis on experiential knowledge.
3. A challenge to dominant ideologies.
4. The centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination.
5. A commitment to social justice and racial justice (Perez Huber, 2009).

[36] Such complexities, connections, and contradictions are also discussed within Latina/o Critical Theory (LatCrit), which evolved from CRT, the body of legal scholarship, now about over two decades old. CRT has evolved into several sub-disciplines that examine specific communities of color; these subdisciplines disrupt the Black-White paradigm that had dominated earlier CRT scholarship and suggest nuanced ways communities of color experience the intersections of race, gender, and class. These sub-disciplines are not in opposition to each other, but rather act as "cousins" within the CRT family (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2010). The sub-disciplines developed thus far are: TribalCrit, AsianCrit, LatCrit, FemCrit, and WhiteCrit (Yosso, 2005). Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2010) offer an explanation of LatCrit as: "concerned with a progressive sense of a coalitional Latina/Latino pan-ethnicity and addresses issues often ignored by critical race theorists such as language, immigration, ethnicity, identity, phenotype, and sexuality…[LatCrit] is a theory that elucidates Latinas/Latinos' multidimensional identities and can address the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classim, and other forms of oppression" (p. 311 - 312).

Furthermore, this approach attempts to explicitly recognize more indigenous ways of thinking and seeks to combat colonial models of research and epistemological racism (Gutiérrez, 2008; Scheurich & Young, 1997).

Storytelling: Oral History Interviews

> My 'stories' are acts encapsulated in time, 'enacted' every time they are spoken aloud or read silently. I like to think of them as performances and not as inert and 'dead' objects (as aesthetics of Western culture think of art works). Instead, the work has an identity; it is a 'who' or a 'what' and contains the presences of persons, that is, incarnations of gods or ancestors or natural and cosmic power.
>
> Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 89

At the heart of this study are the life stories of Chicana teachers. These stories are powerful. Leslie Marmon Silko (1977) writes, "They are all we have, you see/ all we have to fight off/ illness and death" (p. 2). Through the human relationships we create, I honor and testify the power of stories from women who struggle for a better tomorrow[37].

Positioning teachers as ""knowledge holders and creators"" (Delgado Bernal, 2002)[38] is intentional. Such an approach values teachers as intellectuals and

[37] Within the tenets of both CRT and LatCrit frameworks, experiential knowledge is valued and honored – people's stories hold power. Scholars have been developing critical race methodologies in education where research is grounded within the stories, experiences, and knowledge of communities of color; such works highlight the role that stories play as theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical tools to challenge systems of oppression while working towards a better future (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Malagon, et. al, 2009). Perez Huber (2009) has taken these ideas and applied them specifically to *testimonio* and terms a critical race *testimonio*, which she came to name with her participants: "a verbal journey of a witness who speaks to reveal the racist, nativist, classist, and sexist injustices as a means of healing, empowerment, and advocacy for a more humane present and future" (p. 713). While the way I envision *testimonio* does not call for me to use the concept of a critical race *testimonio*, my work builds on these earlier contributions – particularly in the way that CRT and LatCrit employ the use of story-telling as a method.

[38] Delgado Bernal (2002) argues for a CRT, LatCrit, Feminist, Mestiza framework in order to validate students of color as holders and creators of knowledge. Through such a framework, naturalized concepts such as meritocracy and white privilege are critiqued. Additionally, Delgado Bernal reminds readers to look beyond a standardized model to assess students and turn to counter-stories,

teaching as intellectual work (Giroux, 1988). This emphasis seeks to counter current dominant ideology that measures teacher effectiveness and student learning through the one-dimensional method of standardized tests. The current deficit ideology of teachers deskills, deprofessionalizes, and deintellectualizes educators into reductive "clerks of the empire" (Giroux, 2010).

Employing oral history interviews as storytelling, provides nuanced ways to understand individual and collective similarities and differences, in the lived realities of women from a similar political, ethnic, geographical, educational, generational, and professional background.

Life history interviews offer an in-depth exploration into the situated nature of literacy in the lives of Chicana teachers (see *Key Research Questions*). Sociocultural scholars Barton and Hamilton (2000) suggest: "[a] person's practices can also be located in their own history of literacy. In order to understand this we need to take a life history approach, observing the history within a person's life" (p. 14). Oral history interviews allow Chicana teachers to situate their classroom practices within their own experiences with literacy. Oral history interviews, with a Chicana feminist sensibility, privilege the voice of the marginalized and insists on a close relationship between participants and researchers. It values storytelling, works to develop a collective, communal memory, and links individual experiences to larger historical-cultural events.

Delgado Bernal (1998b) suggests that oral history offers an opportunity to explore the perspectives and interpretations of individuals whose histories have

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dichos, kitchen talk, where an asset model is possible. For the purposes of the above inquiry, I take this framework and extend it to Chicana teachers.

been excluded and distorted within research and the dominant imagination. Thus, oral history interviews are concerned with the expression of the subaltern voice (Spivak, 1988). One can see oral history interviews as a form of storytelling in which marginalized people and experiences are purposefully centered. Delgado Bernal (1998b) reminds us: "Oral sources are thus a necessity when studying working class-women of color, though they may be less important when studying topics involving white men of the dominant class who have typically had control over written history and collective memory" (p. 115).

As a research technique, oral history interviews operate as an intensive biographical interview. There are a variety of ways to structure such an interview. In this study, I employed "episodic events" to frame interviews (Kohler-Riessman, 1987). "In episodic narration a participant speaks by telling stories as episodes within their life. Their speech pattern relies on recounting experiences as episodes that are not chronologically ordered but rather thematically driven" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 170). As indicated by the research question, the study is most focused on the connection between Chicana teachers' cultural intuition and their classroom literacy practices. "Episodic events" are focused on the participants' stories within the context of: family and home; schooling; and professional settings. This was possible through open ended-interviews (see *Appendices 5 & 6: Oral History Interview*, *Part 1 & 2*) that focused on specific social contexts – highlighting the "situated nature" of literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 1998).

The relationship between researcher and participant is critical to the success of an oral history interview. The relationship that the researcher and the

participant build together is one of "holistic collaboration" and "necessarily shifts at least some authority to the research subject" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 173). Both parties play an active role in editing, deciding what parts to include, and in knowledge construction. This relationship is furthered developed by the researcher's and participant's cultural intuition, in which connections are made through the similarities and differences within our diverse experiences as Chicanas and teachers.

Oral history interviews, grounded in Chicana Feminism, seek to develop a collective memory in which dominant ways of knowing are questioned and reclaiming alternative visions of history are important. This is possible through oral history, which can transfer potentially critical consciousness raising stories into written sources. This is significant, considering who has typically had control over written history and collective memory.

Chicana Feminism encourages oral history interviews to develop collective memory, by linking individual experiences to historical events. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) write that, oral history interviews are, "used to link micro- and macrophenomena and personal life experiences to broader historical circumstances" (p. 153). As such, situating the individuals' experiences within the world that they live is an important aspect of both oral history and portraiture.

> Oral history is also an excellent tool for situating life experience within a cultural context. In other words, personal stories can be interlinked with collective memory, political culture, social power, and so forth, showing the interplay between the individual and the society in which she or he lives.
>
> Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 189

Previous scholarship that uses oral history interviews as method offers concrete ways in which to implement this social science as a humanities research tool. For example, Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2006) describe various steps that are important to consider throughout the oral history interview process. They stress the importance of the initial meeting between participant and researcher where they: establish roles, discuss interview protocol, the goal of the project, and ultimately, form a relationship.

The Historical Society of Cecil County (see *http://www.cecilhistory.org/)* suggests that for the first interview, the researcher should ask the narrator to bring tangible items to the interview (i.e., photos, artifacts, written materials, etc.). This is done for multiple reasons; these artifacts offer concrete illustrations of the historical time period under investigation and act as a reminder for the narrator to describe thematic episodes. For each oral history interview, candidates brought artifacts that represented for them, significant moments in their life story within the context of "episodic events" in family and home, schooling, and professional settings.

Most historical societies recommend a complete transcription of the interview to complement the audio. While the transcription serves as an important historical record of the individuals' life within the larger social-historical context, it is equally important for member-checking and the co-construction of a final product. This allows for a deeper, more reciprocal relationship to ensure the co-construction of knowledge. This will be explored further in the next chapter through a three-stage data analysis model (Malagon, Perez Huber, & Velez, 2009; Perez Huber, 2010) with Chicana teachers (see *Figure 2*).

One final step to oral history interviews is the making of a memo after the transcription of the interview. This allows the researcher to capture and reflect on emergent themes within the interview. Such memos are useful throughout the coding and analysis phase, which contributes greatly to the development of code families.

The concrete tools of oral history interviews offer beginning researchers a guide to the implementation of a method. Oral history interviews, grounded within Chicana Feminism, center marginalized, minoritized voices within a larger socio-historical time period. Oral history is concerned with collective memory and emphasizes a close relationship between participant and researcher.

Portraiture as Product

> *We have no idea how to decipher or decode an action, a gesture, a conversation, or an exclamation unless we see it embedded in context. Portraitists, then, view human experience as being framed and shaped by the context.*
>
> Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p. 41

Portraiture is a phenomenological inquiry process that seeks to describe the "richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context" (Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 3). This method interrogates "the expression of goodness [while] documenting how the subjects or actors in the setting define goodness" (p. 9). This is not to say that the portraits are "designed to be documents of idealization or celebration. In examining the dimensionality and complexity of goodness there will, of course, be ample evidence of vulnerability and weakness" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 9).

An approach that truly "listens *for* a story" is the only way to depict the lives,

teaching practices with Chicana teachers, and the intersection of their teaching lives with race, class, gender, immigration, migration, generational status, language, Catholicism, and phenotype (Delgado-Bernal, 1997; Johnson, 1998; Montoya, 1994; Perez Huber, 2010; Trucios-Haynes, 2000). Portraiture allows for such a nuanced understanding of teachers by situating their lived experiences within a specific context.

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) describes different elements of portraiture: context, voice, relationship, emergent themes, and the aesthetic whole. While each element is important to the development of the portrait, as "a narrative that is at once complex, provocative, and inviting, that attempts to be holistic, revealing the dynamic interaction of values, personality, structure, and history" (p. 11), within this work, I focus on the element of context.

I explore context because "the narrative documents human behavior and experience in context. In fact, the portraitist insists that the only way to interpret people's actions, perspectives, and talk is to see them in context" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p. 11). Thus, the only way to describe the lives and teaching practices of Chicana teachers is through the contexts, in which they were raised, currently live, and work. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) describes context as the setting: "physical, geographic, temporal, historical, cultural, aesthetic" (p. 41). In fact, the first few chapters of this dissertation should be read as the context for the portraits.

Portraiture highlights the nuances of the human experience through a concentrated focus on context. Cultural intuition has taught me that all aspects of context are significant in painting human experience and meaning:

> The portraitist, then, believes that human experience has meaning in a particular social, cultural, and historical context – a context where relationships are real, where the actors are familiar with the setting, where activity has purpose, where nothing is contrived (expect for the somewhat intrusive presence of the researcher.
>
> Lawrence – Lightfoot, 1997, p. 43

Sarah Lightfoot-Lawrence's contextual framework includes internal context, personal context, historical context, and shaping the context. Portraiture allows the context to provide the frame, the background for each of the teachers' lives. Micro and macro perspectives frame each portrait. Layered within the specific action of a single moment in their classroom is the story of the teachers' lives as Chicanas living in the U.S. The single moment captures multimodal, culturally relevant literacy practices in the classroom – the story tells how and why those practices are important to the teacher throughout her lived experiences.

I will next describe the different aspects of context that Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) describes in her work: (1) internal context, (2) personal context, (3) historical context, and (4) shaping the context. I employ each of these aspects to create contextual, nuanced portraits of the informants. The following chart describes the way that these different aspects of context find themselves within the scope of this study with Chicana veteran teachers. The narrative that follows will give more detail surrounding the choices to include such information in the portraits (see *Table 2*).

Table 2: Portrait Criteria

Criteria for Portrait	Purpose	Type of Context*
Demography of School	Describes the research site through the racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds of the student body at a research site. This provides a rich context for classroom observations.	Internal Context
Demography & History of School Community	Describes the school's community through a racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic lens. Describes interactions between different populations in the community. This provides a full background of the Southern California context in terms of demographic shifts.	Historical Context
Demography of Classroom	Describes the racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds of the students in a particular class. Furthermore, the number of students in each class will be counted to describe attendance rates and class size union policies.	Internal Context
History of city where teacher was raised and educated.	Describes the racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic background of the city. This provides the context for the lived experiences of the teacher and how they understand the connections between the community where they were raised/went to school and where they currently teach.	Historical Context
Key memories in teacher's life regarding: school, family, and professional experiences.	These moments describe, "literacy events" and highlight individual experiences situated within a racial, ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and historical context.	Historical Context
Physical description of Teacher.	Describes concrete examples so that the reader may "see" the teachers, their demeanor, body language, as well as other physical traits.	Internal Context
Physical description of school, city, and neighborhood.	Names store fronts, important buildings, and historical monuments to describe the socio-political and historical context of a school, city, and neighborhood.	Historical Context
Description of myself as portraitist.	Describes my "perch and perspective" – my positionality as a researcher.	Personal Context

* All types of context also include "shaping the context" as backgrounds constantly shift within human life and meaning. Shaping the context captures some of these shifts.

Internal Context

Internal context describes the physical setting of the research site. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) notes, "no detail is too small to warrant attention and record in the

observational notes. The documentation – on site – is purposefully all-inclusive" (p. 45). Within my observational notes, I described the physical setting of the community, school, and classroom. To supplement my written descriptions, I took pictures of these physical settings. Pictures provided a way to conjure up the memory of the site as well as provide concrete evidence through which to accurately describe the physical setting at the time of the observation.

Initially, I had doubts about providing so much information regarding the physical setting of the participants' schools and communities to protect their identity. However, in emulating *The Good High School* (1983), which includes street names, neighborhood specifics, names storefronts, and describes architectural patterns, Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) encourages the portraitist to take "the reader on a journey" (p. 48) in order to develop the relationship between the community of the research site and the larger metropolitan area. In this regional area, each city, neighborhood, and block have a distinctive history and feel. These nuances are important to name and paint a vivid image of the context in which people live their lives. Furthermore, in member checking with the informants, they all felt that it was important to name the community.

Personal Context

> …[T]he portraitist invites the reader to join her on the journey and experience – step by step – the unfolding reality. The researcher's description of perch and perspective does not necessarily lock the reader into looking through the same lens or from the same angle. Paradoxically, it does the opposite. Vivid, discerning (and restrained) articulation of the researcher's stance allows the reader to entertain a contrasting view – to move to a different point on the landscape that might shape a different vision.
>
> Lawrence – Lightfoot, 1997, p. 50

Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot understands positionality and standpoint as the personal context or cultural intuition that the researcher brings to the study. This informs how I ask my research questions, how I know what is knowledge, how I know where to sit in a classroom. It drives my interaction both with research participants and their primary and secondary level students.

Historical Context

As the tools of oral history suggest, the historical context provides for the frame of remembering and reshaping the past in the present. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) suggests that, "[a] visual scan of the physical setting, then, also helps the reader anticipate themes – both historical and philosophical – that characterize this place" (p. 55). While Lawrence Lightfoot is suggesting a visual scan of the present, I interpreted this as also a historical scan of place. Through U.S. Census data and historical city records, I am able to discuss demographic changes due to socio-historical and political factors. Additionally, works within the history field aided in developing a portrait of the neighborhoods where teachers were raised and where they currently teach.

Shaping Context

As the portraitist begins to spend more time within the specific context of her research site, she begins to notice changes and records such variation with unfaltering integrity. The context is a dynamic force and is equally shaped by the people who inhabit the space and place. "The portraitist, then, hopes to capture this dialectic of contextual structures and forces defining individual action and

perceptions and of actors inventing and shaping the contexts in which they inhabit" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997, p. 58).

Portraiture as an art and science requires the portraitist to interrogate connection and disconnection between theory and the participants' realities. The emphasis on context, as a dynamic framework, provides a background for action, and also informs my interpretations of the participants' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Life history interviews, due to their characteristic nature of asking about events in the past, insist on a rich description of context. Context is crucial in order to accurately frame an individual story. Life history interviews allow the artist to gather and analyze contextual data to paint a detailed, full portrait.

CHAPTER 6

METHODS

This chapter includes the overall design of the study, including: (1) the research questions, (2) detailed depictions of participant sampling, (3) data sources, (4) data collection, and (5) data analysis strategies. Throughout the chapter, I make explicit connections to how cultural intuition guided this process. The study centers the lived experiences of 11 Chicana K – 12 teachers from Southern California who view their teaching as a political, spiritual, and/or moral commitment. Through (1) pre-interviews, (2) oral history interviews, and (3) classroom observations, I address the following research questions:

Key Research Questions

1. What connections do Chicana teachers perceive between their cultural intuition (lived experiences) and the K – 12 classroom literacy practices and pedagogies they employ?

2. How are those perceived connections represented in the classroom?
    c. What types of literacy practices does the teacher use and encourage in her classroom?
    d. How do these practices reflect her overall approach to literacy?

Sampling

I used purposeful sampling to select a small group of Chicana teachers that corresponds directly to literature surrounding culturally relevant and responsive teaching. This focused sample of teachers was chosen in order to fully answer my research questions and test my hypothesis. The research questions and hypothesis were guided by my cultural intuition as a former classroom teacher, and graduate student where I have been exposed to educational research and literature. Analysis

of the life histories and classroom practices of the 11 Chicana teachers will provide nuanced understandings of themes relevant and exceptional across the sample.

Table 3, see below (*Participant Selection Criteria & Rationale*), details the criteria I used to select Chicana teachers who see their teaching as a political, spiritual, and/or moral commitment. I selected for participants who describe employing culturally relevant approaches in their teaching with Students of Color.

Table 3: Participant Selection Criteria & Rationale

Participant criteria	Rationale	Literature
Self-identifies as Mexican-origin and views herself as an ethnic and political being.	People of Mexican-origin identify in a myriad of ways, often depending on context. Assumes a connection between race, ethnicity, class, gender, and political identities in their lived experiences	Alarcon, 1993; Lynn, 1999, 2002; Hayes-Bautista & Chapa, 1987; Rios, 2008
Takes a culturally relevant approach to teaching through practices like: • Building upon students' "funds of knowledge". • Establishing relationships with students and their families. • Discussing power relations in classroom. • Advocating for students and their families. • Holding high academic expectations for students with appropriate support.	Culturally relevant and responsive literature documents that such practices are essential for academic success, particularly for low-income, students of color. This work purposefully samples for teachers who employ culturally relevant practices.	Crawford, 2009; Gay, 2010; Ladson Billings, 1994; Malagon, et al., 2009
Speaks about her students from an asset-based perspective	Teachers are likely to employ a broad range of pedagogies to connect curriculum to students' lived experiences.	Umbach, 2006; Moll, et al., 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Yosso, 2005; Howard, 2010
Teaches/Taught in a school with a student of color majority (80% or more).	Teachers are likely to understand students of color experiences and act as cultural brokers.	Irizarry, 2007; Jordan 2003; Nieto, 1999
Teaches/Taught at a school with high concentration of poor students (60% or more on free or reduced lunch).	High-poverty schools often experience high teacher turnover and teachers with limited teaching experience.	Darling-Hammond, 2007
Teaches/Taught at public, pilot, or charter school.	Highlights the current conditions of public education and neoliberal policies.	Lipman, 2009
Taught and lived in Southern California for the majority of her life.	Different localities have particular socio-historical, political, and cultural contexts. Individual experience is situated within this context.	Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 1999; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997

In creating a deliberate participant criteria, I am concerned with "sampling aimed at theory construction, instead of population representativeness" (Malagon, et al., 2009, p. 10). Theoretical sampling "seeks people, events, or information to

illuminate and define the boundaries and relevance of the categories" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 189). This approach allows for theoretical saturation, when gathering more data does not uncover new conceptual insights, and is most associated with grounded theory in order to produce relevant data to test emerging theories (Bloor & Wood, 2006). My coding and analysis approach is more abductive in nature. I rely on both previous scholarship and grounded theory to allow published literature to guide initial codes and the raw data to form new codes. This study employs such approaches to explore theory regarding culturally relevant literacy practices with Chicana teachers.

Explicit Connections Between Questions, Hypothesis, and Literature

This section offers explicit connections between the design of the research questions, the hypothesis that is being tested, the data that will be used to answer and test the research questions, and the supporting literature. I discuss these connections, considering previous theoretical and empirical scholarship. The tables that follow this discussion summarize the material (see *Table 5a - d*).

The central question of this study is: How do Chicana teachers perceive the connection between their cultural intuition (lived experiences) and the K – 12 classroom literacy practices and pedagogies they employ? Cherie Moraga (1983) and other U.S. Third World feminist scholars have written explicitly on the lived experiences of Women of Color and the particular ways that gender, sexuality, race, and class intersect to create our daily realities and material conditions. Moraga deftly describes this as, "theories of the flesh". The driving question thus seeks to explore, through oral history interviews, the varied schooling, familial, and

professional experiences of Chicana teachers. “A theory of the flesh means one where the physical realities of our lives – our skin color, the land or concrete where we grew up on, our sexual longings – all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity” (Moraga, 1983). Moraga places the intersections of one’s being into how we, in the bodies that we occupy, experience the world.

The concept of cultural intuition was born from decades of scholarship in Chicana Feminisms (Delgado Bernal, 1998a) among our “enarkened” feminist sisters (Collins, 1991; hooks, 1989; Hurtado, 1996). Cultural intuition (Delgado Bernal, 1998a) is an extension of what Strauss and Corbin (1990) call “theoretical sensitivity – a personal quality of the researcher based on the attribute of having the ability to give meaning to data” (p. 563). The aforementioned authors agree that such intuition comes from four distinct areas: (1) personal and collective experiences, (2) existing literature, (3) professional experience, and (4) the analytical research process. Delgado Bernal (1998a), however, makes a key distinction between cultural intuition and theoretical sensitivity by “extend[ing] one’s personal experience to include collective experience and community memory” (p. 563), and by describing cultural intuition as “a complex process that is experiential, intuitive, historical, personal, collective, and dynamic” (p. 567 – 568).

This study explores the role of cultural intuition in the classroom practices of 11 Chicana teachers. In a previous article, Delgado Bernal (1998a) describes the role of cultural intuition for Chicana researchers. For the purposes of the above inquiry, I take her framework and extend it to Chicana teachers. I will detail the different ways the framework relates to both Chicana researchers and teachers.

Central to cultural intuition is the concept of meaning-making. In drawing and developing upon the four areas of cultural intuition (personal and collective experiences, existing literature, professional experience, the analytical research process), Chicana researchers give meaning to data. In a similar way, Chicana teachers give meaning to students' lives and their interactions within the classroom (see *table 4*).

Chicana researchers pull from personal and collective experiences to inform the research process. Individual and community memory provides the foundational purpose for the research and informs all parts of the research process. The researcher cultivates theories of the flesh to inform her praxis (theory and action). Similarly, Chicana teachers use personal and collective experiences to guide their inspiration, motivation, and praxis in K-12 schools. Chicana teachers working with Latina/o students share a pan-ethnic identity with students. From this common identity, Chicana teachers may pull from personal, familial, and collective experiences to empathize, strategize, and prepare students emotionally, socially, and academically, as research on home-grown teachers suggests (Irizarry, 2007).

Within academe, researchers are encouraged to build upon existing literature in which to situate a study. The literature that a Chicana researcher has read, in regards to her field, shapes her study philosophically and methodologically. Most often, decisions and who to read and cite are deliberate (Delgado, 1984). Likewise, Chicana teachers also read literature within their fields (i.e. elementary education, secondary education, English Language Arts, History, social justice education, literacy studies, curriculum studies, etc.), which informs their classroom

practice. This decision can also be deliberate, chosen by content area and level, and/or mandated by administration at local, district, and/or national levels.

The professional experiences that the researcher brings to the study add insight into the research design, analysis, and presentation. As a former classroom teacher, my research design sought to include the voices of teachers and provide nuanced and asset-based understandings of teaching. I did this intentionally to combat dominant, pathological ideologies regarding teachers. In a similar vein, the professional experiences that a teacher brings to the classroom add insight to her practice. For example, professional development regarding technology may allow teachers to deliver content in a culturally responsive way. That is, students will be engaged through the use of technology and learning communication skills that will prepare them academically, economically, and socially for the 21st century.

The final aspect of this framework focuses on the research and teaching processes and stresses relationships between researcher and participant, teacher and student. Both couples form dialectical, and, hopefully, reciprocal relationships through inclusion and dialogue. I am recognizing here the hierarchical nature of power. In dominant society, the researcher and the teacher are given higher status than research participants and students. Chicana researchers and teachers who utilize and continually develop their cultural intuition include their participants, and students throughout the research, teaching, and learning processes in spite of such power relations. They critique the status quo of hierarchical relationships and find ways of relating in which power is more equally shared.

Table 4: The Cultural Intuition of Chicana Teachers

Chicana Researchers	Chicana Teachers
Personal & Collective Experiences: The researcher's lived experiences, their theories of the flesh, inform the research process. This includes community memory.	*Personal & Collective Experiences:* The teacher's lived experiences, their theories of the flesh, inform the teaching and learning process. This includes community memory.
Existing Literature: The literature that the researcher has read, in regards to her field, shapes her study philosophically and methodologically.	*Existing Literature:* The literature that the teacher has read in regards to her field shapes her pedagogy and classroom practices.
Professional Experiences: The professional experiences that the researcher brings to the study add insight into research design, analysis, and presentation.	*Professional Experiences:* The professional experiences that the teacher brings to the classroom adds insight to curriculum, pedagogy, and delivery.
Analytical Research Process: Researcher and participant form symbiotic, reciprocal relationships. Participants are included throughout research process.	*Analytical Teaching Process:* Teacher and student form symbiotic, reciprocal relationships. Students included are included throughout teaching and learning process.

The second research question explores the connections between the teachers' cultural intuition and their K – 12 classrooms. My hypothesis is that Chicana teachers, who view teaching as a political, spiritual, and/or moral commitment, employ their cultural intuition to provide culturally relevant literacy practices. This question looks for confirming and disconfirming evidence in the connection between lived experiences and K – 12 classrooms. The purposeful sampling of this study attracts teachers who view students from an asset-based perspective, and

thus are more likely to employ a broad range of pedagogies to connect curriculum to students' lived experiences, yielding higher levels of student engagement and improved markers of traditional academic success (Umbach, 2006; Moll, et al., 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Yosso, 2005; Howard, 2010). The extent to which the current research explores the lived experiences of teachers in relation to these classroom practices, however, is limited (see Bullough, 1991; Gomez, 2009; Mahlio & Maxon, 1995; Marino Weisman, 2001; Muchmore, 2001; Pajeres, 1992). This research seeks to explore lived experiences and classroom practices with Chicana teachers through a literacy framework.

The sub-questions for the second research question describe the classrooms of Chicana teachers. The first sub-question documents the literacy practices and the second sub-question records the literacy pedagogies evident during the ethnographic classroom observations.

The following tables document the research questions, my hypothesis, the data that will be used to answer the questions and the literature supporting the inquiry. This scholarship cited has been addressed more fully within chapter 3, the literature review.

Table 5a: Central Question

Question 1	Hypothesis	Data	Literature
How do Chicana teachers perceive the connection between their lived experiences and their K – 12 classroom literacy ideologies and practices?	Participants will identify significant literacy events throughout their schooling, familial, and professional experiences. These social experiences will dictate how teachers interact with literacy in their classroom.	Pre-Interviews Life history Interviews Reflections	Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Moraga, 1983; Anzaldúa, 1987; Delgado Bernal, 1998a; Pardo, 1998; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Solórzano 1998; Perez Huber, 2010

Table 5b: Secondary Question

Question 2	Hypothesis	Data	Literature
How are those perceived connections represented in the classroom?	Chicana teachers employ a broad range of pedagogical approaches and practices influenced by their cultural intuition (lived experiences). Such pedagogical approaches will include culturally relevant practices for students.	Participant Observations Classroom artifacts (in digital form) Oral history interviews	Umbach, 2006; Moll, et al., 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Yosso, 2005; Howard, 2010;

Table 5c: Sub-question 1

Question 2a	Hypothesis	Data	Literature
What types of literacy practices does the teacher use and encourage in her classroom?	The literacy practices the teacher employs are multimodal culturally relevant literacies in their classroom.	Participant-Observation field notes from classroom visits Digital photographs of classroom walls, bookshelves, student work Curriculum artifacts (handouts, assignments, readings, worksheets, photos of whiteboard)	(Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 1996; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2002; Kellner, 2000; Freire, 1983; Rogers 2004; Gutiérrez, et al., 1999; Gutiérrez, et al., 1997; Gutiérrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995).

Table 5d: Sub-question 2

Question 2b	Hypothesis	Data	Literature
How do these practices reflect pedagogy	The literacy practices that the teachers express will be shaped by the participants': (a) Schooling Experiences (b) Familial experiences (c) Professional experiences (d) Other important social experiences	Fieldnotes (classroom visits) Digital photos of classroom walls, bookshelves, student work Curriculum artifacts (handouts, assignments, readings, etc.)	(Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 1996; Freire & Macedo, 1987; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2007; Rogers, 2004; Gutiérrez, et al., 1999; Gutiérrez, et al., 1997; Gutiérrez, et al., 1995).

Data Collection & Methods

The data collection phase began through pilot pre-interviews, oral history interviews, and observations with three Chicana beginning teachers (5 years or less of classroom experience). I decided to interview beginning teachers as a way to avoid limiting my sample of Chicana veteran teachers. Originally, I intended on interviewing only veteran teachers with 12 years or more of teaching experience. This changed after I analyzed the interviews and classroom observations of my pilot participants and decided to include them in the dissertation research, thus creating a multigenerational sample of Chicana teachers.

I had previously formed a relationship with one of these three teachers through my professional experiences as a field support provider for a teacher education program in Southern California. At the conclusion of our first interview, this teacher suggested I contact two of her colleagues. I had previously explained the criteria for participation and she felt they matched my call. She initialed an email exchange between her two colleagues and myself; they also agreed to be interviewed.

The purpose of these pilot investigations was to test and adjust my inquiry tools, namely the interview questions and observations. Initially, these Chicana teachers were screened through an email or phone call to ensure that they matched the purposeful sampling I described earlier in the chapter (see *Appendix 1*).

After testing and adjusting the pre-interview, life history interview, and the observational tool with this pilot sample, I began a formal recruitment of Chicana teachers for the dissertation study. I distributed a flyer (see *Appendix 2*) to email

list-servs of targeted teacher groups and at community functions within Southern California (i.e. Association of Raza Educations, Association of Mexican American Educators, California Association for Bilingual Education). The flyer was also distributed to schools in Southern California with a known presence of Mexican teachers. A third way I recruited participants is through a network sampling method (Delgado Bernal, 1997; Gándara, 1995). Colleagues frequently asked if they could forward the flyer to their networks as many thought of teacher(s) who matched the criteria.

Through the tools of an initial phone call or email interview, and a pre-interview, I narrowed down a small sample of eight additional participants who meet the full participant criteria. In this formal recruitment stage, I focused on selecting teachers with 12 or more years of teaching experience. This is a notable point, given that 50% of new teachers leave within their first 5 years (Darling-Hammond, 2007). Teachers of color are reported to have higher turnover rates than white teachers (Ingersoll & Connor, 2009). As such, I hoped that Chicana veteran teachers could discuss retention strategies as well as educational policy changes over a longer range of time (Montaño & Bernstein, 2006).

With this sample of eight veteran teachers, I began oral history interviews. These occurred through 2 to 3 meetings, with the interviews lasting between 30 minutes to 2 hours. The oral history interview approach allowed us to delve deeply into the lived experiences of the teachers in regards to their schooling, familial, and professional experiences. In using a framework that pulls from Critical Literacy, Sociocultural Learning Theory, and Multiliteracies, the context in which the teachers

describe learning to read the word and the world is central. The first research question asks about the connection between Chicana teachers' cultural intuition and their classroom. The context of their lived experiences offers a rich lens in which to make meaning of their professional practices.

Through such an in-depth approach, the socio-historical and political context of the teachers' lives is more fully fleshed out. The oral history interviews capture the nuances of the teachers' lived experiences, and allow the participants to describe, in their own words, their classroom. This approach allows us to fully explore how Chicana teachers perceive the connection between their cultural intuition and their K – 12 classroom literacy practices, the guiding focus for this study.

Ethnographic classroom observations (Erickson, 2011) allow for an in-depth exploration of the current professional experiences and classroom interactions of this small sample of Chicana teachers within specific schools and classrooms. Eight teachers were observed in their classroom as part of this dissertation study. Three teachers who were not observed had already retired from the teaching profession. The other five Chicana teachers were observed between 1 – 5 times. Table 6 describes the number of observations for each individual teacher. The teachers who constitute the case study for the portraits (see *Chapter 6*) were each observed 5 times. The section that follows will address how the teachers came to form 3 separate case studies as a result of their generation and number of years in the teaching profession.

Table 6: Ethnographic classroom observations

Name	School Site	Number of Observations
Ms. Perez	Inglewood, CA	2
Ms. Jimenez	Los Angeles, CA (Silverlake/Echo Park)	2
Ms. Zarazua	Los Angeles, CA (Korea Town)	1
Ms. Castillo	La Mesa, CA	2
Ms. Montemayor	Los Angeles, CA (Downtown)	5
Ms. Romero	Los Angeles, CA (South Central)	5
Ms. Sotomayor	Huntington Park, CA	5
Ms. Martínez Luna	Pasadena, CA	5
Ms. Ochoa	Oxnard, CA	0* (retired)
Ms. Bachiniva	Pomona, CA	0 (retired)
Ms. Sánchez	San Diego, CA	0 (retired)
Total		**27**

* Observed at a teacher organization meeting in her role as president.

During the observations, I looked for things that demonstrated the teachers' literacy classroom practice. This was accomplished through detailed field notes for every visit, and digital photography of the actual classroom and classroom artifacts (student work, graphic organizers, instructional tools, books, posters, displays, etc.). Additionally, my observational tool focused my attention on social/political comments made by the teacher; asset-based conversation and approaches with students; and the use of classroom artifacts. In this way, I captured curriculum, curricular tools, day-to-day classroom practices and routines of the teachers while also describing their approach and interactions with students. Additionally, I documented literacy practices, teacher-student interactions, and the classroom space, in order to address the second research question and sub-questions, through ethnographic field notes.

Three Case Studies

The participants themselves represent three distinct cases (Yin, 2003) bounded by generation and time in the teaching profession. I will describe each of the three cases and offer their demographic, educational, and geographic information through tables. The tables distinguish the three case studies.

The first group of teachers has been teaching between 30 and 40 years. Three out of the four individuals in this group are currently retired. All the women are 60 years of age or older.

Case Study 1: Las Groovies[39]

Name	Sex	Age	Level(s) Grade Taught	Subject(s) Taught	School Type(s)	Current Status	Years in Teaching Profession
Ms. Sanchez	F	70s	7th – 8th grades Community College 4-year University	English, Chicana/o Studies, Writing	Public	Retired in 2012	40
Ms. Ochoa	F	60s	K, 4th	Elementary Multiple Subjects	Public	Retired	30
Ms. Bachiniva	F	60s	PreK – 12th grades	Elementary Multiple Subjects Spanish Migrant Education Mini-Corp Summer School Programs	Public	Retired in 2011	37
Ms. Martinez Lopez	F	60s	7th – 8th grades	English Language Arts, English as a Second Language, Spanish	Public	Working	30

[39] My family would call my granma and her sisters "las groovies". To me, this term embodies the strength of an entire generation to make something out of nothing.

The second group of teachers has been teaching between 12 and 30 years. All 5 women are still working as K – 12 teachers, and are between the ages of 35 and 60 years. Please notice the overlap of one of the participants, Ms. Martínez Luna, into both groups. Ms. Martínez Luna constitutes an interloper. Her long teaching career and age locates her in the first group generationally however her employment status places her in the second group, as well.

Case Study 2: Las Veteranas

Name	Sex	Age	Grade Taught	Subjects Taught	School Type	Current Status	# of Years in Profession
Ms. Martinez Luna	F	60s	7th – 8th grades	English Language Arts, English as a Second Language, Spanish	Public	Working	30
Ms. Sotomayor	F	40s	4th grade	Elementary Multiple Subjects	Public	Working, setting up new school	22
Ms. Romero	F	30s	9th – 11th grade	English Language Arts English as a Second Language Introduction to Social Welfare & Health Advocacy	Public	Working Setting up new school as design team member	12
Ms. Montemayor	F	30s	10th and 12th grades	World History (regular & honors) AP Psychology	Public	Working Considering administration position	12
Ms. Castillo	F	30s	7th – 8th grade	English Language Arts English Language Development	Public	Working	12

The third and final group, the pilot sample, has been teaching for less than 5 years. These women are still employed in K – 12 schools, and are in their late 20s - early 30s.

Case Study 3: El Futuro

Name	Sex	Age	Grade Taught	Subject Taught	School Type	Current Status	# of Years in Profession
Ms. Zarazua	F	20s	1st grade	Elementary Multiple Subjects	Pilot	Working	4
Ms. Jimenez	F	20s	7th – 8th grade	English Language Arts	Charter	Working	3
Ms. Perez	F	20s	9th – 12th grades	Spanish (for Native Speakers and non-Native Speakers); Introduction to Social Justice	Charter	Working	4

These three different groups represent women who are in different stages of their career. This is significant, as where they are generationally in their career will be referenced throughout their oral history interviews in regards to schooling and teaching experiences. This works to form a detailed description of the historical and internal context of their portraits.

Analysis

The different information sources (pre-interviews, oral history interviews, classroom observations, and field notes) were coded and analyzed in different, yet complementing ways. Each data set answers separate parts of the research questions and sub-questions. The following sections detail how each of the different information sets were coded throughout the analysis phase.

Pre-Interviews & Oral History Interviews

I transcribed the interviews (pre-interviews and oral history interviews) and listened to the interviews an additional two to three times. I printed out the

transcribed interviews and coded them by hand using pre-determined and emergent codes. Using the qualitative software program, HyperResearch, I coded the interviews again, after refining the themes.

Throughout the analysis of the oral history interviews, I coded for literacy events shaped by significant social and cultural experiences in the teachers' schooling, familial, and professional experiences. Barton and Hamilton discuss the importance of understanding a person's literacy practices in the context of their own history of literacy. These authors maintain a situated notion of literacy as they describe "literacy events":

> Activities where literacy has a role. Usually there is a written text, or texts, central to the activity and there may be talk around the text. Events are observable episodes which arise from practices shaped by them. The notion of event stresses the situated nature of literacy, that it always exists in a social context.
>
> Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8 – 9

While Barton and Hamilton highlight the written text, I use a multiliteracies framework to describe literacy events; this framework includes texts that are also audio, gestural, spatial, etc. in nature. This is significant given the multimodal essence of literacy and the "funds of knowledge" specific to the diversity of the Mexican/Chicana/o culture. For example, oral storytelling remains an important cultural practice within Mexican/Chicana/o communities. Utilizing an understanding of literacy that is solely based on written text limits a literacy analysis of this culturally relevant, intellectually demanding cultural practice.

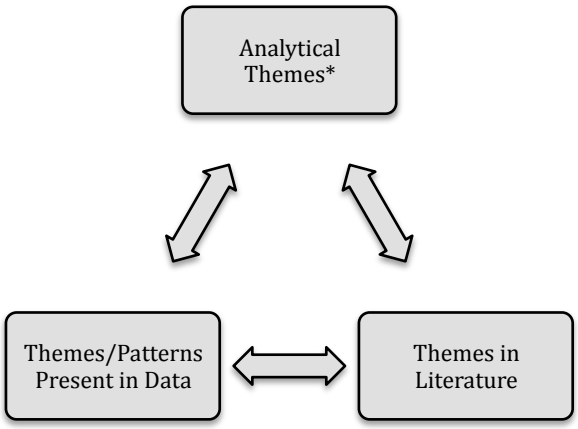
Literacy events are situated activities that include the social contexts of community, school, and family. Within the oral history interview, the participants chose particular events from experiences within four areas: personal and communal

experience, the literature that they have read, professional experience, and the process of teaching, which together describe cultural intuition.

In the initial coding phase of the interviews, I anticipated certain literacy events related to the educational experiences of Latina/os as detailed previously (see *Chapters 2 and 3*). Previous scholarship on the educational and professional experiences of Chicanas provided literacy event codes such as: segregation, language experiences, community college, identity, etc. During this initial period, I considered themes already present in literature regarding Chicanas, while also allowing new codes to emerge that were context specific to the 11 Chicana teachers in this dissertation study.

This demonstrates an abductive approach, in which I use grounded theory to allow codes to emerge from the data, and also employed a rigorous literature review to provide and test initial themes that may also be present within the data. Through this approach, I developed 15 final analytical themes. The nature of an abductive, or constant comparative, method is dynamic and involves constant comparison between the analytic themes and the patterns in the data and themes in the literature (see *Figure 1*).

Figure 1: An Abductive Approach



* Look for confirming and disconfirming themes. Re-align analytic themes to reflect those found in the data and the literature. Make conscious note to document any outliers in data or literature. Graphic developed by Karla Perez Mendoza (2012).

Using a constant comparative system, I first developed 55 codes. After the initial coding/analysis session, these were then collapsed into 30 codes, in which I paired codes and eliminated irrelevant codes. For example, I collapsed "racial/ethnic experiences" and "teacher/professional experiences" into "identity experiences". The individuals in this study are both Chicana and teachers. Within the context of this study it is impossible to disengage one identity from the other. They are separate and apart of each other at the same time. I also eliminated codes that I did not find relevant within the oral history interviews.

Next, I refined the 30 codes based on the definition of literacy events. During this process, the codes were broken down further into 15 codes in order to capture the situated nature of literacy. Thus, all of the patterns capture an aspect of cultural intuition and the participants as an individual and as part of a collective. These codes represent lived experiences as literacy events and are meant to be read in

conjunction with the concepts of "lived experiences" and "theories of the flesh" - real patterns that impact the bodies, minds, and souls of Chicana teachers.

The 15 codes for the oral history interviews are listed as follows:

1. Schooling experiences (K – 20+)
2. Familial experiences (as child and adult)
3. Professional experiences
4. Language experiences
5. Identity experiences (racial, ethnic, class, gender, teacher/professional)
6. Mothering experiences
7. Mentorship experiences
8. Leadership experiences
9. Ethnic Studies experiences
10. School/classroom experiences
11. Culturally relevant pedagogies
12. Consciousness
13. Student-teacher relations
14. People of Color relations (especially African American and Latina/o),
15. Teaching commitment (moral, political, spiritual).

Ethnographic Classroom Observations & Fieldnotes

I coded the ethnographic classroom observations and artifacts for literacy ideologies and practices that demonstrated: (1) multiliteracies, (2) critical literacies, (3) sociocultural learning theory (i.e. Third Space), and (4) culturally relevant practices. The first stage of coding recorded the types of literacy modalities the teacher used and/or encouraged in her classroom. The second stage described the type of interaction occurring within one of these meaning-making design elements through a culturally relevant and critical literacy framework, and lastly applied a sociocultural lens to explain literacy learning

The following six elements from multiliteracies scholarship describe the codes I used for capturing multimodal classroom literacy practices. I provide brief

examples to accompany these codes, which have been developed among scholars in the Multiliteracies field (see *Table 7*).

Table 7: Codes for Literacy Modalities in Classroom Practice

Design Element	Classroom Examples	Literature
Linguistic	Reading, writing, speaking; discourse; fanfiction; digital storytelling	Banda, 2003; Chandler-Olcott & Mahar, 2003; Grabill & Hicks, 2005; Gee, 1996; Martinez, Orellana, Pacheco, Carbone, 2009
Visual	Posters in the room; writing on the board; critical visual media skills; watching film	Callow, 2006; Golden, 2007; Kline, Stewart, Murphy, 2006; Share, 2009
Audio	Verbal directions; lecture; student conversations; critical audio media skills; listening to spoken word/storytelling	Camangian, 2008; Fisher, 2005
Gestural	Body language; voice (i.e. perspective, tone of voice, volume of voice); watching spoken word/storytelling	Camangian, 2008; Fisher, 2005; Stein & Slonimsky, 2006
Spacial	Placement of objects (desks, tables, chairs, teacher desk, student work, posters) and in media (format)	Share, 2009
Multimodal	Multi-tasking across other designs.	Beach & O'Brien, 2008; Camangian, 2008; Clancy & Lowrie, 2002

I employed culturally relevant and critical literacy frameworks as a basis for the codes to describe classroom pedagogy. From this literature, six different codes surfaced. I included concrete examples to illustrate how such practices are visible within a classroom.

Table 8: Codes for Culturally Relevant & Critical Literacy Pedagogies

Design Element	Classroom Examples	Literature
Builds from prior knowledge (students' funds of knowledge).	Builds from students' backgrounds: ▪ Racial/Ethnic. ▪ Cultural. ▪ Class. ▪ Gender/Sexuality. ▪ Home/Familial.	Dutro, Kazemi, Balf, Lin, 2008; Irizarry & Gonzalez, 2007; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Moll; Morell, 2002
Holds high academic expectations.	Rigorous academic work as demonstrated by asset-based comments/conversation with constructive, honest criticism. Attentive to student outcomes.	Kana'iaupuni & Jensen, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994
Offers appropriate academic support.	▪ Scaffolds. ▪ Provides pathways for students to utilize. resources. ▪ Skill-building activities.	Ladson-Billings, 1994; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002
Reshapes curriculum to build on students' funds of knowledge.	Reciprocal student-teacher relationships.	Gay, 2010; Hill, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1994
Establishes relationships with students and their homes.	▪ Home visits. ▪ School visits. ▪ Community visits. ▪ Direct communication between teacher and families.	Ladson-Billings, 1994; Valenzuela, 1999
Cultivates students' critical consciousness regarding power relations.	Multi-tasking across other designs.	Freire, 1970; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Stovall, 2006

3-Stage Data Analysis

A 3-stage data analysis procedure worked to ensure the theoretical co-construction of knowledge with Chicana teachers, or member-checking (Malagon, et al., 2009; Perez Huber, 2010). The first stage included transcribing, and sharing the transcriptions with the participants. At this point, participants could make edits to the documents. Next, I conducted a preliminary analysis using the abductive approach described in the previous section. In the second state, I wrote the initial

portraits for each teacher and shared these drafts with the informants. Again, they could make any edits that they saw fit. The feedback from the participants helped me to refine the codes, the meaning-making surrounding the codes, thus providing an opportunity for member checking. Lastly, I used the feedback that I received from the teachers to shape and create the final portrait (see *Figure 2*).

Figure 2: Three-stage Data Analysis Model with Chicana Teachers

CHAPTER 7

THE PORTRAITS

This chapter offers a glimpse into the lives of three Chicana teachers through individual portraits. I begin here with a brief introduction of these three storytellers. Each story that they share is embedded within a larger understanding of the teaching profession, society, demographic shifts, and culture.

The sample in this study is multigenerational, from beginning teachers in their 20s to retired teachers in their 70s. There is great variability in the experiences of the participants and common themes among ethnic, gender, class, and generational lines. Some of this will be discussed more fully within the implications chapter.

The portraits in this chapter focus on three veteran Chicana teachers who are currently teaching, and have been doing so for more than 12 years. This is a significant characteristic, given the high percentages of new teachers who leave the profession within the first 5 years (Darling-Hammond, 2007). As veteran Chicana teachers, these women provide insight into how to retain Teachers of Color who describe political clarity in their decision to teach.

The three portraits illustrate the varied experiences of women who share an ethnic identity and also include a richly painted neighborhood. The attention to physical and demographic detail chronicles a collective account of human migration and meaning within a specific socio-historical context. I also sketch an outline of federal educational policy, which finds its way into these stories through classroom and school settings.

I have written the portraits as glances into individual lives amid a teaching experience in the second largest national public school system. We start in East Los Angeles with the portrait of Ms. Sotomayor, a 22-year veteran teacher, who will eventually lead us into an elementary school in Huntington Park. From here we turn directly west to face South Central Los Angeles, the home of Ms. Romero. The 12-year veteran teacher was raised and teaches in this neighborhood. Next, we head northward to the roses of Pasadena where we find Ms. Luna Martínez who has lived, taught, and raised generations of children for the past 30 years.

Each portrait illustrates culturally relevant classroom practices through the creation of 3rd space (Gutiérrez, et al., 1999; Gutiérrez, et al., 1997). Embedded within the classroom are stories the women tell of family and school. I describe these life moments as "literacy events" – observable episodes where literacy has a role within a social context (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Ms. Sotomayor takes us through her journey as a reader while demonstrating how she includes culturally relevant texts in a 5th grade classroom. In the second portrait, Ms. Romero identifies the demographic shifts of South Central as part of her family's migration story. She offers English Language Arts curricula approaches to discuss neighborhood dynamics with her Black and Latina/o high school students. Ms. Luna Martínez, in the last portrait, describes her own experiences in a newly desegregated high school and suggests how those events influence her teaching of Mexican-American culture in a 7th grade English Language Arts classroom.

We will begin here with the stories of these three veteran Chicana teachers.

Ms. Sotomayor

I think it's important to teach in the community with Latino kids because they need to see you. They need to see other Latinos in these positions (Interview, 5/8/2012).

Ms. Sotomayor is a veteran teacher with 22 years of experience in Los Angeles public schools. She stands tall at 5'8" and wears her dark brown hair long - well past her shoulders. She identifies herself as "Latina" and "Mexican American" and teaches at a school where 98% of the student body also identifies as "Latina/o". At the time of our meeting, Ms. Sotomayor was teaching at an elementary school located in Huntington Park, CA. The school sits near City Hall, a beautifully designed Spanish colonial style government building with a red tile roof. Huntington Park today is a predominantly Latina/o community with a mix of working-class and middle class residents.

The community is nestled south of downtown Los Angeles among other working-class communities that developed as streetcar suburbs in the early 20th century. These communities provided homes for factory workers from the rapidly growing industries located southeast of downtown Los Angeles. The city of Vernon provides the northern border to Huntington Park; to the east reside the cities of Bell, Cudahy, and Maywood; the southern part of the city is bordered by South Gate; and Alameda Street divides the western portion of the city from South Los Angeles.

These surrounding communities once made up a contingency of streetcar suburbs that were populated by mostly white, working-class residents employed by industrial factories. Alameda Street to the west and Slauson Avenue to the south once marked the official segregation boundaries between African American and White communities. A series of events like the loss of industrial factory jobs, the rise

of cheap global labor markets and neo-liberal economic polices, wide-scale unemployment, concentrated poverty, the Watts (1965) and Los Angeles (1992) Uprisings, and the constant influx of Latina/o immigrants drastically changed the demography of the white street car suburbs into largely Latina/o communities. Today, Huntington Park is home to a diverse community of Latina/o residents who are mostly of Mexican and Central American heritage.

During the 2011-2012 school year, Ms. Sotomayor's elementary school, one of the eight elementary schools in the community, was undergoing changes among staff. A group of seven teachers had written a plan to begin a new school under the Los Angeles Unified District (LAUSD) Public School Choice 3.0 plan. These teachers, which included Ms. Sotomayor, had worked all year on designing the new school. The design team's new school plan included: a dual-immersion Spanish-English program based on Reading and Writing Workshop principles as well as whole child approaches to schooling.

Ms. Sotomayor is a serious, spontaneous, creative, and humorous teacher who sets high expectations for herself as a teacher as well as for her colleagues. She takes her work very seriously - in fact she is deadly serious about her work, demonstrated through her classroom practices and leadership within the design team. At the same time, her approach remains vibrant and alive as she engages students with creative reading aloud voices and student-centered class projects. She will tell colleagues to give "blood, sweat, and tears" for their students and an hour later will be engaged in a student-designed film based on Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax*.

Ms. Sotomayor speaks honestly about her continuous professional development as a teacher through the different workshops she elects to attend, which she believes improves her classroom practice. She is able to laugh as she remembers her first year of teaching in a 1st grade classroom.

> I was so bad in the beginning. Horrible. I had no idea what I was doing and I remember one time the assistant principal coming in and sitting in the back to observe me. I was sitting with one student textbook in the front and trying to read it out loud and holding it up so the kids can see. One kid is crawling under the desks. And I'm ignoring him because I don't know what to do with him. The assistant principal calls me into her office and goes, "ok, you need some help" (Ms. Sotomayor laughs).
>
> Interview, 6/12/12

During that meeting, the assistant principal advised Ms. Sotomayor to concentrate each year in a specific content area. This advice she took to heart and each year honed an elementary multiple subjects curriculum. This is a practice that Ms. Sotomayor has maintained throughout her teaching career. During 2011 – 2012, Ms. Sotomayor' focus was technology in the classroom. She attended a few workshops that addressed using technology in the classroom and also wrote small grants in order to fund technological opportunities (i.e. iPads, digital recording cameras). Some ways that Ms. Sotomayor incorporates technology in the classroom is by: writing grants to access technological materials; having students use iPads to read; and teaching students to use and present with Prezi (an online presentation tool) for a culminating project – a student presentation intended for an audience of the donors who funded the class's Mexican-American leadership field trips.

Ms. Sotomayor depicts the current environment at the elementary school within the Magnet program where she teaches, as a collegial space. Here, teachers share a similar instructional philosophy. She credits a former principal, Mr.

Gonzalez, for cultivating among teachers an instructional philosophy and practices while facilitating a distributive leadership work atmosphere. Central to Mr. Gonzalez's approach was encouraging and funding the teaching staff to attend professional development at Teachers College, Columbia University. Ms. Sotomayor's introduction to Reading and Writing Circles is central to this professional development and is also the backbone of the philosophy and practices of the new school that Ms. Sotomayor was instrumental in beginning. She describes the mentorship she received from Mr. Gonzales and working on the design team below:

> Mr. Gonzalez was amazing…He knew a lot about instruction, so we learned about Read-Alouds, we learned about the workshop model, he sent a lot of us to New York, so it was a lot of stuff like that. He was here 7 years and taught us a lot about instruction. So we decided, you know what, let's make this plan with the best instructional ideas that we can… It's about integrating Reader's Workshop, Writer's Workshop, math problem solving, hands-on Science, full inclusion for special ed, incorporating technology into your teaching and dealing with the whole child. So, it's about know that you also have to deal with the emotional and social aspects.
>
> Interview, 6/21/12

Ms. Sotomayor's daily classroom practices are reflective of these instructional strategies. For example, Ms. Sotomayor follows a daily protocol that includes Read-Alouds. This consists of a 20-minute block every day after lunch and recess; students sit in the reading section of the room on a mat, vacuumed everyday by one of their peers, surrounded by 4 bookshelves. The students all have copies of the Read-Aloud book and are instructed to look at their books while Ms. Sotomayor reads out loud from her tall teacher stool-chair. Ms. Sotomayor uses an animated voice as she reads out loud; sometimes it drops to a bare whisper spoken very slowly while other times it is high pitched as she rushes the words out of her mouth.

Breaks in the book naturally lead to student-centered questions, discussions, predictions, and comments about the characters, plot, and style. Many times, students blurt out exactly what they are thinking or feeling about a situation.

During one class, the students were reading *Maniac Magee*, a book that explores the themes of racism and homelessness through the lens of an orphaned boy living in a fictional small Pennsylvania town. This book is popular within elementary school curricula, and has been used in several scholarly studies, which have investigated the relationship of children to racial identity and reading (Enisco, 1994).

In the following example, Ms. Sotomayor can be seen as engaging with critical race literacy in how she prompts students to discuss the current nature of racism in today's society through the use of a Third Space filled with Nepantla-like tension. She is able to create this by building upon students' lived experiences and "funds of knowledge".

Ms. Sotomayor had just read aloud a part in *Maniac Magee*, where the main protagonist, Maniac, a white 10-year old, and the novel's antagonist, Mars Bars, a Black, 10-year old, become embroiled in a fight sparked by racial tension. Ms. Sotomayor, during a chapter break, asked the students if racism still occurred. Some students reported yes and others no. One young girl with long dark hair and deeply brown skin with tiny painted flowers on her acrylic nails, replied emphatically, "yes, but not in the same way". She described a scene in the park that she witnessed where "Mexican" kids had spit in the face of a "Black" kid. While she did not give

specific details of the event, it was clear that she had identified this scene with racial tension.

The students immediately started discussing with their peers around them about what they thought of the incident. Ms. Sotomayor looked on and allowed the students to discuss for a moment; she then gathered the students back to the whole group Reading-Aloud activity in order to finish the chapter before Readers Workshop, another daily peer-led, reading practice. While Ms. Sotomayor offered no comment on the scenario that the young woman described, she gave students time in order to discuss with their own peers how they read this racial incident. It was clear from the students' immediate response that they had a lot to say on the subject. Ms. Sotomayor took note and listened as their excited 4th grade voices reported an analysis of the situation. In a timely way, Ms. Sotomayor cut their conversation off in order to come to an appropriate stopping place in the book in order to begin Readers' Workshop.

The scene demonstrated from the *Maniac Magee* Read Aloud suggests the workings of a Third Space (Gutiérrez, et al., 1999, Gutiérrez, et al., 1997). The official space is orchestrated by the teacher and follows a traditional schooling process where teachers ask the questions and students respond accordingly. In many classrooms, certain topics are off-limits, and in many classrooms "race" is a topic that is not discussed. In this classroom "race" is welcomed and encouraged. In this sense, the classroom operates as a third space in which topics that revolve around "race", class, gender, and power relations are encouraged both in the formal curriculum and informal classroom discussions. Discussing "race" from a critical

perspective is not a "normative practice" of official school curricula; using English Language Arts texts, such as Maniac Magee, however, is a normative practice. Thus Ms. Sotomayor's direct question about racism and it's role in society today propels the class into a third space in which "race" and racism are discussed from the students' own lived experiences. Moreover, the conversations that erupted after the student's lived experience was permitted as analytical material, created a third space both in terms of content and format.

Ms. Sotomayor's reading approach is deliberate. She makes it a point to choose books that are appropriate for her students' age and reading level, are culturally relevant, and provide opportunities to discuss power relations in society. The literature review has provided detailed scholarly examples on the importance of culture in schools and culturally relevant and responsive practices. The examples highlighted in this portrait are evidence of Ms. Sotomayor's culturally relevant practice.

Ms. Sotomayor notes, however, that the school and district do not support culturally relevant teaching. She reflects on the power of the individual teacher in providing those resources and suggests that it is because of her own experiences as a Chicana/Latina student that she makes sure her students have access to this type of curriculum.

> I don't think the school or district in any way pushes or even supports the teaching of Mexican-American history or culture, I think it's up to the teacher, which is why it's so important to have teachers with that background and the understanding of how important that is.
>
> Interview, 6/21/12

Ms. Sotomayor demonstrates how this is possible through a conversation between Ms. Sotomayor and another Design Team teacher, who was serving as the curriculum coordinator for the new school. Ms. Sotomayor put in an order for classroom sets of particular novels for the upcoming school year at the new school. Ms. Sotomayor placed an order for classroom sets of book titles by Mexican-American authors Pam Muñoz Ryan and Gary Soto. Ms. Sotomayor noted that she chose those novels because, in her perspective, they deal with a variety of themes in the lives of her Latina/o 4th graders. She concludes that her choice of these specific reading materials comes from personal experiences as a Mexican-American, Latina student without access to culturally relevant books.

> You know, which is why, when our coordinator asked us, well what core lit books do you want, I told her let's get *Tequila Worm, Becoming Naomi Leon, Esperanza Rising*, you know, just different books that the kids could relate to more. You know instead of just *Johnny Termain* which none of the kids relate to! (Laugh.) Those are the books we have in our core lit. You know what I mean, so it's like just trying even to address those kinds of things and trying to get resources that deal with the issues that they deal with everyday…where they can say, "oh yeah, I remember doing that" or "yeah, my father does that too". I think that's very strong for kids to have that connection. I wish growing up that I would have had more books like this.
>
> Interview, 5/8/2012

Books in Ms. Sotomayor classroom have many different roles. They act as an introduction to basic literacy skills that 4th grades must master according to California State Standards[40]. Additionally, books act as a way into the cultural, social, linguistic lives of students and seek to bring their experiences into the classroom. Book themes also allow Ms. Sotomayor to address important societal concerns, like racism, from a literary perspective.

[40] See Common Core State Standards Initiative website: http://www.corestandards.org/.

> I always attack it [racism] from a literary point of view. Like when we're reading a book and the theme naturally comes up. It's a good way to talk about it with kids. So I've read *Esperanza Rising*, which is really good and that talks about racism and even just I think the struggles within the main character herself because she at one time was a rich and powerful Mexican young girl in her home and then they lose everything and their family becomes migrant workers in California. And what she had to deal with and the struggles within herself of having to deal with that.
>
> Interview, 6/21/12

While Ms. Sotomayor starts out describing how she addresses racism, she includes a class analysis as well through this literary example. Specifically she points to the downward economic and social mobility of a "rich powerful Mexican young girl" from Aguascalientes whose family loses everything and becomes migrant workers in California. Ms. Sotomayor also identifies the protagonist's internal struggles within herself as an important theme that the students will bring up. Teaching *Esperanza Raising* centralizes Mexican and Mexican-American experiences during post-revolutionary Mexico and the U.S. Great Depression and provides a culturally relevant text for Latina/o students[41]. Furthermore, the use of culturally relevant texts allows Ms. Sotomayor an entry point for many third space classroom discussions as evidenced by the classroom example above. Thus, Ms. Sotomayor uses books as a way to merge both official and unofficial spaces into her classroom creating a hybrid/third space culture.

Ms. Sotomayor's understanding of the need to find a bridge between the realities that students inhabit stems, to some extent, from her own experiences as a student. She grew up in East Los Angeles and attended a Catholic School in the area until she reached high school. Upon reaching high school, Ms. Sotomayor took

particular note of her single mother's economic sacrifices for her children's Catholic education; she told her mom that she could attend a local high school, seeing that it was a 5-minute walk from the house. She attended Garfield High School, a historical school given its prominent role in the 1968 East LA school blowouts. She describes her experiences growing up in East LA as being surrounded by other Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, and Latinas/os. In response to understanding her ethnic identity, Ms. Sotomayor recalls:

> Growing up I was very not Latina, or Mexican-American. It's just part of who you are, because you're growing up and in East LA and everybody is [Mexican/Latina/o]. There is no difference.
>
> Interview, 5/8/2012

Ms. Sotomayor however marks a great difference between growing up in East Los Angeles, attending area schools, and then moving to West Los Angeles to attend UCLA for college.

> Once you go to UCLA, there is a huge difference. Now all of a sudden, it's wait a minute, who are you? People look at you differently. You are expected to be in certain groups, like CHEP or MECHA. Even though growing up, that was not really a part of me. It was just everybody is the same and there's no big difference. UCLA was sort of a wake up call like, oh ok. So it made me identify myself more as a Latina.
>
> Interview, 5/8/2012

It is not surprising that books hold central prominence in the classroom of Ms. Sotomayor. As a young student, a teacher who gave her a book one day while she was cleaning out her classroom first introduced Ms. Sotomayor to reading. From that moment on, Ms. Sotomayor describes that she never stopped reading and would read anything she could get her hands on – "my life was basically books".

She frequently tells her students the story of the only time she was ever sent to the principal's office - for reading too much! The principal asked her to please put

the book down once in awhile and maybe make friends. Ms. Sotomayor still laughs at that memory and at her candid response of, “why?”. While she continued with her normal reading patterns, Ms. Sotomayor recounts the moment when her 4th grade teacher gave her a book.

> My teacher, Ms. Apple, asked me if I wanted a book, and I said, “sure”. So she gave me an anthology. You know those old anthologies schools are always throwing away? But to a kid, you never realize how much it means to them. I was like, “oh my God, a teacher gave me a book”. So I went home and I started reading, and reading, and reading. So that's what put me on the path to reading. Now I know that we give those books away, just to get rid of them. But at the time, I was like a teacher gave me a book. I'm just like so enthralled by having this free book from the teacher. That's what sort of put me on that path.
>
> Interview, 5/8/2012

Ms. Sotomayor’s memory of Ms. Apple giving her an old anthology left a lasting impression on her identity as a student, as a teacher, and as a reader. In the way she recollects the moment, it was as if the teacher had given Ms. Sotomayor pure gold, when in actuality Ms. Sotomayor realizes that she was probably trying to clean out her classroom. Ms. Sotomayor identifies this experience as putting her on the path of reading. Evidently, this transfers over into her classroom reading practices.

In observing her classroom, it is clear that Ms. Sotomayor values books and reading. Each day after the Read Alouds, students gather in small book clubs of 2 to 5 students for Readers’ Workshops (comparable to Literature Circles). The students named the clubs themselves: “the reading gamers”, “the reading dorks”, “the reading peeps”, and “the zombie readers”. The reading clubs would choose a book based on their reading levels and read the book aloud to one another. Additionally each day someone within the small group had a role to complete to demonstrate their

progress for that day (illustrator, writer, reader, etc…). Ms. Sotomayor as a teacher concerned with spatial literacy reserved an entire section of a classroom wall to display student work from Readers' Workshop. One can see from the figure the different books clubs within the 4th grade classroom, the various book titles they are reading, and their most current daily assignment/role (see *Appendix 7*).

I focus in particular on the reading aspect of Ms. Sotomayor classroom, as throughout her life history interview, she identifies reading as a central component of her academic, social and family life. As mentioned prevoiusly, Ms. Apple led Ms. Sotomayor to her reading path by giving her a free book from her classroom. As Ms. Sotomayor recounts her reading path, she shares that as a young girl, her mother would give her $2 to take the bus to the Montebello library and buy $1 tacos with her best friend.

> When my mom gave me two bucks, I was like "YES"! We're going to go to the Library. So we would take the bus all the way to Montebello. Then we would save $1 so we could buy tacos at Taco Bell because it was cheap so we could eat, both of us. Then go to the library and stock up on books. We would walk home because we didn't have any more money. That was our big thing to do.
>
> Interview, 5/8/2012

While in this instance Ms. Sotomayor describes the social practice of going to the library as a big event out in the neighborhood with her best friend, reading also played an intimate role in her family life. Reading for Ms. Sotomayor also became an escape from her home life reality.

> That's all I did was read. So even though my mom and dad were alcoholics at the time and they were in their own world, I could get into my own world just by reading and just withdraw from all of that.
>
> Interview, 5/8/2012

From the time Ms. Sotomayor was a child, she developed a deep emotional connection to books and readers. It formed a central part of her social life with her best friend and in her family life as books became her refuge to escape from turmoil associated with alcoholism. From her own experience, she intimately shared the power of participating in these imaginary worlds. As a teacher, she takes a literary approach to social issues and this impacts her pedagogy in meaningful ways. Her sense of social consciousness and the impact of power relations on the lives of her students influences a literacy approach that bridges her love and intimate relationships with books and her political philosophy. Her literacy pedagogy emerges from her own powerful connection to literacy.

Ms. Sotomayor is a teacher who employs culturally relevant practices with her students by choosing books that speak to her students' ethnic backgrounds while also grounding them in the students' "funds of knowledge". She holds deep connections to print-based literacy, given her personal experiences as an elementary student. Her analysis of power relations in society demands that she bring themes of inequity into her classroom. Her specific approach requires her to do this through a literary point of view through the books that the chooses for her Latina/o students.

Furthermore, she creates opportunities for students to view themselves as leaders of the community. As mentioned previously, Ms. Sotomayor took her 5th grade class on field trips to explore Mexican-American leadership in Los Angeles. They visited the home of Pio Pico, the last Mexican governor of Alta California, the Plaza de Cultura y Artes, and the Getty House, the home of former Los Angeles

mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa. The culminating project was a Prezi presentation that focused on these trips and also asked students to see themselves as leaders. Ms. Sotomayor elaborates here:

> The last section of their Prezi was how do you see yourself as a leader or taking leadership roles either now or in the future. It was interesting for some of the kids, where they do see themselves as leaders or other kids were like I don't see myself as a leader. But at least it's something that will serve as a catalyst for their thinking. Just to have them see the possibilities that are out there.
>
> Interview, 6/21/2012

Ms. Sotomayor highlights the political importance of leadership, particularly in regards to immigration. During the course of this study, President Obama announced a new immigration policy that allows undocumented young people who: were brought to the United States before age 16, have lived in the U.S. for 5 consecutive years, and demonstrate activity within education or the military, to be granted, "a discretionary grant of relief"[42]. Ms. Sotomayor discussed the importance of having students understand such political policy in order to directly offer understanding and clarification around current immigration reform. She cites immigration as the number one issue impacting her students. She shared:

> One of my students at the very beginning of the year, her father was deported. It was very difficult for them. The mom came in here and she was crying. She said, "talk to Elena, if she needs anything I want you to understand why she's feeling the way that she is". For their family, it's just

[42] Ms. Sotomayor is discussing DACA, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which President Obama signed, as a memo, on June 15, 2012. This calls for deferred action, or a discretionary grant of relief by the Department of Homeland Security. Individuals who receive "deferred action status" can apply for employment authorization and are in the U.S. under "color of law". There is no direct path from "deferred action" to "lawful permanent resident" or "citizen". It can also be revoked at any time. It costs $465, due to application and biometrics (i.e. identification systems, like driver's licenses, passport, etc.) fees. This is different from the DREAM Act. Deferred action is temporary and does not offer a path to citizenship. The DREAM Act seeks to offer legal status to certain individuals (see http://immigrationequality.org/issues/immigration-basics/daca/).

> the three of them. The father was the main breadwinner. And so it, I mean this is something that has affected Elena all year, because he's still not back.
>
> Interview, 6/21/2012

This is a tragic moment in one of Ms. Sotomayor's students' lives. Ms. Sotomayor's particular approach to teaching in her 5th grade classroom has indicated to her student, Elena, and Elena's family that they can share this type of information with a Mexican-American teacher. The literature that Ms. Sotomayor explores in her classroom has themes of migration, separation of family, and resiliency within a Mexican cultural context. One may make connections between Ms. Sotomayor's personal experience with literature as a survival strategy and the ways that the literature in her class may serve the same purpose for her own students.

Ms. Romero

For me to own Chicana meant I was owning a political stance about being an agent of change (Interview, 12/14/11).

Ms. Romero is a veteran teacher from South Central Los Angles who teaches in South Central Los Angeles; she has 12 years of experience in San Francisco and Los Angeles public schools. She is a National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) and identifies as Chicana "because it's not only a reflection of my Mexican background and growing up and being born here, but it's also a political term. For me to own Chicana meant I was owning a political stance about being an agent of change" (Interview, 12/14/11). As a change agent, Ms. Romero makes conscious choices about the curriculum she presents and the approach she takes with her Latina/o and African American students. Ms. Romero, however, is quick to point out that being the best teacher isn't enough to create equitable life opportunities for low-income, Students of Color. "We need to think beyond issue based to larger broader based community", she fervently states (Interview, 7/26/2012).

Ms. Romero' role as a change agent is evident in her classroom practices, as well as in her leadership role as a design team member of a new school. Her development as a Chicana change agent occurred in college through her exposure to Ethnic Studies, "I did go to UCLA and I had the luxury of having classes about myself and my history and being in spaces with other Chicanos that were very much exploring or had already started that exploration" (Interview, 12/14/11). At the time of our meeting, Ms. Romero was working as an English Language Arts teacher at Manual Arts High School, located on Vermont Avenue in South Central Los

Angeles, less than a mile south of the University of Southern California. This was her fifth year teaching at the school.

She describes her early experiences at Manual Arts as isolating. She had already been teaching for 6 years before in San Francisco Unified and felt that people just assumed that she knew what she was doing. These feelings of isolation, however, changed as she began to meet more teachers who would come to form the design team for the new school that Ms. Romero worked to open for the 2012 – 2013 school year.

In this passage, Ms. Romero discusses meeting change-agent teachers and their process of opening up a new school, Augustus Hawkins High School.

> It wasn't until I met some of the people on our design team that I was like oh, this is totally what I have been wanting and thinking about. We started writing plans and thinking about this as a real possibility. We were like if I'm going to put all my energy, it's going hard or just go home. It was I'm going to do it, and if that means it blows up in my face then, sorry. If they don't accept our plan or if something doesn't work out along the way, at least I went for it. I can live with myself in saying at least I tried my best to put this into practice. And so we did and it helped that the things that we were doing, I wasn't doing by myself. I was doing it with these really amazing people that had this vision as well. But it's been crazy hard.
>
> Interview, 6/12/12

In the description of building the new school, Ms. Romero notes her sense of commitment and community. She stresses the importance of not working alone and of giving unwavering focus for a new school, that even if it had its own shortcomings. Augustus Hawkins High School was officially recognized in a December 13th, 2012 ribbon cutting ceremony that included parents, local politicians, students, parents, teachers, and the three school principals at Hawkins

(field notes, 12/13/12). The new school is located about two miles south of Manual Arts and contains three small schools.

The demography of both Manual Arts and Augustus Hawkins mirror that of South Central Los Angeles, once a predominantly working-class African American community, and now a predominantly working-class Latina/o community. During the 2010 – 2011 school year, Manual Arts reported a total of 3,458 students with 82.4% of all students identifying as Latina/o, and 16.7% of all students identifying as African American (CBEDS, 2011). Over 90% of students qualified for free or reduced meals (School Fiscal Services Division, 2011). In the opening year of Augustus Hawkins, within the small school where Ms. Romero works, 79.9% of all students identified as Latina/o, and 18.7% of all students identified as African American. At least 70.7% of students qualified for free or reduced meals, a preliminary percentage at the time of the report's publication (Los Angeles Unified School District, Office of Data and Accountability, 2012).

The history of South Central Los Angeles, also known as South Los Angeles, is dynamic and diverse, much like the people who have migrated and lived within its borders. A typical stereotype of South Central emerges from popular movies such as *Boys in the Hood* and the media coverage of the 1992 Los Angeles Uprising, which portray the area as violent and gang-ridden. Despite such images, South Central remains a vibrant, culturally rich community that is home to migrants from the U.S., Mexico, and Central America.

South Los Angeles borders Compton to the southeast and Gardena to the southwest. Inglewood lies directly west and to the north is downtown Los Angeles.

Across Alameda Boulevard to the east reside the streetcar suburbs of Vernon and Huntington Park. During the early part of the 20th century, South Los Angeles was home to a mix of affluent and middle-class African Americans, Mexican-Americans, Asian Americans, working-class whites, and immigrants from Mexico and Europe. The Great Depression and World War II era saw millions of African Americans leave the Southern part of U.S. to escape Jim Crow segregation, racial violence, and poverty in search of work and more racially hospitable laws and lands.

Many working and middle-class African Americans poured into Los Angeles. Due to housing restrictions, these migrants found themselves within the increasingly over-crowded neighborhoods of South Central Los Angeles. Restrictive covenants forced African Americans to limit their housing options to a small area bordered by the streets of Slauson Avenue, Alameda Boulevard, Washington Boulevard, and Main Street. After the Shelley v. Kraemer (1948) Supreme Court decision, African Americans began purchasing homes outside of this area. They were met with a torrent of racial violence from white segregationists. The years that followed saw most of the white residents leave South Central and the surrounding areas.

Much like the community of Huntington Park[43], profiled earlier, a series of events, like the loss of manufacturing union jobs that employed working- and middle-class African Americans, in addition to unemployment, poverty, and the subsequent Watts (1965) and Los Angeles (1992) Uprisings, drastically lowered housing prices. The rise of labor demands in low-wage, semi-skilled jobs as well as

[43] Augustus Hawkins and Miles Elementary School are just 4.4 miles directly east from each other. One just needs to walk or drive east and cross Alameda Boulevard.

economic and political conditions in Mexico and Central America saw a great influx of people from these regions migrating to Los Angeles, beginning in the late 1960's. The low cost of housing, in addition to the number of home vacancies left by more affluent African Americans and whites moving out of South Central, lead to the demographic shift of this area from a predominantly African American community to now a majority Latina/o community.

This has not occurred without tensions. Many news stories have carried reports of Black and Brown conflict in the South Central neighborhoods (Banks & Shields, 2005). Despite these very real racial and economic tensions, other media sources address the ways that Black and Brown communities are living together, learning from each other, and developing an ethnic enclave that combine many different cultures (Jones, 1992; Tobar, 1992). These demographic shifts are central to Ms. Romero's classroom pedagogy as a home-grown[44] teacher.

Within this reflection, Ms. Romero describes how she speaks with her students about the demographic shifts within South Central and the authentic tensions that have accompanied these changes.

> I tell them about my experience. I said we were the family that came in that started shifting the percentages. When my parents moved here, what was it? Twenty-two years ago. You could see the Latino families moving in with us and after us and maybe right before us. And changing that percentage from primarily African American to now we're like half and half. And now we're more. So I asked them, why do you think that happened? And they're like people started moving out. And I said yeah, people started moving out, and people started moving in. I said but it's not about trying to push somebody

[44] Home-grown teachers are individuals who "work as educators in the communities in which they were raised and educated" (Irizarry, 2007). In chapter 2, the literature review, I describe the particular attributes of teachers of color who are also home-grown teachers. These include: relating in ways to students of color, cultural insight into students of color, and having intimate knowledge of the material conditions of students of color (Jordan 2003; Nieto, 1999).

> out. That wasn't my parents' intention. My parents' intention was we finally get to buy something. It was an opportunity and so anyway, that's how I bring in those conversations. If people are aware, which most people that work with community groups in the area, they're aware of the tensions for sure because you have to be because that what's going on.
>
> Interview, 6/12/2012

As a home-grown teacher, Ms. Romero is acutely aware of the different narratives that have accompanied the demographic shifts in South LA. She discusses the "pushing out" narrative that many feel is happening as more Latinas/os move into the area. At the same time, Ms. Romero also addresses the role of political influences and affordable home-ownership. This becomes real for students as Ms. Romero personalizes this historical change through her own experience. The stories she shares about growing up in South Central are not fictional, but rather are her own lived experiences.

Ms. Romero, as a change agent in her community, is not content with simply naming the changes that are taking place within local society. She extends this conversation more globally to other situations. For example, Ms. Romero describes how she continues discussing interracial relations through a very specific lesson in the English Language Arts perspective unit, in which she employs a critical media analysis of Hurricane Katrina, in order to have students consider their own bias and prejudice about their Black and Brown neighbors in South Central. She describes the image that she uses in this activity here (see *Appendix 9*).

> It shows two pictures of people in New Orleans getting the food, right? In one caption it says that they are looters taking and pillaging. In the next picture it says that they are finding food. One picture is with a person of color and the other one is not. So we talk about that. Why is that assumption made? Why are those words used? And they get that.
>
> Interview, 6/12/2012

While many teachers would have stopped the conversation there, as it appeared clear from formative assessment that students understood the bias within the media reportage of Hurricane Karina, Ms. Romero does not. She develops students' critical literacies further by asking students to read the word (the newspaper captions) and then read the world. First, in the context of New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina, and next in the context of their own world, South Central Los Angeles.

> And then when we transfer that to our world. And they're like oh, but that really is true. It's true that Latinos will say that Black people don't work. And we're hard-working and this and that. Or that someone else will say why don't they stay in their country? So wait a minute, so you're telling me that we just say this and that and certain people are assuming certain things and that we're not doing the same thing [as the media]? And so we get into it.
>
> Interview, 6/12/2012

Ms. Romero does not offer students a concrete solution for how to overcome such bias and stereotypes in their own world. Rather, she states, "we get into it". The "it" suggests the making of a Third Space (Gutiérrez, et al., 1999; Gutiérrez, et al., 1997). Ms. Romero's explicit facilitation leads students from a critical media analysis of Hurricane Katrina into a critical literacy analysis of race relations in South Central. While "race" is not a "normative schooling practice", and certainly not within the direct content of the students' neighborhood, South Central, in Ms. Romero's classroom, racial analysis is welcomed and centered in students' realities. Analysis of race, class, media, and power relations are encouraged within the formal English Language Arts curriculum regarding perspectives, which denotes a Third Space outside of "official" school practices.

Ms. Romero's simple statement of "we get into it" suggests that this conversation is filled with tension, conflict, and highlights the messy nature of Third

Space. Through Ms. Romero's guidance, the students' conversation, regarding the bias and stereotypes that students have about each other, is developed through their own lived experiences in the neighborhood. Rather than give students an answer for racial and ethnic relations in South Central, Ms. Romero allows students to speak from their reality, creating a Third Space, or Nepantla, where through the conflict of "multiple stances", opportunities for "confluence and transformation" are possible (Franquiz & de la Luz Reyes, 1998, p. 217). Ms. Romero's facilitation of Third Space demonstrates a culturally relevant approach, where students' lived experiences in their neighborhood become a unit of analysis into reading the world.

Ms. Romero is an English Language Arts teacher who has a great love for reading and books. She describes, "the reason I became a teacher and a teacher of English is because I do love to read and reading for me, when I was a little kid, was a way that I could get into different things and get away from other things" (Interview, 6/12/2012). In fact, Ms. Romero as a small child was a "readasaurus" [see *Appendix 8)*. This is a treasured artifact in the Romero household and one that Ms. Romero's mom has saved in her album of Ms. Romero's academic accomplishments.

Ms. Romero has maintained her practice of reading throughout her life and makes it a public affair. For example, Ms. Romero has a yearly practice of writing a letter to send to family and friends around the Christmas/New Year holidays.

> I publish a newsletter that I then send to all my friends, and I mail, like I still mail, it's still like a 2 to 3 pager. It has a lot of things that I do throughout the year, it speaks to the things that I like in my life and that is traveling, so a lot of the places that I've gone are in there and books. I send my recommended books that I read that year. Not all the books make it, just some of the ones that I thought were pretty good or that I even want to tell someone not to read.
>
> Interview, 6/12/2012

In this way, Ms. Romero is not only actively pursuing an active reading and writing agenda, but she is also sharing this with her friends to encourage their own reading agenda. As a change agent and someone who has political clarity in her life, Ms. Romero also gives suggestions to friends on what they should read and what they shouldn't read. In this way, one can see how Ms. Romero's love of reading crosses seamlessly throughout her professional and personal lives.

Ms. Romero also chooses books to read that are relevant to her students' lives. Even when she is initially hesitant about reading the book, if her students are going to read it, she pushes through it. "Hunger Games for example, I was kind of like, ok I'll read it maybe. And then I read it because I also want to read what I think my kids are reading or are going to read" (6/12/2012).

Her love to "get into different things" has accompanied Ms. Romero throughout life, demonstrated by her love for travel. As a young person, books gave Ms. Romero a passport into different worlds. As she got older, she began her international travels to places like Peru, Mexico, Colombia, and Italy. Ms. Romero combines her love of books and traveling through deliberate tourists stops. "I love libraries. So everywhere that I go, I visit libraries because they hold all these books. So in every country that I've been to, I've been to least one of their libraries" (Interview, 6/12/2012).

One daily practice that Ms. Romero employs in her classroom every day is sustained silent reading. She offers students a 20-minute period in the beginning of each English Language Arts class. In her classroom, she designates an area in the classroom as the library and houses books of various skill levels in the four shelves

that border the southeast corner of her classroom. Students who do not have books for their daily reading go back to the classroom to choose a book. Oftentimes, Ms. Romero will go to the shelves with students and help them to choose a book that is an appropriate level for their reading skills.

Ms. Romero is a teacher who is aware of her students' "funds of knowledge" and their skill levels in language arts in both English and Spanish. She values the importance of bilingualism, and frequently uses Spanish with her students. This was demonstrated to me one day as Ms. Romero was discussing a "do-now" with her Introduction to Social Work and Health Advocacy class, a foundational course for the Community Health Academy – the small school within Augustus Hawkins. Her Social Welfare class is a mix of 10th and 11th grade students. In this class, Ms. Romero has intentionally created bilingual learning opportunities.

Ms. Romero usually opens her classes with a do-now, a beginning activity to motivate learning by offering students an opportunity to activate their own learning process. As introductory exercise, it prompts students to actively engage in preparation for the daily lesson and usually occurs in the form of a short writing assignment, a response to a prompt in various written and/or oral forms, or a problem-solving activity. Ideally, the do-now will have a direct connection to the daily lesson and develop or build upon prior student knowledge.

The class is made up of 31 students; about two-thirds of the class are female and one-third are male students. Approximately 24 of the students are Latina/o, and 6 are African American. There do appear to be students who may identify with

two or more races in the class[45]. Among the students, there is a mix of linguistic repertoires from: dominant Spanish speakers, dominant English speakers, Language Heritage learners, Second Language learners, Chicana/o/Salvadoreño English speakers, Black English speakers, and Edited American English.

I recorded this moment for Ms. Romero on her iPhone. She had planned to highlight the ways that she includes English Language Learners into her classroom, through a bilingual approach, in a professional development session she was leading for her small school later on that month. I describe this video clip here.

In this clip, Ms. Romero is going over the do-now with her students. The students have had about 10 minutes to complete a T-chart, by writing down different factors that contribute to poverty, and factors that prevent/end poverty. The do-now is written in English and Spanish. There are some students who respond to the prompt in Spanish, and others that respond in English.

The following interaction will demonstrate ways that a bilingual approach is achieved through her do-now activity, and will demonstrate how this meets the learning needs of Second Language English Learners, Spanish Heritage Learners, and Second Language Spanish Learners, all of various skill levels. Ms. Romero employs a consistent classroom practice for choosing students to speak through the "popsicle method". Each of her students has a popsicle stick with their name written on it. Ms. Romero picks a popsicle stick in order to choose someone to answer a question or read out loud.

[45] I used phenotypic markers and cultural practices to delineate between Latina/o and African American students.

During this scene, Ms. Romero is going over the daily do-now by asking students to share factors that contribute and prevent poverty from their already completed t-chart. The students are seated in pods of about 4 to 5 students. Ms. Romero rummages through the stack of popsicles.

> Ms. Romero: Um, Hilda, ¿*qué más*[46]? Poverty makes us go like uh oh, we're more poor, or we're going to stop poverty.

Students turn their gaze towards Hilda. As Hilda begins speaking, more students turn to look at her.

> Hilda: *Lo que, lo que contribuye a la pobreza es desalojar a las personas de sus casas*[47]*.*

> Ms. Romero: Ah, yes. Who can translate?

Students are at first very quiet, then start to stir in their chairs. Ms. Romero points with her right hand to Isis, who identifies as Latina.

> Ms. Romero: Ok, Isis is going to help.

All of the students in the camera frame turn to look an Isis.

> Ms. Romero (to Hilda): Repeat, ok? Isis is going to try and help you, but repeat. *Desalogar la parte desde desalojar*[48]*.*

> Hilda: *Lo que contribuye a la pobreza es dejar a las personas de su casas*[49]*.*

Immediately, after Hilda is finished reading her statement, Isis turns to look at a third young woman at the table, Lily, another Latina student. They begin to quietly discuss the translation. Ms. Romero grins. All of the students in the camera frame watch. Isis and Lily discuss quietly; the class looks continues to look on.

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[46] What else?
[47] What contributes to poverty is when they evict people from their homes.
[48] Evict, the part from evict.
[49] What contributes to poverty is when they abandon people from their homes.

Isis: Like if they don't contribute together, they lose it all or something.

Ms. Romero: Yeah. They get des-, does anybody know the word *desalogar*?

Lily: Evicted.

Ms. Romero: Yeah like evicted or displaced. So she's saying if, you know, what contributes and this happened what two years ago? Three years ago? Right? Where so many people were getting kicked out of their houses because of the mortgages and the other things that were going on. So that contributes then to people not having a house and everything else, ok alright. Here's what we're doing today before we move on.

From this clip, we are offered a glimpse into Ms. Romero's bilingual classroom philosophy. While most secondary classes are conducted, at least officially, in predominantly English instruction, Ms. Romero encourages and uses bilingual techniques to include students of varying levels of English and Spanish. Through the use of the do-now, Ms. Romero ensures that official classroom documents are written in both English and Spanish. When she focuses on Hilda, a Spanish dominant student, she uses a Spanish phrase, "*qué más*" to signal to her that Spanish is accepted. Hilda responds in Spanish with a pointed observation about evictions.

Ms. Romero values what Hilda says, and demonstrates this by asking another student, Isis, to translate so that all students will understand. As Isis translates, Ms. Romero maintains an encouraging smile on her face. Isis relays the basic message, but misses the translation of the word, "*desalogar*". Ms. Romero understands that this may be an issue in comprehension and asks students to define, "*desalogar*". Another student, Lily, perhaps a more advanced Language Heritage learner, says, "evicted".

In this moment, Ms. Romero is creating a Third Space. This is a space of collaboration – "a process in which participants acquire knowledge through co-

participating, co-organizing, and co-problem-solving within linguistically, culturally, and academically heterogeneous groups throughout the course of task completion" (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Alvarez, & Chiu, 1999, p. 87). She builds upon the students' "funds of knowledge" surrounding their linguistic capital (Orellana 2009; Yosso, 2005) and expertly navigates a linguistically diverse classroom. She develops academic vocabulary, like "*desalogar*" or "evict", bilingually. These are appropriate language skills, given the class, Introduction to Social Work and Health Advocacy, and the mission of the school – to "nurture, empower, and inspire the future social workers and community health advocates of South Central" (Augustus Hawkins High School website).

Bilingual academic vocabulary regarding social issues within South Central is important to the Latina/o and African-American community, given the linguistic diversity in the neighborhood. Additionally, Latina/o and African-American households were the hardest hit by foreclosures during the recent housing crisis (Pew Research Hispanic Center, 2012). As such, Ms. Romero is developing critical literacy with her students to explore the root causes of foreclosures. Both through her content, skill-based activities, and daily practices, Ms. Romero is preparing students to act as social workers and community health advocates within the particular context of South Central Los Angeles.

As a home-grown teacher, Ms. Romero intimately knows the community in which she teaches. She connects her own personal story to the experiences of her students from the community of South Central Los Angeles. As a witness to interracial tension and collaboration that exists within this specific neighborhood,

she develops a culturally relevant curriculum. She has students critically analyze their bias and prejudices about neighbors in order to develop a critical analysis of power relations within the United States. One may conclude that through such an approach, Ms. Romero is equipping her students to act as change agents within their community – a process similar to her own identity as a Chicana change agent.

Ms. Luna Martínez

"It was very empowering for me to see what changes I could make with the kids and in turn the kids made a change in my own children's lives" (Interview, 8/7/2012).

Ms. Luna Martínez is a veteran teacher with over 30 years of service with Pasadena public schools in Spanish Language and English Language Arts secondary classrooms. She currently teaches English Language Arts and English as a Second Language with 7th and 8th graders at Marshall Fundamental Secondary School, which serves 6th – 12th grades. Home is an important component of Ms. Luna Martínez's story as a life-long resident of Pasadena, CA. She was born in Pasadena, educated in Pasadena K – 12 schools, has lived in Pasadena her entire life, raised her children in Pasadena, sometimes goes to church in Pasadena, and teaches in Pasadena. Ms. Luna Martínez embodies "home-grown teachers".

Ms. Luna Martínez stays firmly grounded and visible within Pasadena, which provides opportunities for deep relationships with students and their families who also reside within Pasadena. Upon entering Ms. Luna Martínez' classroom, one is struck by the visible display of her connections with students through a 20-foot long photographic tribute to her current and past pupils, which engulfs one of her classroom's walls.

Within the collage of photographs are generations of students that Ms. Luna Martínez has taught throughout her career. She has educated all the siblings in some families, and will frequently find the connections between sisters, brothers, cousins, and even between madrinas and padrinos and their ahijadas/os[50]. One picture sits

[50] Padrinos and Madrinas are godparents; ahijda/os are godchildren. Within Mexican Catholic traditions, the ties of compadrazgo are established between parents, godparents, and child at

framed, on a bookshelf near Ms. Luna Martínez' desk; it displays one of her current students with his padrino, a former student, on the day of his confirmation. Such generational connections are symbolic of Ms. Luna Martínez' story within the city.

Ms. Luna Martínez's roots in Pasadena begin with her parents' childhood migration from the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Jalisco. Her parents had originally immigrated to Texas, and then later to Pasadena, California where they eventually became homeowners. She describes, that despite discriminatory housing practices, her parents were able to buy a home in a historically white area of town.

> Mom had to pass as white. I have pictures of mom, so mom could pass as white. She didn't take Dad with her to buy the house. And so that's how they got the house. The neighbors didn't talk to mama. Then one of the neighbors was being snoopy. My sister, the middle sister that passed away, was climbing up the stairs when Mama was hanging up the clothes. So the neighbor comes and grabs Caroline and hands her to mom and then they started talking. She asked if my dad was African American. And mom said, no, we're Mexican.
>
> Interview, 8/7/12

This experience offers a microcosmic glimpse into the Mexican-American experience during the 20th century through the lens of Pasadena. While Pasadena often conjures up images of whiteness and affluence, Ms. Luna Martínez suggests a different story that includes Mexican-American resistance and survival strategies amid a white power structure. It has not been uncommon practice for light-skinned Mexican-Americans to pass as white in order to gain access to housing, employment, and social acceptance.

The 1940's signaled a time when Mexican-Americans were racially defined as white, although treated and segregated as a culturally inferior "white" ethnic group.

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significant cultural and religious life passages (i.e. baptism, first communion, confirmation, quinceañera, marriage).

It was not until the 1970's, when Ms. Luna Martínez was completing her college career, that Mexican-Americans were legally considered a racial group different from white[51].

This individual example highlights the ways whiteness has historically controlled property and material realities within a collective experience (Harris, 1993). The varied realities of Mexicans living in the U.S. due to the diversity in phenotype, given the racial mixture between indigenous, African, and European ethnic groups throughout the "Conquest" (1492 – present day) offers a clear example of how property and labor are organized through a system of white supremacy. In addition, Ms. Luna Martínez's neighbor's questioning an African American heritage of her father, suggests the social and, perhaps phenotypic proximity of some Mexican-Americans with African-Americans.

This neighbor's question also marks a historic demographic change in Pasadena, as the 1940s and 1950s saw a rise in the African American population from 3,900 in 1940 to 7,800 in 1950 (City of Pasadena City webpage, 2013), reflecting the larger pattern of African American migration from the Jim Crow south into more Northern and Western states. Such a phenomenon is also described within the previous portrait of Ms. Romero and the demographic changes within the South Central neighborhood of Los Angeles.

Ms. Luna Martínez and her family are part of the Latina/o, predominantly Mexican and Mexican-American, community in Pasadena. This community once formed the base of the city's population until migration from the Western part of the

[51] *See Hernandez v. Texas*, 1954.

U.S. brought in more white residents. While Pasadena was primarily seen as a tourist center and winter resort for the rich during the early 20th century, the city enjoyed a multi-ethnic community that consisted of Latina/os, African Americans, and Asian Americans. During this time period, Latina/os accounted for about 10% of the total city population. This has drastically shifted in the last 30 years. In 1990, Latinas/os accounted for 27.3% of the total city population. Pasadena has seen a further increase of Latinas/os; it now boasts a Latina/o population of 33.7% (City of Pasadena City webpage, 2013; US Census, 2010).

Historically, Mexicans and African Americans were segregated in regards to housing and education. The northwest portion of Pasadena was a densely populated area where African Americans and Mexican-Americans were forced to live, due to housing discrimination. This is significant to note as Ms. Luna Martínez was raised outside of this area in a central part of town. Her parents once lived within the segregated area and attended Pasadena schools, like the Junipero Serra School, which educated Mexicans and Mexican Americans in "Mexican schools" throughout the 20th century (Mares-López-Tamayo, 2011; Martínez, 2009). The 1970's saw a distinct change in schooling segregation practices, as Pasadena became the first non-Southern city to be federally desegregated.

Ms. Luna Martínez identifies the onset of Pasadena busing as an important contextual factor in her experience. She explains that when she was a secondary student,

> [The high school] was still basically very white. I graduated in 1971 and court-ordered busing started in 1970. I guess we Latinos added some color to the school, but there weren't that many Latinos there because the emphasis

> was busing of African American students and not Latino students. The Latinos, we were just sort of lost, and tried to fit in as best we could.
>
> Interview, 8/7/12 & Email Correspondence, 5/28/13

Again, this moment signifies the varied experience for Mexican-Americans in the U.S. As a historically racially mixed people, the U.S. has had a difficult time categorizing Latina/os according to the binary white-black measure, evidenced by the U.S. one-drop policy[52]. Ms. Luna Martínez highlights this through her experience with busing, in which Latina/os, historically segregated by custom rather than by law, are left in limbo with regards to federal desegregation regulations within a white-black framework.

Identifying with this history and with Pasadena as home is significant for Ms. Luna Martínez. She has worked with students in her community in various educational programs and states, "I thought of the kids in Upward Bound and Puente as being my kids" (Interview, 8/7/12). Ms. Luna Martínez demonstrates a familial relationship with her students by maintaining strong connections to former students, acting as a mediator between administrators and her students when their own family is unable to make school meetings, and through her motherly manner and approach. Ms. Luna Martínez embodies "activist-mothering"[53] within the context of a secondary ELA classroom.

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[52] "In the United States, because race has been constructed as a biological category that is rooted in the body, controlling Black sexuality has long been important in preserving racial boundaries. U.S. notions of racial purity, such as the rule claiming that one drop of Black "blood" determines racial identity, required strict control over the sexuality and subsequent fertility of Black women, White women, and Black men" (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 133).

[53] Nancy Naples (1991, 1996) discusses activist mothering among low-income Black and Latina women. She describes activist mothering as a direct response to the needs of their children. Good-mothering is seen as caring for their own biological children while also engaging in action (including social activism) to address the needs of all children in the community.

Ms. Luna Martínez's activist-mothering is indicative of her leadership skills and role within school, and the community. Throughout the day, during passing periods and lunch, a consistent group of former students stops into the classroom to greet Ms. Luna Martínez, give her a hug, and write on the board. Sometimes the students would re-write the assignments in their own "font". Other times, they write little messages like, "Ms. Luna Martínez loves Jenni" or "Jenni loves Ms. Luna Martínez" or "Jenni was here". Many of the students are high school juniors and seniors who had Ms. Luna Martínez as 9th graders. One of the students, upon being introduced to me, led to me to her own framed picture, which shared the special location on the bookshelf near Ms. Luna Martínez' desk with other framed pictures.

The student seemed particularly proud of the picture, which captured her quinceañera[54]. This young woman's dress was different from the more traditional frilly garment; it was bright yellow and in a charro-inspired style[55]. In mentioning this to Ms. Luna Martínez, she remarked that yes, her dress had been specially tailored. Ms. Mares López also described the student's quinceañera and the unique cactus centerpieces.

Other teachers and the administration in the school notice the type of familial relationships that Ms. Luna Martínez builds with her students. Ms. Luna Martínez shared that while she purposefully creates these types of ties with her students, "her kids", others do not always appreciate such close relationships. She describes one example:

[54] A quinceañera is a cultural practice among Latina/os and Latin Americans that celebrates a girl's fifteenth birthday.

[55] Traditional clothing that has ties to ranching practices in central-western Mexico.

> Last year we got a new principal. For some reason he has continually questioned my ability as a teacher . One day he stopped me in the hall and said something to the effect that in talking to the older students about me, whereas he did not ask the students, they came out and told him that they did not do the work in their classes for themselves, but because they loved me and they knew it was important to me that they do the work. He looked puzzled and it was quite evident that he was bothered . I could only think how foolish he was and how detached he was from many of our students.
>
> Interview, 8/7/12 & Email Correspondence, 5/28/13

In this quote, one sees how Ms. Luna Martínez interprets why her students turn in work. While the students may not want to do work, they do it because they "love her". Ms. Luna Martínez suggests that the type of familial relationship she cultivates with her students motivates them to do work. This depicts, from a teacher perspective, the type of caring relationships that Angela Valenzuela (1999) describes in her ethnography with Mexican-American youth. In creating such relationships, Ms. Luna Martínez enacts "other-mothering" by stepping into a "mother-teacher" role where she demands high quality work from her students while offering the necessary social-emotional and academic support to complete it.

Ms. Luna Martínez's identity as a teacher is very much tied to the perception of herself as a mother. When asked to talk about who she is as a person, Ms. Luna Martínez emphatically declares, "When I see who I am, I would like to see myself first as a mom. That's what I feel is most important for me in my identity of who I am" (Interview, 8/7/12). As she discusses the importance of motherhood, she looks upon two photographs of her family, which includes three children, two biological children and a nephew who she raised as a son. The emphasis that Ms. Luna Martínez places on mothering comes from a deep respect for her own mother who

passed away as she entered her first days of high school. She remembers as a young child, holding motherhood, and her own mother, in high esteem.

> I remember at my elementary school here in Pasadena, Madison, there was a big assembly every year, and those of us that were the hall monitors, we'd go up and get our award from one of the PTA moms. When the PTA Mom asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I said, "a mom", and everybody in the audience just started laughing. But in my mind that to me was the greatest job you could ever have and I think basically it was because of the high esteem I felt for my own mother.
>
> Interview, 8/7/12

As highlighted previously, Ms. Luna Martínez intimately ties her roles as a teacher and a mother within a single existence. Ms. Luna Martínez develops close relationships with students through motherly care. Angela Valenzuela (1999) suggests that a caring pedagogy is culturally relevant. The Mexican-American students in her study describe the best teacher as someone who, "'helps you to be a better person book-wise and social-wise,' and '*loves* Mexicans and the Spanish language we speak'" (p. 157).

Ms. Luna Martínez accomplishes a culturally relevant teaching practice through the books, assignments, conversations, and relationships she creates with students. During one lesson, Ms. Luna Martínez introduced an autobiographical book by Francisco Jimenez entitled *The Circuit: Cajas de Cartón*, which is a series of linked stories that follow the life of a family who travels "the circuit" harvesting crops throughout California. Ms. Luna Martínez begins by asking students to define "circuit". One student describes a personal experience in the summer basketball league where the coach has students run circuits. Another said, "circuit breaker like we have in our house". In both instances, Ms. Luna Martínez affirms the students' responses by saying things such as: "Taylor gave us a great example" and "yes,

exactly, that's the definition most people know". She then transitioned into the title of novel and the way it is used within the book.

Ms. Luna Martínez explained how "circuit" in the context of this story, describes the migratory pattern of farm-workers through the lens of her own personal experiences. She did this by first asking her 7th graders if, "anyone has family that dealt with working in the fields?" Many students responded, no; and some did not reply. Ms. Luna Martínez shared the experiences of her father as a farm worker. She described, once, as a small child looking at her father's feet, and asking him why they were discolored. He explained to her that his toes had become infected with frostbite one winter, while he worked in the fields. Ms. Luna Martínez informed the class that her father mostly worked with cotton and pears. She concluded her familial story by stating, "these stories affected my life".

Ms. Luna Martínez transitions back to the novel by identifying the title and author while pointing to the book. She asks, "what does the term 'migrant farm worker' mean?" No students responded, and Ms. Luna Martínez suggests they "think of it in terms of a monarch butterfly"[56] (Fieldnotes, 10/4/12).

These momentary glimpses into the classroom of Ms. Luna Martínez demonstrate culturally relevant practices. She consistently attempts to link the content material to the students' lives by asking them to name and define words, like "circuit" and "migrant farm worker", from their own experiences.

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[56] The monarch butterfly introduces a culturally relevant reference given the migratory patterns of the butterfly deep into the interior of Mexico. While some of these references may not be familiar to students, the fact that they can be directed related back to Mexico, Mexicans, and migratory patterns, make them culturally relevant for students of Mexican descent. The butterfly has also become a symbol for Dreamers (see appendix #10 http://nbclatino.com/2013/01/18/nc-ag-backs-giving-drivers-licences-to-dreamers-with-work-papers/).

Although students may not have experience with migrant farm work, this remains an important part of Mexican-American history, particularly within California where the standards include important labor leaders like Cesar Chavez[57]. In a classroom of almost all Latina/o students, in a school community where 62.2% of all students identify as Latina/o, and in a region where the majority of Latina/os identify themselves as Mexican, the teacher's decision to highlight the experiences of Mexican-Americans is deliberate.

Furthermore, many Mexican students retain familial and cultural ties with rural communities in Mexico, where agriculture is an important way of life. This is significant, as it represents a different way of relating to the earth, a different epistemology of land, than is traditionally captured in colonial ways of schooling (Calderón, 2008; Jimenez-Pendleton, 2006). Thus, the content and context of the reading material has the potential to be more relevant to students' lives.

Ms. Luna Martínez, in choosing these examples and these types of literature, is making a definite statement about Mexicans and Mexican-Americans as ""knowledge holders and creators"" through our own lived experiences. Ms. Luna Martínez welcomes the lived experiences of her students by encouraging them to use their life as a unit of analysis. The inclusion of their ""funds of knowledge"" validates students' lives as cultural beings, and asks them to reflect on the meaning-making within their experiences. Ms. Luna Martínez scaffolds and models these

[57] Additionally, migrant farm work impacted many different communities of color like Filipinos, Shiks, Japanese (Takaki, 1993). This is important to note when we think of Ethnic Studies approaches in our increasingly diverse public schools. Voices of Filipino farm labor leaders are, however, missing from this content standard. California bill AB123 (2013) seeks to include the lives of Filipino Americans such as, Larry Itliong, Pete Velasco, and Philip Vera Cruz, who had critical roles in these movements.

types of personal connections to the material through the use of her own familial stories.

Culturally relevant practices are important to Ms. Luna Martínez because of her own experiences in Pasadena schools. Some of her most salient memories come from her later years as a high school student and college student at Pasadena High School, Pasadena Community College, and the University of Southern California, respectively.

She recalls one of these moments as a high school student in an Advanced Placement History class.

> Here in Pasadena, we were sort of in a vacuum of what was going on in the rest of the world in the late '60s, early 70's. So hearing about the student walkouts in LA schools and stuff and I'm asking my dad what's going on? And my dad was very protective of not wanting me to know what was going on because of what he had gone through as far as the American Dream and fitting in. So I had an Advanced Placement History class. I was between a B and an A in the class, so she [the teacher] told those of us that had a B+ that if we did this special research project, we could bring it up to an A. So I thought ok, I'm going to do it on what's going on in LA. I do this research. I'm really getting involved in it. Like at night instead of doing my homework, I'm reading, reading, reading. I thought I had a really good presentation. This is during 11th grade and there's no way I'm getting in front of the class [to present], but I did. I was very proud of myself that I was going to go up there. I think I probably got through what would be a paragraph of my presentation and she told me to sit down. She turned bright red. And she said, "you're lying, you know none of this what you're saying is true. This is not going on". And she was just furious. I thought, you know, she was older; I thought she was going to have a heart attack or something. And the class was just looking at me. I put my head down and went to my desk…I sat down and a week later she apologized that she had to give me B+ in the class, but I needed to realize that these things were basically propaganda. That it wasn't real. That it was being pulled out of proportion.
>
> Interview, 8/7/12& Email Correspondence, 5/28/13

This experience marks an important moment in the critical literacy development of Ms. Luna Martínez. It offers a moment of exposure to the powerful student voice

within the Chicana/o movement in East Los Angeles, just 10 miles from her home. The 1960s and 1970s marked a powerful wave of reform and revolution internationally. The liberation movements throughout Africa and Asia overthrew European colonial powers, and students throughout the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Europe were protesting unjust economic and educational conditions.

In this instance, Ms. Luna Martínez experienced a microagression – a covert form of racism that powerfully impacts the lives of people of color through "subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are 'put downs'" (Pierce, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Wills, 1978, p. 66). Without actually calling Ms. Luna Martínez a "liar", the teacher attempts to discredits her research and the larger Chicana/o movement.

Ms. Luna Martínez was not offered Spanish as a language to study in this same high school. Although the school had over 5 different languages at the time, the high school counselor did not offer her Spanish. Ms. Luna Martínez reflects on this moment here:

> I didn't even think to ask, why aren't you offering me Spanish? I'm going over the list again and thinking, Mom said French is a lot like Spanish, so I'll take French. Given the way I am now, given my experiences, I could have asked him, "why aren't I being offered Spanish"? But I didn't at the time. I went through high school taking French and then I wanted to get back to what I felt were my roots. And I took Spanish [at community college].
>
> Interview, 8/7/12 & Email Correspondence, 5/28/13

Although Ms. Luna Martínez is of Mexican descent, she did not grow up speaking Spanish. The influence of Americanization, acculturation, and corporal school punishments caused many Mexican-American families within Ms. Luna Martínez' parents' generation to encourage English over Spanish.

Such experiences are characteristic of the time period. This mis-education of Mexicans and about Mexicans has been used to subjugate, devalue, criminalize, and pathologize people of Mexican descent. In a response to the dominant colonial and deficit perspective towards Mexicans-Americans in schools, Ms. Luna Martínez entered the teaching profession. Her Spanish professor at Pasadena Community College, also of Mexican descent, guided her to this career choice, reminding her that other Chicanitas/os should not experience the same type of dismissive and destructive education that she had endured (Duncan-Andrade, 2005).

The East Los Angeles school walk-outs proved to be instrumental in the critical literacy development of Ms. Luna Martínez. As a teacher-candidate in the Education department at University of Southern California, Ms. Luna Martínez sought to intern with one of the most prominent teacher-leaders of the 1968 school blowouts, Mr. Sal Castro. She describes here the first meeting she had with the school principal at Belmont, the high school where Mr. Castro taught after his political involvement at Lincoln High School

> When I went to meet the principal at Belmont, I said I understand, I don't know, you could call this a big mistake or how funny life is. I said that Sal Castro is here. Could I please observe his classroom? And you know the man's just looking at me, but I couldn't read his expression. And he said, well I would like you to go to the reading class, I see you're an English major and maybe you can meet him in the hall or I'll set it up. Elexia between the time of getting from Belmont to SC because I didn't drive, I used to take the bus to SC, by the time I got from there, the principal had already called SC and said he didn't want me on his campus.
>
> Interview, 8/7/12

In this passage, one sees Ms. Luna Martínez actively seeking the type of culturally relevant political education that Mr. Castro embodied. While the principal at Belmont was adamant about not having an “agitator”, like Ms. Luna Martínez, on the

campus, she was eventually permitted to stay as a student teacher with the reading teacher. Mr. Castro would, however, come to the reading class each day, and invite Ms. Luna Martínez into his classroom. Every day, she gladly accepted.

One way that Ms. Luna Martínez ensures her students will have a meaningful and positive educational experience, is by including their culture directly into the ELA curriculum that she teaches. On one particular day, Ms. Luna Martínez was discussing a segment from Sandra Cisneros' *House on Mango Street* – one of the most used pieces of Chicana/o literature in secondary schools. She had made copies of a vignette from the book entitled, "My Name". Ms. Luna Martínez began the activity as a Read-Aloud and later asked other students to read sections of the vignette. She explained "vignette" as something that could stand apart from a book or could be read with the entire book. She also connected "vignette" to a previous assignment on autobiographical essays in order to contextualize the particular, personal writing style of Sandra Cisneros.

Ms. Luna Martínez draws from students' prior knowledge on autobiographical essays and describes the vignette as a short story inspired from the author's life. The opening line of the vignette begins, "In English my name means hope". Immediately, Ms. Luna Martínez stops reading, and asks:

Ms. Luna Martínez: What is "hope" in Spanish?
S: Esperanza

Ms. Luna Martínez validates the language that the students speak by including Spanish into the official script of the classroom. All of her students in this class are English Language Learners; almost all of these students are Spanish speakers except for one young boy who speaks Armenian.

The next person to read is a Latina student with full shoulder-length brown hair held back by a headband. Every so often, Ms. Luna Martínez stops her to check in with the students for understanding and cultural references. In one part, Cisneros describes the music of the main character's father as: "like sobbing".

She stops with the word "sobbing" and asks the students what it means. Students respond with things like, "cries", "sad", and "mad". Ms. Luna Martínez pushes the students further by making a connection between sobbing and La Llorona. She asks the students, "what does La Llorona do"? The students reply that she cries a lot because:

Student 1: "She lost her children".
Student 2: "She drowned her children".
Student 3: "And she looks for them".

While La Llorona[58] constitutes part of a culturally relevant folklore among Mexicans, it is further made relevant by the timing. This lesson took place on November 8th, only a few days after *Dia de los Muertos*. During this calendar period, stories like La Llorona flourish around the Catholic holiday *Dia de los Muertos* (and All Souls Day) and the secular holiday of Halloween. Folklore associated with death is abundant during this time[59].

Ms. Luna Martínez next asks students to think about the type of music that Cisneros could be describing. Students respond in the following different ways:

Student 1: Like *corridos.*

[58] La Llorona is a figure in Mexican folklore who typically is described as a young beautiful woman dressed in white who is heard crying near bodies of water. Some stories tell of her drowning her own children for a variety of reasons. She wanders along bodies of water crying and looking for her children.

[59] For example, during this time period, a popular Got Milk? commercial aired on Spanish language TV channels featuring La Llorona. Please see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erhsuXTyDww

Student 2: Like *romanticos.*
Student 3: Like the song on Titanic.

Ms. Luna Martínez: What other types?

Student 4: Instrumentals.
Student 5: *Mariachis.*
Student 6: *Rancheras.*
Student 2: Maybe the tone is sad.
Student 4: Yeah like instrumentals

During this exchange, students mention four different genres from within the Mexican musical tradition – *corridos, romanticos, mariachis,* and *rancheras*. Ms. Luna Martínez does not interrupt while the students call out different types of music. Rather, she waits for the students to provide all of their examples before asking a student to continue reading out loud.

This moment creates a "Third Space" in which students pull from their ""funds of knowledge"" to infer the type of music playing in the story. Inference is a powerful English Language Arts skill that is addressed within Common Core Secondary ELA standards. Ms. Luna Martínez does not comment on which type of music *she* thinks is playing. Allowing the students to provide their own examples without giving a definite answer can develop critical literacy skills built from students' experiential backgrounds to analyze written text. Ms. Luna Martínez deliberately chooses literature that is relevant to the cultural and ethnic identity of her students in order to create opportunities for text-to-self connections. From the enthusiasm in the students' responses, it appears that they see lived experiences as a valuable tool for literary analysis. Furthermore, while some of the students use examples that are not explicitly within the Mexican musical tradition (i.e. song from

Titanic, instrumentals), Ms. Luna Martínez does not deter the students from expressing their opinion and visualizing this literary scene.

Ms. Luna Martínez is a home-grown teacher who intimately understands the importance of culturally relevant classroom practices, given her own experiences in Pasadena high schools. One may speculate that such experiences are at the core of Ms. Luna Martínez' approach to Mexican culture in her middle school English Language Arts classroom. Through her specific culturally relevant practices with her predominantly Latina/o students, she encourages them to bring their family and community into the official classroom script – a reality that she did not have as a young person in public schools. Her approach as an activist-mother-teacher allows Ms. Luna Martínez to view all students as her children. As a "mommy-teacher[60]" she is extremely caring and at the same time equally demanding in her expectations of her children.

[60] My 3-year old daughter recently told me that when she grows up, she wants to be a "mommy-teacher". This instantly made me think of Ms. Luna Martínez and the generations of her children in Pasadena.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, & FINAL COMMENTS

Let Us Speak: Chicana Teachers on Teaching is a story about 11 Chicana teachers who see their teaching as a political, moral, and/or spiritual act. Through 3 portraits of the veteran teachers in this small sample, I paint culturally relevant literacy practices in K-12 classrooms. All 11 Chicana teachers describe, at least, one positive culturally relevant experience during their own schooling. They point to these experiences as informing a deliberate, culturally relevant approach in the official classroom space as K-12 teachers. These findings offer clear implications for the development of a critical, "home-grown", Teacher of Color pipeline, and offer a way to conceptualize culturally relevant approaches within literacy practices.

Strategic pipelines that develop critical, "home-grown", Teachers of Color increase the likelihood of culturally relevant practices in schools. The findings suggest that the teachers' experiences, as students, impact the type of teacher they become. Growing critical, "home-grown", Teachers of Color requires culturally relevant approaches. This research demonstrates that culturally relevant schooling experiences, in the teachers' personal lives, are adapted and replicated with Students of Color throughout the teachers' professional experiences in K-12 classrooms.

Previous scholarship has demonstrated the positive academic, social, and emotional impact of culturally relevant approaches. Culturally relevant school practices and programs disrupt the standardization of current school mandates, while developing key literacy skills with K-12 students. In order to build more

culturally relevant centers, programs, and classrooms, we must develop teachers who will facilitate these spaces. This research joins the platform to develop K-12 critical Ethnic Studies programs and demand culturally relevant approaches as a human right, through the development of a critical, "home-grown", Teachers of Color pipeline.

Earlier studies regarding Chicana activist-teachers, suggests that Chicana/o Studies, as a culturally relevant approach, had a significant impact on the development of their critical consciousness. It is also true for this sample. All 11 Chicana teachers had either been key to the formation of a Chicana/o Studies department, had taken Ethnic Studies, or had majored in Chicana/o Studies in college. The older generation of Chicana teachers was instrumental in the development of Ethnic Studies, specifically Chicana/o Studies, in higher education. Their bravery and constant praxis formed the Ethnic Studies departments, which created the next two generations of Chicana/o Studies graduates, who later became teachers. Implications of the current study suggests, following other studies, that Colleges of Education should link with critical Ethnic Studies programs, in order to recruit teacher-candidates who have been exposed to a critical, culturally relevant curriculum and approach.

"Home-grown" teachers, individuals who "work as educators in the communities in which they were raised and educated" (Irizarry, 2007), have valuable insight into the lives of students. Many act as cultural translators and cultural brokers for diverse students and their families attempting to navigate schooling. As individuals who may be aware of the sociocultural realities of Students

of Color, many home-grown teachers use their own schooling and familial experiences to inform their practice (Irizarry, 2007; Jordan, 2003; Nieto, 1999).

Moreover, this work offers insight into the lives and experiences of Chicana teachers who describe using culturally relevant approaches with Students of Color. This dissertation is guided by, and contributes to, research at the intersection of culturally relevant pedagogy, literacy practice & learning, and activist-teaching with Teachers of Color (see *Chapter 3*). The research question, methods, and findings bridge the fields of culturally relevant pedagogy and literacy practices with Chicana, home-grown, activist-teachers. The broad literacy framework, that guided the analysis and codes for this study, captured themes already prevalent in culturally relevant pedagogy, and described them through a particular Mexican/Chicana/Mexican-American lens. Literature regarding Chicana/o-activist teachers, guided the development of interview questions and ethnographic classroom observations. Although this work contributes to scholarship with Chicana teachers, there remain gaps in our understanding. One of the most crucial oversights is the impact of Chicana activist-teachers with Students of Color.

The lack of student voice, and the fact that this work has limited generalizability, are two important limitations in this dissertation. A focus of the current study was student-teacher relationships. However, student voice was not included, nor was it pursued. The central purpose of this work was to document the experiences and classroom literacy practices of Chicana teachers. Future work, should implement a research design that offers both teacher and student perspectives. In this regard, as a follow-up to the current research, I could pursue

contact, and conduct interviews, with alumni (students) of the 11 Chicana teachers in this study. Such interviews would focus on the perceived impact that the teachers had on their students, with respect to student-teacher relationships, culturally relevant practices, markers of academic success, and overall worldview. This would complement the teachers' reflections on how students impacted their lives, in addition to their classroom practice.

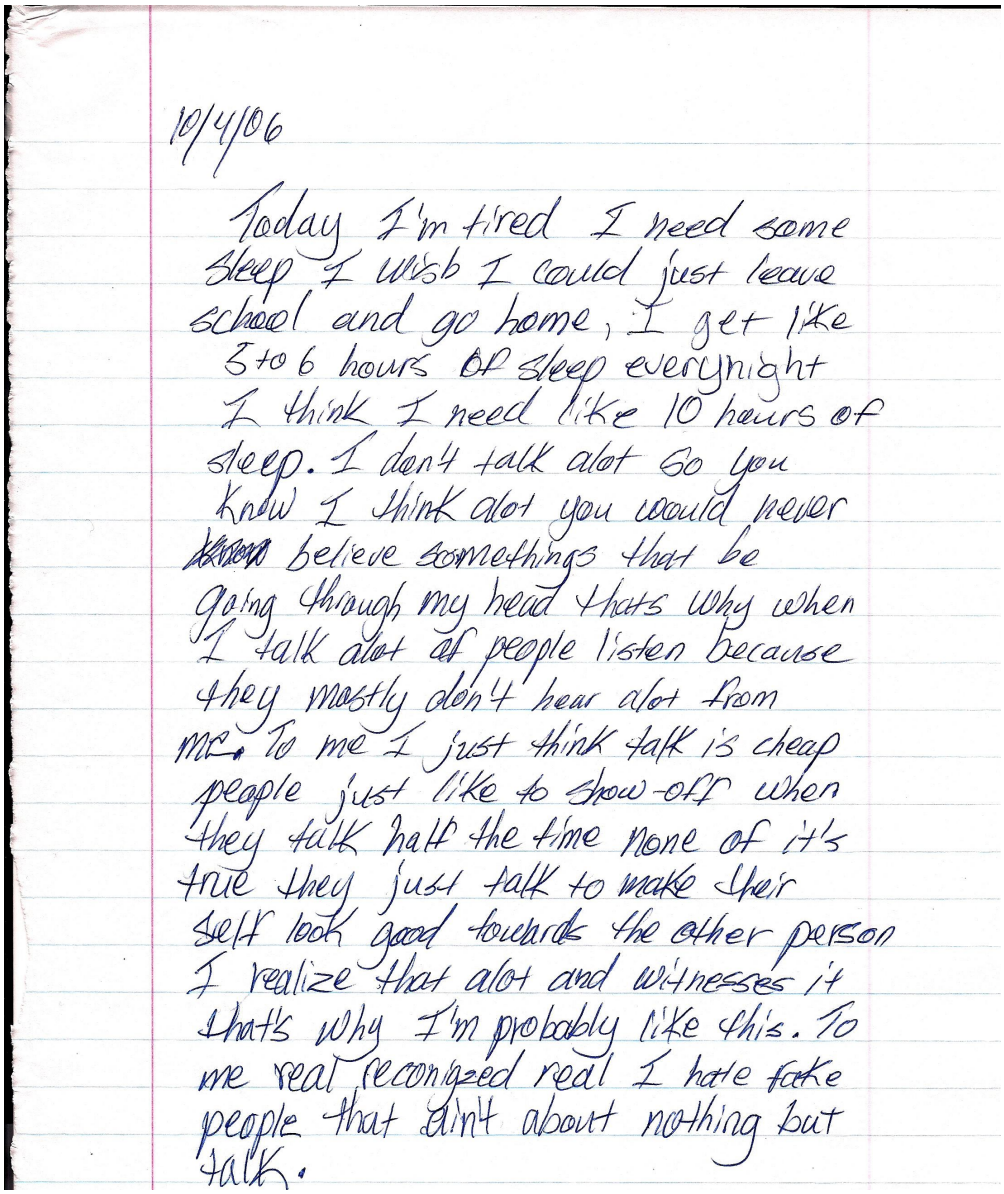
Furthermore, this work has very limited generalizability. The purposeful sampling technique used in this dissertation offers an opportunity for theoretical construction regarding culturally relevant practices with teachers who report use of such methods in their classrooms (see *Table 3: Participant Selection Criteria & Rationale*). This study contextualizes the nuanced experiences of Chicana teachers, which, by nature, suggests a fluid continuum of communal and individual patterns. The findings cannot be described as representational of all Chicana, or Latina, teachers. Chicanas are not homogeneous. As Chicanas, we have a variety of different experiences that impact our daily practices, worldviews, and culture. In order to fully embrace the similarities and differences among Chicanas and Latinas, more ethnic-specific research should be conducted to highlight the cultural distinctions among Latinas/os. Such a focus will highlight the needs of the different Latina/o ethnic communities, and illustrate the diversity within Latinidad - disrupting essentialist frames and images of Latinas/os.

Let Us Speak: Chicana Teachers on Teaching, is a story about 11 diverse Chicana teachers who see their teaching as a political, moral, and/or spiritual act. This sample of teachers employs strategies that are culturally relevant, despite

constant pressure from federal mandates and school administrators to do otherwise. In open defiance of scripted curriculum, these teachers are purposeful transgressors, revolutionary, "home-grown", critical, teacher-mothers. They fervently oppose being employed as "clerks of the empire".

These women offer us "critical hope" (Duncan-Andrade, 2009), as teachers who create autonomous classroom spaces, while feeling overwhelmed by standardization and test scores. In these classrooms, teachers have developed a culture in their classroom where students' backgrounds is validated through curriculum and approach, and where students learn to become change agents.

Appendix 1: Example of a Student Free-Write (2006)



10/4/06

Today I'm tired I need some sleep I wish I could just leave school and go home, I get like 5 to 6 hours of sleep everynight I think I need like 10 hours of sleep. I don't talk alot so you know I think alot you coould never believe somethings that be going through my head thats why when I talk alot of people listen because they mostly don't hear alot from me. To me I just think talk is cheap people just like to show-off when they talk half the time none of it's true they just talk to make their self look good towards the other person I realize that alot and witnesses it thats why I'm probably like this. To me real recongized real I hate fake people that don't about nothing but talk.

Appendix 2: Recruitment Flyer

Veteran, Mexican-ancestry, teachers on pedagogy and classroom practices with students of color

- Do you identify as a woman of Mexican ancestry (any generational status)?
- Are you a K – 12 teacher? Or recently retired?
- Do you have 20 years or more of classroom experience?
- Would you like to share your personal story of becoming a teacher and your best practices in the classroom?

If you answered yes to these four questions, please consider participating in a doctoral dissertation study exploring the life experiences and teaching approaches and practices of female, Mexican-ancestry, veteran teachers in the K – 12 classroom.

For more information, please contact:
Elexia Reyes McGovern, UCLA
(310) 498-1368
elexia.mcgovern@gmail.com

Thank you for your time and support!!!

UC San Diego, the Chicano Legacy 40 Años mural, collaboration between UC San Diego's Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA) and Mario Torero.

Appendix 3: Recruitment Email

Hi All,

My name is Elexia Reyes McGovern and I am a doctoral candidate at UCLA in education. I am writing you because I am recruiting Chicana/Mexicana/Mexican-American/Latina/Hispanic veteran teachers for my dissertation study. I am looking for women who see their teaching as a political, moral, and/or spiritual commitment and who have been teaching in K-12 schools for over 15 years. Anyone in the Southern California region can participate. The study consists of a couple interviews and possibly some classroom observations. If you know of anyone who may be interested in participating, please forward them the attached flyer. Feel free to contact me with any questions. I very much appreciate your time. Thank you so much for your help!

Sincerely,
Elexia

Appendix 4: Initial Telephone/Email Protocol

Introduce myself as a researcher and doctoral student. I am focusing on the life and teaching experiences of female teachers who are of Mexican ancestry.

Name:

Phone #, Email, Address:

Preferred way for communication:

I am going to read a list for you that women of Mexican ancestry living in Southern California might use to characterize themselves. When I am finished, I will ask you which term or terms, you use to describe yourself. You are free to choose multiple terms. I may have missed one, so please feel free to add to the list.

Term	Do you use it?	Context of use?
Mexican		
Mexicana		
Mexican-American		
Mexican-origin		
Latina		
Hispanic		
Chicana		
Xicana		
Mestiza		
Tejana		
Indigenous		
Angelina		
Multiracial/Biracial		

- How long have you been a K – 12 classroom teacher? What grade levels/classes have you taught?
- What types of schools have you taught at (i.e. public, pilot, charter, or private)?
- What was the racial/ethnic make-up of your students? What was the socioeconomic background of your students?
- Have you ever been involved in a community organization (i.e. church group, online community, political organization, parent group, teacher group, etc.)? If yes, please describe briefly your involvement in the organization(s).
- How do you explain inequality and opportunity in the U.S. to your students?
- What are your dreams and realities for your students?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank the individual. Ask if it's ok to contact the individual for more follow-up questions or longer interviews? If yes, let participant know that I will be in contact with them again. Ask if individual would like to receive a final report of dissertation or be invited to any community teacher events that come out of this project? Thanks again. Offer my individual phone number and/or email.

Appendix 5: Oral History Interview, Part One

Self identity

This portion will ask you to talk about how you currently identify yourself, to describe any changes to your self identity that occurred throughout your life, and how your identity influences your teaching approach.

1. Please describe your artifact.
    a. Why did you choose it to represent your identity?
    b. What does it mean to you?

Schooling

This portion will ask you to discuss your most influential experiences in K – 16+ schools that developed you as a person and as a teacher.

2. Are there any moments or influential people in your schooling that stand out to you? Why?
3. How did your experiences in your schools encourage and/or undermine your identity as a person?
4. Describe your artifact.
    a. Why did you choose it to represent your schooling experiences?
    b. What does it mean to you?
5. Who are your key intellectual mentors?

Family

This portion will ask you about your family and how they influenced your educational experiences as well as your approach to teaching.

6. What were your responsibilities toward school growing up?
    a. Was that different from your sisters and brothers?
    b. How did you feel about that?
    c. How did your family talk about education?
7. Do any of your family experiences influence your teaching? If so, how?
8. What is your family's reaction to you becoming a teacher?
9. Do you or your family participate in any religious or spiritual practices?
    a. If no, did you or your family participate in any religious or spiritual practices in the past?
    b. If yes, what types of religious or spiritual things do you do (or did you do) with your family? Why?
10. Do you think participating in religious or spiritual practices plays a part in how you approach teaching?
    a. If yes, can you give me an example?
    b. If no, why not?

Appendix 6: Oral History Interview, Part Two

Teaching

This portion will ask you to describe about yourself as a teacher, your approach with students, and how you navigate your school site.

1. Describe your artifact.
    a. Why did you choose it to represent your teaching life?
    b. What does it mean to you?
2. What does being a Chicana mean in your school setting(s)?
    a. Have there been consequences to being political in the classroom?
3. How would you describe the way you approach teaching with students of color?
    a. Ask for specific examples
    b. Can you provide an example?
    c. Are there differences in the way you approach Latina/o students versus African American, Native American, or Asian American students?
4. Tell me about your professional experience (ask for each professional setting):
    a. Who are/were the influential people to you in this setting? Why?
    b. Are there any moments from your professional experience that stand out to you?
5. Who has mentored you through your teaching career? How?
6. What do you think should occur in teacher education programs to retain political, teachers of color in teaching?

Political

This portion will ask about to discuss your political identity, to describe your political awakening, how you reached your current state of political consciousness, and how this influences your teaching.

7. Describe your artifact.
    a. Why did you choose it to represent your political identity?
    b. What does it mean to you?
8. Can you describe a meaningful experience that raised your level of consciousness?
9. Does this experience influence your approach to teaching? If so, how?

The 1968 School Blowouts in East LA called for the following educational changes (among others):

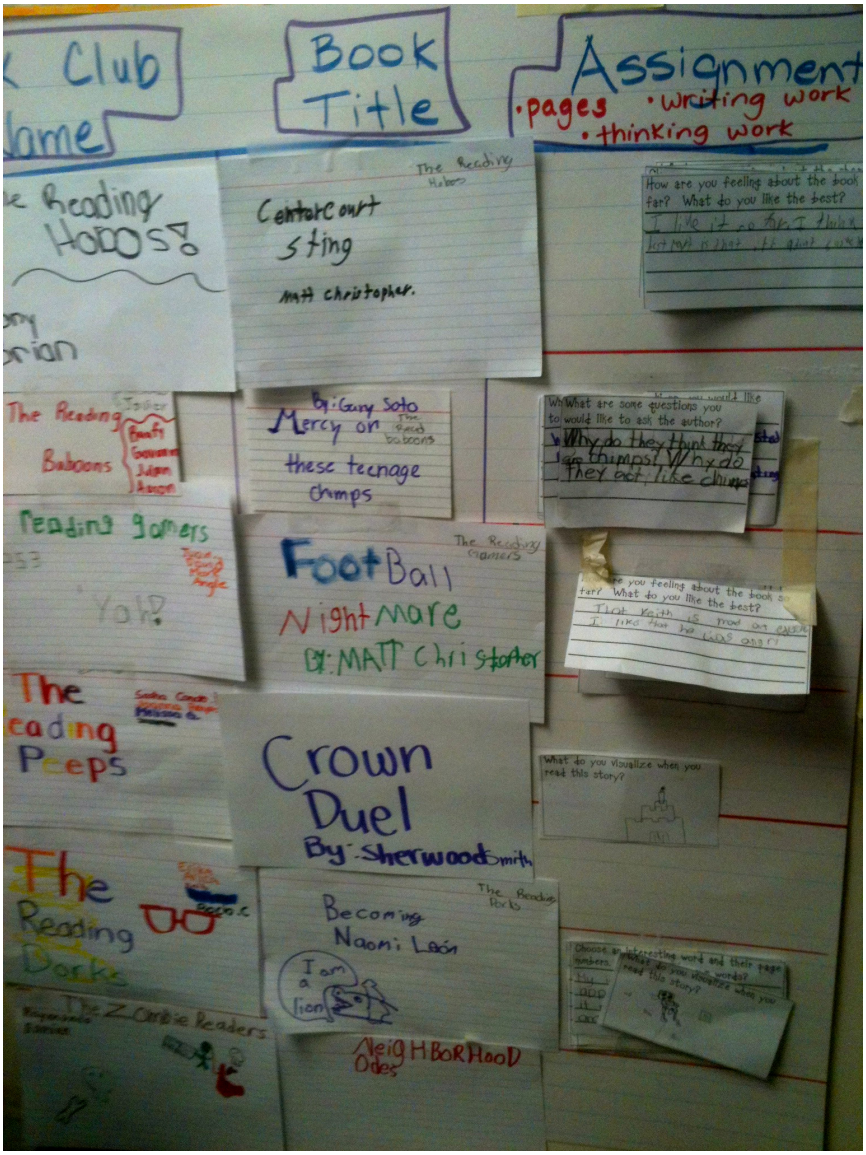
    a. Implementation of bilingual & bicultural training for teachings
    b. Elimination of tracking based on standardized tests
    c. Improvement & replacement of inferior school facilities
    d. Removal of racist teachers & administrators
    e. Inclusion of Mexican history & culture into the curriculum

10. In your opinion have any of these changes been addressed?
    a. If so, how?
    b. If no, what additional steps need to be taken in order for these concerns to

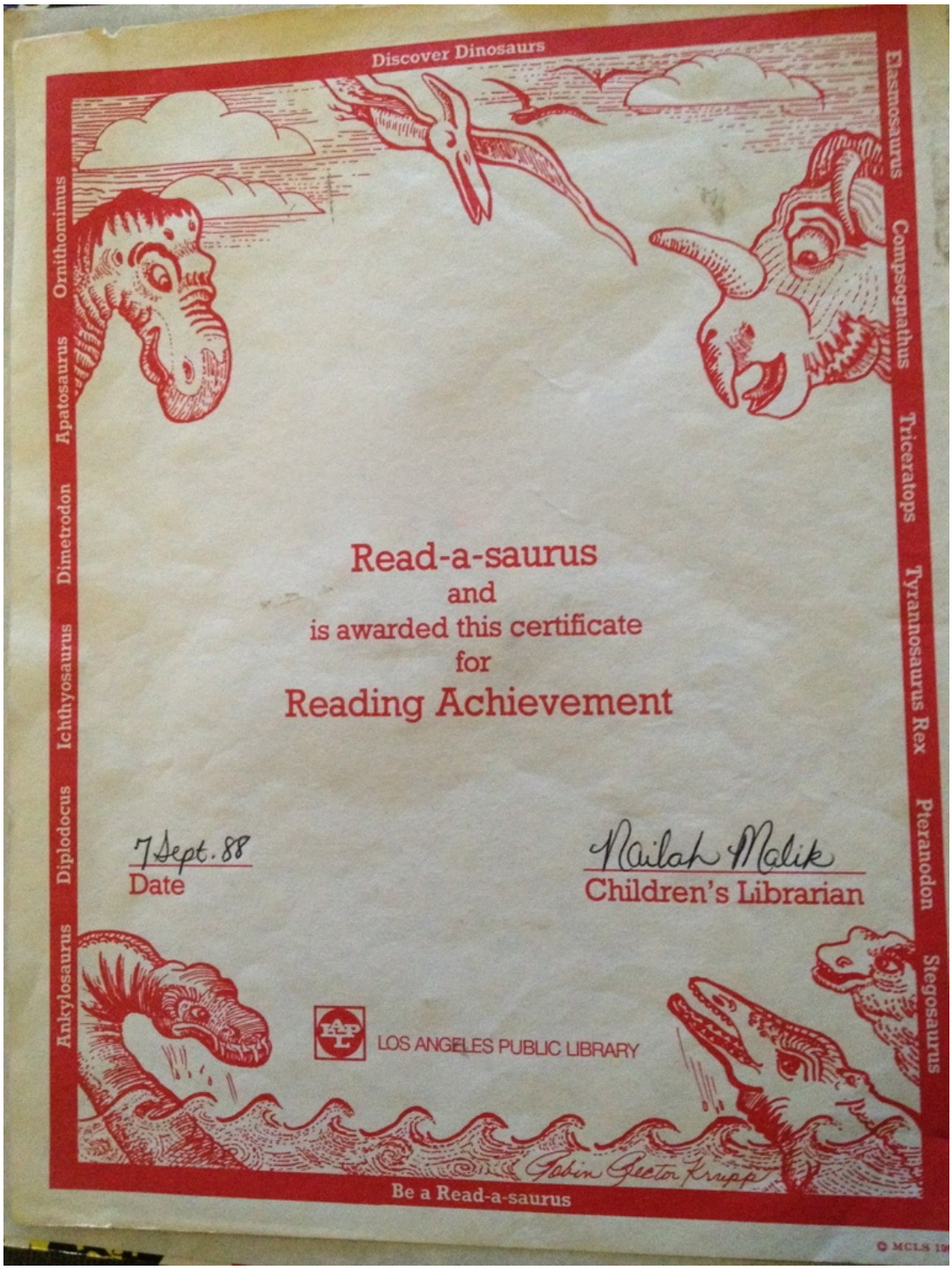
adequately addressed?

11. Are there new concerns that should be added to list in order to provide quality education for students of color in today's society?

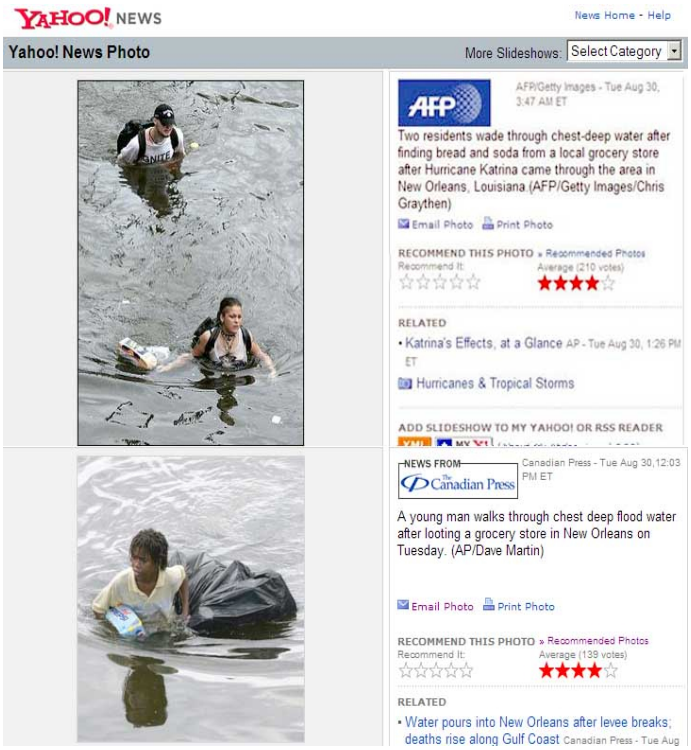
Appendix 7: Picture of Ms. Sotomayor's 5th grade Reading Clubs



Appendix 8: Picture of Ms.Romero as a "Readasaurus"



Appendix 9: Critical Media Literacy & Hurricane Katrina (Ms. Romero)



Appendix 10: Dreamers y mariposas

Photo Credit: Robyn Beck/AFP/GettyImages from website: http://nbclatino.com

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