TRANSLATION
as a Generative Construct for Lesson Ideas

Do you have students who are the children of immigrants?

Do your students have experience translating/interpreting or "brokering" language for others?

Here are a series of activities to explore students' experiences as language and culture brokers, and to connect the skills youth use in this work to academic literacy skills. By "language brokering" we mean the many ways in which the children of immigrants use their knowledge of two languages to speak, read, write, listen and do things for others.

Lessons Designed By

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Sections

Introduction
& Overview

The activities are designed in the "Cultural Modeling" tradition as developed by Carol Lee (see her book *Culture, Literacy and Learning: Taking Bloom in the Midst of the Whirlwind*) in which everyday language and cultural practices that students engage in outside of school are treated as resources for learning in school, and used for building disciplinary knowledge and cultivating academic language. The goal of these activities is to help all students to expand their repertoires of linguistic practice by connecting school-valued language skills to the language skills they cultivate in their everyday lives, and to empower students by helping them to reframe their own abilities, and validate them.

This Involves

1. Working with students to identify what they know and do well in their lives outside of school

2. Working with students to raise awareness about the skills they deploy as they engage in those activities

3. Identifying analogues with school-valued language skills

4. Helping students to draw connections between their everyday competencies and those that are valued in school

We have designed activities that can be adapted for use with children of any age, and for classrooms that include children who have experiences as translators/interpreters or language brokers for their families as well as those who do not – though our unit on persuasive writing will be easiest to implement in grades 6-12. Where possible, we have indicated which activities are more appropriate for older and younger students, and/or suggested how to adapt the activities for different kinds of classrooms. We have also identified corresponding California State Standards.

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To learn more about Carol Lee visit her faculty profile page at the Northwestern School of Education and Social Policy Website:

www.sesp.northwestern.edu

Introduction
& Overview

About the Activities & Lessons

The first set of activities is designed to elicit what students already know about translating/interpreting or language brokering, and specific experiences they have had with the practice. We present a core set of activities for learning about students' experiences, as well as additional activities to deepen and extend their explorations of this work. The collective experiences of students in any given classroom then become resources to draw on as you proceed with the lessons. Throughout the year, as well as during these activities, we encourage you to reference students' specific experiences through such statements as, "Remember when Juan told us about translating a jury summons for his mother?"

Following the set of introductory activities, we describe a series of lessons that leverage language brokering experiences for the development of persuasive writing skills. This persuasive writing unit is described in more detail in Martinez, Orellana, Pacheco and Carbone et. all (2008) and Pacheco (2009).

Finally, we suggest other ways that translation can serve as a generative construct that can be infused throughout the curriculum, with "translations" to math, science, Social Studies and beyond.

A Note About Adapting the Unit

These lessons are not scripts that need to be followed rigidly. Pick and choose the activities that make most sense for your students and your subject matter. You might want to spend more time on some activities than on others. And there are many related issues that can be explored – for example, you might discuss language policies, immigrant rights, and immigrant family contributions to society (with language brokering serving as an important contribution) – even as you also use this material to develop academic literacy.

Teacher Feedback

These lessons are a work in progress and we would love to hear from you as you try them out in your classroom, or try related new activities. We would also love to hear your own ideas for building on bilingual youths' language experiences. Tell us what you tried and how these things worked in your classroom. Your comments will become part of the repository and available to other teachers as well.

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Further Reading

"Found in Translation: Connecting Translating Experiences to Academic Writing," a paper originally published in *Language Arts* in 2008, is avaiable for free access by permission of the authors (Ramon Martinez, Marjorie Faustich Orellana, Marinana Pacheco, and Paula Carbone). See the Lesson Resources for the manuscript version of this paper.

"Toward Expansive Learning: Examining Chicano/a and Latino/a Students' Political-historical Knowledge," a paper originally published in Language Arts in 2009, is avaiable for free access by permission of the author (Marianna Pacheco). See the Lesson Resources for the manuscript version of this paper.

Feedback Wiki

To offer feedback and share resources please join our Translation Generative Lessons Wiki:

http://translategenlessons.pbworks.com/

Basic
Introductory Activities

These activities are designed to introduce students to the construct of "language brokering" or everyday translation/interpretation: to see and value what they already know about this practice, and to generate a list of their experiences as language brokers that can serve as resources for learning.

Introduce the Construct of Language Brokering

Introduce the construct of language brokering with any of the following cultural data sets and have students discuss what they understand about language brokering based on these items and/or their own experiences.

Journal Entries

Journal entries written by other youth about their experiences as language brokers. You might choose a variety of samples representing different kinds of situations, and/or written by children that are more or less the same age as your students. The original journal entries along with questions for discussion with students can be accessed in the Lesson Resources Section.

Language Brokering Event Video

Video clip of "Vin Vin" (self-selected pseudonym) working with his father to fill out an English form. This is a common kind of language brokering activity, in which children help their parents to fill out forms. As we see in the video clip, language brokering may not involve direct forms of translation/interpretation, but more of a pooling of linguistic resources. In the video we see a father and son work together to decipher and respond to a series of questions on a form that was required by the school for participation in a field trip.

Journal Entries

Samy, age 15
interpreting in public spaces

María, age 10
helping her mother with her ESL homework – reading and writing stories

Brianna, age 12
helping her mother to choose a birthday card for her father

Miguel, age 10
going with his father to return an item to a store

See these Journal Entries in the Lesson Resources.

Language Brokering Video & Audio Commentary

To access the video clips and companion audio commentary, please refer to the downloadable Media Pack in the Teachers' Workroom section of the XChange Website.

www.centerxchange.org/teachers-workroom

Basic
Introductory Activities

Language Brokering Examples from Popular Culture

Film: Bajo la Misma Luna (Chapter 11 – 46:00 minutes)

This is a brief episode showing the young protagonist speaking for his adult companion as they try to find a job to help them get to California. The actual language brokering event is not shown in the film, but we see the young child brokering a deal for himself and his adult companion.

Film: Spanglish (Chapter 3 and 13)

Chapter 3 shows a child serving as a language broker at a restaurant with her mother.

Chapter 13 shows the child serving as language broker between her mother and her mother's employer. This is a highly "dramatized" version of language brokering. The girl in the film provides a more or less literal translation of what her mother says, complete with gestures and body language. The children we observed more typically acted in more reserved ways that were appropriate to their positions as children talking to and for adults. You might discuss with students how this scene accords with their own experiences.

Picture books (for younger children):

1. Pepita Talks Twice/Pepita Habla Dos Veces by Ofelia Dumas Lachtman, Illustrated by Alex Pardo Delange

2. I Speak English for my Mom by Muriel Stanek, Illustrated by Judith Friedman

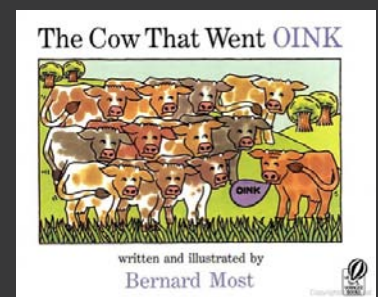3. The Cow That Went OINK written and illustrated by Bernard Most

Available on Google Books for free access:

http://books.google.com/

Search: Pepita Talks Twice
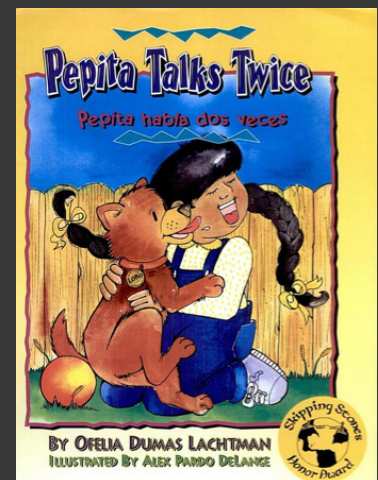
Search: The Cow That Went OINK

Basic
Introductory Activities

Additional Resources and Ideas

Share Personal Experiences
Listening & Speaking 1.0; 1.8

Invite students to talk about their own experiences similar to these. Students may work individually or in small groups using this handout to analyze their experiences in terms of who was there, what was being translated, where this took place, and the feelings that were expressed. Students may then share out and the teacher can create a class chart modeled on the handout, summarizing all of the experiences that student's name. Additional questions to guide the discussion could include:

1. How does the setting influence how you feel about language brokering? Think especially about the difference between public and private settings.

2. How can the participants make translating/interpreting easier or harder? Is it easier to translate for some people than for others? Why or why not?

3. What kinds of tasks are easier/harder to translate? What makes them hard? How do you handle the challenges?

Define the Term
Reading 1.0

Ask students what they might call this activity. See if they offer a label for the practice, such as translating or interpreting. However, they may not have a name for the practice; they may just see it as something they do for their parents ("I speak English for my mom.")

Introduce the term "language brokering" and ask students to brainstorm a definition.

Students may share these definitions and the teacher can help to construct a group definition. Compare this with the definition offered by Orellana (2009): the many ways in which children of immigrants "use their knowledge of two languages to speak, read, write, listen and do things for others," and with the dictionary definitions for translating and interpreting.

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Activities
to Deepen the Construct

Puzzle Share
ELA-Listening & Speaking 1.11

Students work in small groups or at a center to become "experts" on any of the cultural data sets we have provided, or students' reports on their own language brokering experiences. Who is involved in each episode? What is being translated/interpreted? Where is this taking place? How do the participants feel? Or, how would YOU feel if you were in this situation? Have you ever been in a similar situation?

Home Share
ELA-Reading 2.2

Invite students to bring in examples of things they have translated at home. You could create a bulletin board display of "things we have translated for our families." Students could work in small groups to share written material they have translated and discuss what challenges they faced and how they dealt with them. They could re-enact the translation situations together.

Journals
ELA-Writing Applications 2.1

Invite students to keep journals of their own, documenting their experiences as language brokers. Ask them to record who they translate for, where this takes place, what they translated, and how they felt about this. Was it easy or hard? What made it easy/hard? Consider offering students the opportunity to earn ongoing "extra credit" by reporting on this everyday work that they do at home. This could be "community service" credit as well, as children are using their skills to help others in their families and communities. "real" situation felt like in comparison with the dramatized versions. These role-plays could also be audio recorded or video recorded for students to watch and reflect upon later.

These activities may be used to deepen and extend these explorations of everyday language brokering experiences. It can be valuable to spend time exploring students' language brokering in and of itself, rather than simply using the practice as a stepping-stone to school tasks. Language brokering involves a complex set of linguistic, cultural, and content skills, and you can help students to see and appreciate these complexities. By examining this work in school, you might help to make their future language brokering experiences outside of school into more robust learning opportunities. Your students may reflect more thoughtfully on those experiences and approach them in more conscious ways.

Activities
to Deepen the Construct

Drawing
Visual and Performing Arts-Creative Expression 2.6

Ask students to draw themselves in language brokering situations.Use students' drawings for further discussion of how they felt in these situations. (Were they literally "in the middle" between the speakers? How did that feel? How did it feel to be a child speaking to and for adults?)

Drama/Role play
Visual and Performing Arts, Theatre-Creative Expression 2.2

Act out language brokering situations. Have students play the parts of the people that were involved. Talk about how they handled each situation. How did it feel? What was easy/hard? How did they handle these challenges? Note that the re-enactments will be dramatized versions of reality. Talk with students about what the "real" situation felt like in comparison with the dramatized versions. These role-plays could also be audio recorded or video recorded for students to watch and reflect upon later.

Graphing
Look at these graphs of Chicago students' language brokering experiences:
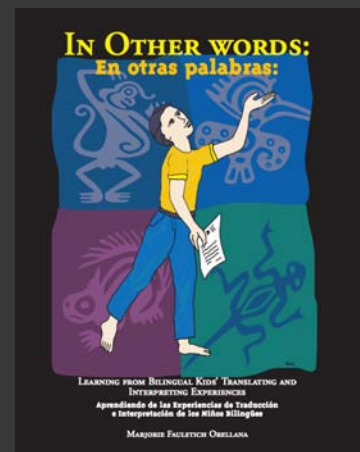

Create similar graphs of the class' language brokering experiences. Have students compare their experiences with those of the Chicago students.

Graphing Examples

Full size images of these graphs can be accessed on pages 2 and 4 of the *In Other Words* brochure.

See the Lesson Resources for this brochure.

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Activities
to Deepen the Construct

The Math of Everyday Language Brokering
ELA-Reading 2.2-work place documents

Have students identify how they engage with math concepts within the context of language brokering. For example, have they helped their parents apply for credit or mortgages, fill out tax forms, write checks, make purchases, shop for sales items, make decisions about Internet/phone package deals, check receipts, financial transactions? (These are all things that students in our research project told us they had done.) What did they learn from these activities? What was hard/easy about them?

The Science of Everyday Language Brokering
Have students identify how they engage with science concepts within the context of language brokering. This could include health-related language brokering, reading product labels, or recipes.

### Social Studies in Everyday Language Brokering
Through language brokering, children help their families to engage in many kinds of civic activities, and more generally, to be productive citizens. They may be exposed to some specific social studies concepts through such language brokering activities as reading jury summons, letters from social service agencies, voter registration materials, or citizenship exam study materials.

Including Students who do not have Experience as Language Brokers
These students may write/talk about times they have seen other people work as language brokers. They may think of times when someone else acted as a language broker for them when they did not understand the language being used. They may also think about how they speak differently in different places or in different relationships – a form of "translation" across registers or varieties of English.

Discussion

Read and discuss the *In Other Words* brochure with your students.
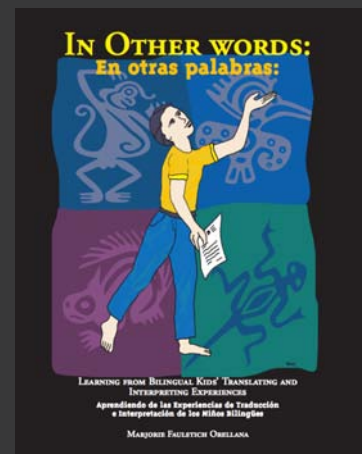
See the Lesson Resources for this brochure.

Connecting
Language Brokering
to Academic Literacies

Next, we present a unit plan that is designed to leverage everyday language brokering skills toward the development of academic literacy, specifically the writing of persuasive essays.

California Language Arts Standards for 9th/10th grades:
Writing Applications 2.4; Speaking Applications 2

The goal of the unit is for students to write a persuasive essay on the same topic to two different audiences, and to identify how they change their essays to make their arguments appropriate and convincing for each audience. We begin with lessons that help students see how they adapt their language for different audiences in language brokering situations. The point here is that translation/interpretation is never exactly "verbatim" (especially in language brokering situations, where the focus is on helping people to understand, not approximate literal translations). The goal is to help students see both how and why they modify their language for different speakers.

Following this, we extend from "translation" across languages to changes in register within language, and then help students to apply this to the development of persuasive essays.

Introduction to the Unit

Begin by explaining the eventual goal of the unit: to write persuasive essays that are effective for different audiences. Encourage students to begin thinking about issues they are concerned about and arguments that they would like to make for someone to voice their ideas about those issues. Emphasize that we will be building on the linguistic virtuosity (language skills) that they display everyday in language brokering situations; Show examples of youth reflecting on how they shift their language as they speak to different people in language brokering situations.

Working with the chart of language brokering experiences, call attention to the "who" column. Ask students to think and talk about how they change the way they talk when they interact with different people.

Using the list of the class' language brokering experiences, ask for volunteers to act out situations.

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A Note About Adapting the Unit

These lessons are designed to work in classrooms with a mix of students (those with language brokering experiences and those who do not have such experiences). They could be modified for younger students, but are probably most appropriate for students in grades 6-12.

Introduction Objective

Students will be able to see how they adapt the ways they talk when they interact with different kinds of people in language brokering situations.

Notes

These re-enactments of actual language brokering situations are inauthentic, and thus students probably won't speak or feel as they did in the actual encounters. Talk with students about those differences. How did it feel when you were speaking to the actual bank manager/principal/doctor/etc.?

Connecting
Language Brokering
to Academic Literacies

These can be recorded (either with audio or video recordings) for students to be able to slow down the process and see the same event several times. Have the class listen and identify how the message was modified for each audience. i.e. Did the translator/interpreter say exactly the same thing in each language? If not, what changed? Why might s/he have done this? Have the translator/interpreter explain why s/he thinks she changed the message.

Have students work in small groups to act out additional language brokering situations. Each situation will involve a language broker and two or more "audiences" (the people for whom translation is needed). Other students can listen in as an extended audience, and help to identify how the message changes.

Lesson I
ELA-Listening & Speaking 1.1

Show the class this highway sign

Note: underneath this sign was another sign (see the Lesson Resources for both versions). The second sign was in Spanish, ostensibly providing a "translation."

Ask students if they have ever seen this sign. (Invite personal experiences.) Unpack the message. What is it saying? Who is it directed to? Where might it be located? (on the highway near the U.S./Mexico border) Why does it say "Caution"? How are some different ways this sign could be understood or read by different people? Orally to the class.

Ask students: How would you translate this into Spanish? (Elicit translations; refer to Spanish-English dictionary to substantiate translations).

Uncover the "translation" ("prohibido"). Ask the class: Does this mean the same thing as "caution"? Who is this message intended for? Why does the sign say "Caution" in English and "Prohibido" in Spanish? See Pacheco, 2009.

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Connecting
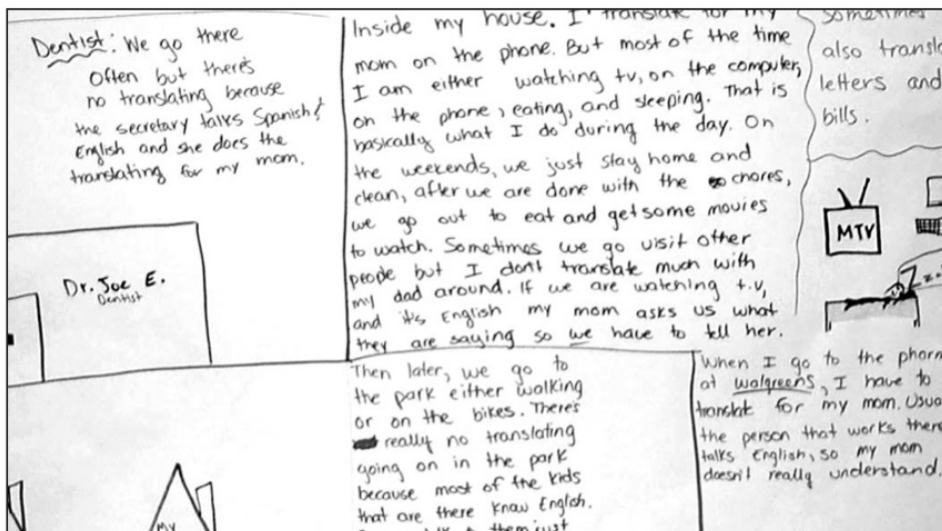## Language Brokering
to Academic Literacies

For the purposes of this introductory lesson, the focus is on the fact that translations/interpretations invariably are never verbatim and are shaped by many contextual influences, especially assumptions that the speaker/writer makes about who their audience is.

Another activity could involve having students look at video clips in which the same message is constructed differently for different audiences. Advertisers do this all the time when they want to sell the same product to a different target audience. Here is one example of a lesson for this. Look for lesson 3D, "Ads R Us: Understanding Target Marketing"

Lesson II

Have students brainstorm their activities over the last 24 hours. What did they do? Who did they do it with? What kind of talking/writing was involved?

Students may draw "maps" of their activities: sketching what they did, who they did it with, and how they used language in each activity (See example).

Lesson II Objective

Students will be able to see how they change the ways they talk and/or write when they interact with different kinds of people in other everyday situations (not just language brokering).

Student Map Example

The full size example map can be found on Page 5 of the *In Other Words* brochure. See the Lesson Resources Section for the brochure.

13-year-old Jessica, the daughter of immigrants from Mexico to Chicago, drew a "typical day" in her life, noting where and when she sometimes translates for her mother.

Jessica (13 años) hija de inmigrantes de México a Chicago, dibujó "un día típico" en su vida, notando dónde y cuándo ella a veces traduce para su madre.

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Connecting
Language Brokering
to Academic Literacies

Ask students to think about how they shift the way they talk with different people and in different situations. Help them to identify specific ways they do so, and why.

Help students to identify ways they shift language that go beyond vocabulary. They might say they speak "more proper," "more correct" or "more formal." Help them to identify just what they mean by these notions of correctness/formality:

1. Do they speak in longer/shorter sentences?

2. What information do they make explicit for each audience, and what information do they assume their audience already knows?

3. Do they change their positioning? (i.e. what pronouns do they use – "we," "they," "you," or "them"?)

4. Does their body language change? Where do they more freely, use more gestures, or feel more relaxed? How does this body language map onto the language they use, and how they feel in each situation?

5. Does their tone of voice change? Do they use different inflexions and different volume levels as they speak with different people or in different situations?

6. Why did we change voice/inflexions, volume levels in these different situations

Lesson III

Show students the California State Standards for persuasive writing that are relevant for their grade level. Explain that these standards are written for teachers, and are designed to guide instruction. (Discuss the shaping effect of standards on instruction.) Ask students to work with a partner to "translate" this standard for a friend or a younger brother or sister – i.e. a familiar audience who doesn't understand the standards. This "translation" is really an explanation. Think about how you are going to reword this standard to make sense for this person.

After explaining the standard to this person, have students construct an argument for why this is (or is not) an important standard. How would they argue that to their friend/brother/sister/parents? Have volunteers deliver their "translations" and arguments through pronoun use), and form (i.e. what mode of presentation is most convincing for each audience?)

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Notes

Students may readily identify vocabulary shifts. Help them to consider why they use different words with different people, and what those differences imply. Does it mean the same thing to say "dilapidated" and "messed up?" When would you use one kind of word? When would you use the other? But it is also important to help students identify ways they shift language that go beyond vocaulary, such as grammar and tone.

Lesson III Objective

Students will be able to understand the California State Standards for writing persuasive essays, and be able to "translate" the standards into "everyday" language. A secondary goal is for students to be able to recognize different genres of writing by working with both explanations and argumentation.

Connecting
Language Brokering to Academic Literacies

Lesson IV

Remind students of what we have done so far (summarize).

Tell students that we are now going to focus more on how to write effective arguments. Write "argument" on the board and invite discussion of what it means. Accept all ideas and discuss the differences between argument as a fight and argument as taking a stance. Clarify that we are focusing on "taking a stance" and emphasize that this is an important skill for speaking up about things that are unfair in the world. Give a few examples or ask for examples when this has helped people. Emphasize that there are a few things that are very important in building arguments: having something to say, being able to back up your ideas, and knowing who you are trying to convince.

Brainstorm with students things that they feel are wrong or unfair, that they want to change, or that they feel really strongly about. Students may work with partners or in small groups to generate a list of issues. Share back with the whole group.

Students choose one of these issues to develop over the next few days. Begin by thinking about the people or groups they want to direct their argument to. Emphasize that these should be real audiences – people to whom we can send the letters that we will write. Students should choose two different audiences to direct their argument.

Model presenting the arguments to specific audiences.

Choose an issue, and audience, and model speaking to that audience.

Model arguing the same issue for a different audience.

Students may work with partners to practice arguing their positions (orally) to two different audiences.

Have students rate these arguments by responding to the questions above. What could they have added or removed to make these arguments more or less convincing for the audience?

Lesson IV Objective

Students will be able to identify an issue and take a stance in a written argument.

Discuss

Do you think your friend/sibling would understand the explanation you provided? Do you think s/he would be convinced by the argument? How could you make the explanation clearer for this person? How could you make the argument more convincing?

Connecting
Language Brokering to Academic Literacies

Lesson V

Introduce the idea that it's not just how we use our voices but what we say that matters as we speak to different audiences. Introduce the concept of "evidence" and ways of backing up one's claims.

Have students brainstorm at least three reasons that each audience should take their position on this argument. Are these reasons the same for each audience? Would each audience find the evidence equally convincing? Share these with a partner and discuss how to make the arguments even more convincing. What might this person say in response if s/he did not agree? How could these counter-arguments be taken into account?

Have students review and discuss two arguments (take arguments written by other classes or in other lessons or included in these lessons). Have students discuss why these arguments are more or less effective.

Lesson VI

The next step in this unit of study involves having students write their persuasive essays for two different audiences. See Martínez et al for examples.

Students will benefit from having time to workshop their writing with peers, where they can focus specifically on how to make their arguments more effective for each audience. Help students to identify where and how they shifted their language across the essays and where and how they did not. How could they stretch further and make each essay even more appropriate for each audience? Use the guiding questions in Lesson X (above) to focus students' attention on the many different kinds of shifts that can be involved, at the level of lexicon (vocabulary), syntax (grammar), content (i.e. evidence for claims), positioning (i.e. level of familiarity that they assume with each audience, and how this is signaled through pronoun use), and form (i.e. what mode of presentation is most convincing for each audience?)

Lesson V Objective

Students will be able to continue building persuasive writing skills by focusing on what constitutes good evidence for claims.

Lesson VI Objective

Students will be able to write persuasive essays and "translate" them for different audiences.

Extending
Translation as a
Generative Construct

We suggest a few activities that are designed to connect language brokering experiences to academic language skills across subject matter. We hope these will inspire you to identify other ways to connect to the material you teach.

Translation in Different Genres

Have students explain something to two different audiences: one audience that is familiar with the thing being explained, and one that is not. Examine the difference in these explanations. Have students identify where additional background information may be required.

Have students write reports (recounts) to different audiences: one that shared in the experience and one that did not. Call attention especially to where the shared background information shaped the specificity of details in the report.

You can involve students in a lesson where they examine college applications (source internet for models) how do these people represent themselves in this application? What is important and why? Link this to situations where students have helped others to fill out relevant and important information in applications (loans, assistance etc.)

Translation Across Genres

Have students "translate" an explanation into an argument (modeling on Lesson? above). For example, ask them to explain immigration reform (or some topic you are covering in class) and then argue for or against it.

Translation Within Subject Matter

Have students translate subject matter texts for different audiences, or write subject matter reports for two or more different audiences.

Translation Across Subject Matter

Have students "translate" a science concept into a mathematical equation, a poem, or a dance. Discuss how to stay true to the concept but conform to the expectations of the subject matter or discipline. What choices do I have to make to communicate in this subject matter?

Translation in a Different Medium

Have students translate an idea into a different media, from words to images, from text message to face-to-face conversation, or from radio to TV. Have them discuss how different characteristics of each medium can influence the message.

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The Possibilities are Endless

The point, however is not simply to have students do this translation work, but to connect this school-focused translation work to their skills and experiences as everyday language brokers, and to use the collective sets of experiences to expand their repertoires of linguistic practice. This may help students to grow in metalinguistic awareness and to cultivate transcultural dispositions. Thus it is important to help them to reflect on and analyze both how and why they change their language as they move across genres, subject matter/disciplines, and audiences.

Finally, whenever possible, we also encourage you to make specific references to students' experiences and explicit connections between the skills and knowledge demanded in language brokering situations and those demanded at school. You can also draw connections to subject specific material. For example, you might initiate an economics class discussion with this scenario: "When Estela helped her father to fill out a credit card application, she had to distinguish between her father's gross annual income and his net annual income. Let's talk about what these terms mean."

Lesson Resources

"Found in Translation:
Connecting Translating Experiences to Academic Writing,"
Manuscript Version of Paper as per authors' permission

"Toward Expansive Learning:
Examining Chicano/a and Latino/a Students' Political-historical Knowledge,"
Manuscript Version of Paper as per author's permission

Student Journal Entries

In Other Words Brochure

The Highway Signs: "Caution" and "Prohibido"

Found In Translation

Connecting Translating Experiences to Academic Writing

Authors: Ramón Martínez, Marjorie Faulstich Orellana, Mariana Pacheco, and Paula Carbone

Abstract

Writing activities aimed at leveraging the translating/interpreting experiences of bilingual students in a sixth-grade English language arts classroom provide an opportunity for these students to develop meta-linguistic awareness and showcase their ability to shift voices for different audiences.

Found in Translation: Connecting Translating Experiences to Academic Writing

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There's a lot of things at Brigham Middle School that need to change because as students we can't really concentrate on school when our school looks dilapidated and poor. One of the biggest problems we have is we don't have enough supplies for everyone. Most students can't do any work because our textbooks are falling apart, old, and are tagged on. The one thing that bugs me and the students at Brigham is our school police is always watching our every move like we are criminals. The police get us by the neck and pull us around. I'm sure if our school got more money for school supplies, students would concentrate more and get better test scores. Students are hungry all the time and our school doesn't give good food. So if students don't eat lunch or nutrition, when students are in the middle of class, they think about food and zone out. As you could see, there's a lot of things that need to change not only at our school, but in everyone's school. If the district gave students more money and supplies, the students would try to stay in school and pay attention and get better test scores. So we need a lot of money for our school.

In this essay, Christina, a sixth-grade student at Brigham Middle School in East Los Angeles, attempts to persuade local school district officials that certain changes are needed at her school. Christina's writing, like that of students throughout the nation,

represents an approximation of a discourse style that is closely associated with school. Put simply, this is the way that many students think they are supposed to write. This perception is no accident. In schools nationwide, students are often explicitly taught that there is a *right* way to write, and they read many examples of rigid, highly-structured, and dispassionate prose in their textbooks. They are then evaluated on how closely they can reproduce or mimic this particular writing style, which seldom reflects the discursive practices in which they engage outside of school. Rather than learn that there are multiple styles of writing and communicating, each with its own affordances and limitations, students are taught to privilege particular kinds of academic discourse above all others.

Although it is essential to help students develop skills for communicating through dominant styles of discourse, we need to do more than expose students to a single, *correct* way of writing. If we only cultivate a single academic voice, we fail to recognize and build on what students already know and do with language in their everyday lives. What gets lost is the full range of students' linguistic and communicative repertoires. Consider, for example, the essay below, in which Christina asserts to a *classmate* the same core argument that she had presented to school district officials—that changes are needed at their school.

Don't you think our school needs to change because it's ugly and poor? The school needs a lot more money for us. They need to give us more school supplies. The school has some police. They're stupid and they bug. They pull us by the neck and scream at us like we're their kids. I feel like socking them, but we can't 'cause it would go on our record and get suspended, but it's called self-defense. The food here sucks. It's not cooked right and sometimes the chicken patty has blood and it's all nasty. When I don't eat at lunch or nutrition 'cause the food's nasty, I don't do my work and my homework. I can't concentrate when I'm hungry and our school is ugly and wack.

What becomes apparent upon comparing Christina's two essays is her ability to shift her voice for different audiences. As we detail below, Christina's audience awareness is evident in her use of various discursive strategies. However, if we were to look at either of her essays in isolation, we would not see the range of Christina's linguistic repertoire. Ours would be a very limited view of her capabilities and skills. This, we would argue, is precisely what happens to students in schools throughout the country. Their vast repertoires of linguistic skills often go unseen and untapped.

Christina's essays were written as part of an assignment that required her to write a persuasive essay about an important social issue for two different audiences. This assignment was part of a research study that we conducted at Brigham in 2006. Over a period of three months, we worked closely with Ms. García, a first-year teacher at Brigham, to develop a set of curricular activities that would leverage her students' experiences translating between English and Spanish to help them develop conventional academic writing skills. We focused on helping students recognize the extent to which they were already capable of shifting voices for different audiences as translators. Our goal was to help them see how the skills that they were using when they translated between English and Spanish in everyday contexts could also be applied to academic writing assignments. This article describes the process through which we helped Ms. García's students identify the skills they already possessed, recognize such skills as valuable within the context of school, and apply them to a specific academic task.

Context of the Study

We set out to work with the students in Ms. García's classroom and to document that work from beginning to end. Our work started in the fall of 2005, when we began meeting with Ms. García on a bi-weekly basis to discuss her students' language practices, read and discuss research and theory related to translating, and engage in collaborative "work circles," the purpose of which was to begin co-designing a curricular unit. We also worked closely with Ms. García to negotiate our roles as researchers in her classroom.

In the spring of 2006, we began working in Ms. García's classroom. Our research team consisted of one research professor, one post-doctoral fellow, and three graduate students (the authors of this manuscript). The entire team was never in the classroom at the same time, but all members were involved in co-designing and implementing the curricular activities, working with the students, and collecting data. Data collection consisted of video-taping and/or audio-taping all classroom activities, writing fieldnotes, and collecting samples of student work.

The class that we observed was Ms. García's language arts/social studies instructional block. All 30 of Ms. García's students were Latino sixth-graders, and about a third of them had been officially classified as English Learners. This classification over-simplifies the variation that existed among students. While all students spoke English, a wide range of language practices could be observed among them. Some spoke more English than Spanish, others more Spanish than English, and others seemed to speak both with roughly equal proficiency. All of them had some form of experience with translating in English and/or Spanish across formal and/or informal settings.

"Seeing" Translation through Theory

Our work in Ms. García's classroom was informed by sociocultural perspectives that view everyday language practices as valuable cultural resources—or funds of knowledge (Moll et al, 1992)—that can be built upon in school. Studies of language uses in everyday contexts (Barton and Hamilton, 1998; González, 2001; Guerra, 1998; Heath, 1983; Zentella, 1997) have documented the rich repertoires of oral and literate practices that people engage in their everyday lives, and sociocultural researchers often call upon teachers and schools to recognize, validate, and build upon these practices. Often, however, these researchers offer only minimal specifications for how to do this.

Some research has focused on attempts to make school practices more like home language and literacy practices. Teachers have been called upon to alter the *forms* of school practices: to allow more or less "wait time" in turn-taking conversations in classrooms (Au, 1980; Philips, 1983); to shift patterns of eye gaze; to ask different kinds of questions (Ballenger, 1999); and to be more explicit in making requests of students (Delpit, 1995). But while awareness of cultural variations in ways of talking and doing things can help teachers to be careful in their interpretations of what goes on in classrooms, students are more adaptable than this approach may acknowledge, and their practices are more varied and dynamic. In addition, this approach tends to reinforce static, stereotypical, and essentialized ideas about members of particular social groups. It leads, for example, to statements like "Mexican students do this; Chinese students do that." Further, we are not convinced that alignment of school and home discourse styles is practically possible, especially when teachers meet up with students from diverse cultural backgrounds — or even with the range of practices that are likely within *any* community.

The "Cultural Modeling" tradition (Lee, 1993; 1995a; 2001; 2007) offers a different way of linking home and school practices. This approach identifies analogues

between everyday cultural and linguistic practices and disciplinary modes of reasoning. This is done first by developing a deep understanding of the practices students engage in outside of school, and then determining the most generative ways of mapping these skills onto academic processes. Carol Lee (Ibid.) established this tradition through close analyses of the rhetorical skill of "signifying" as it is deployed by many African Americans in the United States today; she identified parallels between this practice and the use of metaphors and similes in sophisticated literary texts, and demonstrated, using student-generated examples, that their everyday language practices were a powerful resource for interpreting such texts. Our work builds on this "Cultural Modeling" tradition by identifying parallels between the skills involved in translation and more formal academic literacy skills.

Our work in Ms. García's classroom was informed by prior ethnographic research in bilingual communities conducted by one of the authors over the last decade. This research documented bilingual youths' experiences with translation, mapping the wide range of ways that they translate for monolingual speakers, as well as the social, cognitive, and linguistic strategies that they use to do so (Authors, 2001; 2003a; 2003b; 2006). In this project, we built on this ethnographic base by looking at school practices to identify generative ways of connecting these everyday skills to academic language development. We saw many potential points of leverage, but decided to focus first on writing, and, in particular, on audience awareness skills.

Students' Experiences with Translating

We knew from this prior ethnographic research that there are significant variations in youths' translation experiences both within and across communities, and even within and across households. Eldest children are more likely to be active family translators than are the younger ones in a family. Families who have lived in the U.S. for longer periods of time may not rely on youth as much as newer immigrant families, and the distribution of translation work may shift over time as new family members arrive from home countries, and/or as siblings are born or parents learn English. In some communities, there are few bilingual services and, as a result, more everyday demands on youth translators than in other settings. Even in rather "settled" immigrant communities, most bilingual youth do at least *some* everyday sorts of translating, however, and we wanted to take stock of the sets of experiences that *this* group of youth could collectively tap into.

And so we began our curricular work by posing questions about Ms. García's students' translating experiences. We learned that some students translated relatively little, while others translated a great deal. Some students brokered language for a small number of relatives or loved ones, in a limited number of settings; others translated for multiple people, in different contexts, and for multiple purposes on a fairly regular basis. Students described translating at home, church, stores, banks, restaurants, and schools, among other places. They talked about translating letters, bills, television news programs, phone calls, parent-teacher conferences, sales interactions, restaurant orders, and various other in-person conversations. They also shared that they had interpreted for siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors, teachers, administrators, classmates, new students, and even strangers. Overall, students' translating experiences covered a wide range of audiences, purposes, and contexts. This is important because our

curriculum was designed to tap into their *collective* body of experiences, and to use this as a generative source of inspiration.

The Value of Translating

We also wanted to know what students understood about the value of translating. During a group discussion, we elicited students' understandings by asking them to talk about how they thought translating helped them—or *might* help them—in school. In these discussions, students demonstrated sophisticated understandings of the social and cultural nature of language practices. They recognized how translation practices were embedded in social and cultural practices and used for real purposes in the social world. This contrasts with dominant views of language that separate the range of language codes, registers, genres, and scripts people use from the social-cultural contexts in which we use them.

For the most part, students framed translating as something that *could* be used to help others. Javier, for example, said, "If someone's from a different state and they don't speak English, you could probably *help them with what they're saying*." Jonas suggested, "If someone comes from a different state and they move to another one and they speak a different language, you could *help them understand better*." Some students focused on hypothetical or distant situations in the future:

> **Pablo:** You have to know different languages, so like if you want to travel, you could go to *different cities* and you'll know what they're saying.

Cesar: Like when you go to *college* and you have a Spanish class, you would want to know how to translate Spanish so you would know what to do on your test or your homework.

Jonas: If you have a pen pal and if they're from a *different country…* like China, you could write them something.

In our effort to expand students' views of translation, and to help them see how it could be useful for *them* and have cognitive or academic utility, we made three separate attempts to reframe the discussion and emphasize how translating could help students personally in school. In spite of these attempts, however, students consistently emphasized out-of-school contexts and activities that involved helping others. They emphasized the *social* utility of translation rather than its cognitive dimensions, and they did not link translating to individual achievement—even after explicit prompting on our part. We point this out because it reveals the strength of students' orientation to the social utility of language. Students seemed to have an awareness of themselves as important social resources as translators for non-English-speakers at home, at school, and in society. We came to see that this is an important orientation to build upon, even as we also wanted to expand students' ideas to see how their knowledge of translation practices could also be useful for them, personally, and for their own schooling in the here-and-now.

That Ms. García's students did not appear to see a connection between this practice, with which they were all familiar and in which most of them engaged, and academic literacy skills (despite their awareness of its social utility in non-school contexts) is not necessarily surprising. Perhaps students do not see translating as useful or valuable in school precisely because it is not valued in school. Perhaps they have learned that schools value only a narrow range of language uses, and not their own larger

linguistic skill sets (e.g., their ability to use two languages and multiple registers in creative ways). After all, even in bilingual education programs, little attention is given to the skills involved in translating, and there has been an emphasis on language *separation* rather than on the movement of words and ideas *across* linguistic borders.

Through these discussions, we came to realize just how invisible and naturalized students' translation skills were to them. It became apparent to us that helping students to apply translating skills to their writing would require that we make visible this naturalized, unseen, and untapped language practice. Also, and perhaps more importantly, we would need to emphasize that it was acceptable—indeed, important—to utilize their full linguistic repertoires for academic tasks. In other words, we would need to give students the explicit "go ahead" to draw on language skills that they had for so long been taught to keep out of school.

Translating Re-enactments

In order to help students develop an awareness of what is involved in translation, we engaged them in a series of re-enactments of translation situations. Our primary goal was to help students grasp the idea that translation involves shifting one's voice in order to appropriately address a specific audience, and that shifts in voice involve not just transitions from one language—or code—to another, but also important changes in grammar, intonation, and vocabulary. We used the re-enactments of actual translating experiences to help students see how they already shifted voice in these everyday language practices, and to analyze what was involved in doing so.

First, we asked students to meet in small groups to talk about times when they had translated or witnessed translation. Each group worked together to plan a dramatized re-

enactment of one translation experience. The students then re-enacted these in front of the entire class. After each re-enactment, we engaged the class in a discussion, asking students to share what they had noticed about what words the translator had chosen, what special demands or challenges had arisen, and how the translator had dealt with these.

To build students' understanding of the notion of voice, we asked them how the translator in each scene had shifted her/his voice in order to communicate with each audience. We tried to get students to look beyond differences in code (i.e., English vs. Spanish) and pay attention, as well, to things like grammar, intonation, and vocabulary. Again, students compared the re-enactments with their own translating experiences, and we discussed the appropriateness of using particular voices in particular situations and for particular audiences. This explicit emphasis on shifting one's voice was an essential part of the analysis process that we mentioned above, as it helped us highlight for students an important component of the translating skills that they already possessed.

Writing: Students "Voice" Their Opinions

The centerpiece of this study was a writing assignment that we hoped would allow students to demonstrate their ability to shift voices for different audiences. We began by asking students to choose a social issue about which they felt strongly. In pairs and small groups, students met to brainstorm ideas and generate lists of possible issues. Next, we met as a whole group to share our ideas and brainstorm a list of people to whom we could present our arguments. We emphasized that these should be *real* audiences—people to whom we could actually send letters or with whom we could actually speak in person. As students generated this list, we wrote these potential audiences down on index cards for subsequent use as part of a game to practice shifting voices when addressing different audiences. After these lists had been generated, we modeled the game by

choosing an issue, selecting an index card, and then presenting an argument to the audience indicated on the card. While modeling, we asked students to help us decide how exactly to use our voice to address that particular audience.

Having modeled the game, we gave students extensive opportunities to play it in pairs. Afterwards, we engaged them in a discussion about how their voices had changed for each audience. We asked them what language(s) they had used, how they had changed their tone, and what words they had chosen for each audience. Did they say "the same thing" for each, or change the content of what they said? Did they use different evidence to convince each audience? Why did they make the choices they made? This discussion enabled us to further analyze and make explicit the skills and strategies involved in addressing different audiences. Although students did not use the same technical linguistic terms that we use here, they did notice that they had changed tones and used different vocabulary for different audiences.

Before beginning the actual writing assignment, we presented students with a graphic to help them organize their thoughts. We then prompted students to choose an issue and select two different audiences, briefly discussing audience selections that would be appropriate for the arguments they were developing. Students' task was to take a stance on their particular issue and write a persuasive essay for each audience. Although we explicitly instructed students to change their voices as they saw fit in order to persuade/convince each audience, we did not provide any further direction as to how they should do so. We worked with students in small groups to workshop their writing and engage in a peer editing process. We then asked students to pretend that they were the intended audiences and to focus their suggestions for revisions around these questions: How convincing will this argument be to this audience? How can the argument be made stronger? We emphasized that this could involve modifying the *content* of the arguments,

but also their *form.* We continuously referred back to the ways in which they had used their voices in the translation re-enactments, and discussed how "voice" could be conveyed on paper as well. We then typed up their final essays for them, showed them the typed version, guided them in further editing, and let them choose a font style and size.

Writing: Shifting Voices for Different Audiences

A close look at students' sets of essays reveals that they used various discourse strategies to shift their voices appropriately for each audience. In our discussion, we used Christina's essays to reveal these strategies, and draw in examples from other students' writing to elaborate on these points.

Grammar

If we turn again to Christina's first essay, in which she addresses school district officials, we see that she uses conditional clauses, a late-acquired grammatical structure that invokes a "scientific" notion of causality, which is arguably an effective way of bolstering an argument to an audience such as the school district. She communicates causality by using the *second conditional* in two separate sentences.

> *I'm sure if our school got more money for school supplies,*
>
> *students would concentrate more and get better test scores.*
>
> *If the District gave schools more money and supplies, the*
>
> *students would try to stay in school and pay attention and*
>
> *get better test scores.*

She also makes a similar causal argument by using a *general conditional* sentence. General conditionals communicate causality by expressing general patterns, rules, or truths, in which certain results necessarily follow certain conditions (e.g., If she works, she gets paid.).

> *So if students don't eat lunch or nutrition, when students are*
>
> *in the middle of class, they think about food and zone out.*

In addition to serving as an important component of Christina's argument structure, the use of conditional sentences above serves to convey a relatively formal voice, which seems appropriate for this relatively formal, authoritative, and distant audience. If we look at Christina's second essay, in which she addresses her classmate, we see her invoking a different kind of rationale. While she does use a *general conditional* sentence in her second essay (*When I don't eat in lunch or nutrition 'cause the food's nasty, I don't do my work and my homework.*), she is arguing here about a *personal* cause/effect—how *she* is affected when she does not eat lunch. Christina seems to display an implicit understanding of the kinds of arguments that will be more effective for each audience—for the district, an emotionally distanced approach that includes generalized, causal statements about the effects on *many* students of something that matters to this audience (test scores), and for her friend, a personalized, highly affected statement about the effects that the school lunches actually have on *her.*

Several other students also used conditional sentences in their essays directed towards more formal audiences. Although some students made use of *general conditional* sentences in their less formal essays, they tended to reserve the use of the *second conditional*, which communicates hypothetical causality, for their more formal essays. For example, Carlos, a student who chose to write about school uniforms, uses the

following *second conditional* sentence in an attempt to persuade his principal to change the school's uniform policy.

> *If you had to wear uniforms, you would agree with me about no uniforms.*

Interestingly, Carlos makes no use of the second conditional in his less formal essay, in which he addresses his parents. Like Christina, Carlos seems to have an implicit understanding of how to use different grammatical structures to tailor arguments to particular audiences.

Argument Structure

Another difference between Christina's essays lies in the argument structure. In the letter to the district, the argument is clean, neat, and sequentially organized, with little embellishment. Christina states the main problem, lists three related sub-problems, and then provides an example of each. In contrast, in her second essay, she interweaves her set of arguments with personal responses expressed in highly affective language. While she follows the same sequential argument structure, she asserts her feelings and experiences, and uses these *as evidence to bolster her claims*. Notice, for example, the difference between the two assertions below.

> Essay #1
>
> *The police get us by the neck and pull us around.*
>
> Essay #2
>
> *They pull us by the neck and scream at us like we're*
>
> *their kids. I feel like socking them…*

By referring to her own feelings and experiences, Christina personalizes the second essay, conveying familiarity and informality. This personalization may well make it a more

effective argument for a friend, who is likely to *care* about Christina's feelings, and may likely feel similarly herself. Again, the first essay contains little reference to Christina's personal or individual experiences or feelings. Instead, the focus is on providing evidence in the form of problems that all students at her school face. This difference suggests a keen awareness of the audience that she is addressing in each essay.

Several other students also incorporated their feelings and experiences in order to personalize their less formal essays. In an essay about school uniforms, for example, Elena incorporates her feelings when addressing her classmate Nicola. Notice how she complains about teachers and administrators not having to wear uniforms.

> *I feel like I am in a prison. I mean come on, it's not fair that they*
>
> *don't have to wear uniforms and we do.*

When presenting the same argument to her school's principal, Elena omits any mention of her personal feelings. She simply states, "*It is not fair that we students have to be wearing uniforms and the teachers and you don't have to.*" Again, while both of Elena's essays focus on the issue of fairness, only the less formal one contains any reference to her personal feelings. Much like Christina, Elena seems to craft an effective argument for her classmate by conveying familiarity through personalization.

Establishing Common Ground

Christina further demonstrates audience awareness through an implicit recognition of each audience's values, beliefs, and worldviews, and an attempt to construct common ground with them. In the first essay, for example, she twice emphasizes improved test scores as a potential result of increased investment in schools. She makes no mention of test scores when addressing her classmate in the second essay. By emphasizing test scores, Christina constructs an argument that is appropriate for the

purpose of attempting to persuade district officials, even though she recognizes that this argument will hold little weight for her friend. Christina also attempts to construct common ground by using a somewhat conversational tone (speaking to her audience as "you") that assumes shared agreement, when she writes: *"As you could see, there's a lot of things that need to change…"* With this, she reminds her audience that she has provided evidence to support her argument, and suggests that it is only logical that they should agree with her. This contrasts with how she seeks to establish common ground with her classmate in the second essay.

> *Don't you think our school needs to change because it's ugly*
>
> *and poor?*

When addressing her classmate, Christina attempts to establish common ground not with an abstract set of arguments, but by invoking shared experiences. She conveys informality by posing a question directly *to* her friend, using the first person familiar ("you"), and presupposing that her friend will agree. She also refers to their shared *ownership* of the school when she refers to the school as "ours." Again, these shifts in voice indicate that she is keenly aware of each audience's position and perspective, her positioning relative to each, and their positioning relative to the school.

Once again, we see that Christina is not alone in her ability to demonstrate audience awareness. Several of her classmates also seemed to display recognition of each audience's values and perspectives. Marisa, for example, chooses to write about students' right to walk out of school in support of the larger immigrants' rights marches that were taking place in town. In her first essay, in which she addresses the school principal, she seems to recognize the way in which student walkouts might be perceived by school administrators. Notice how she begins.

> *Well, as a student, I think we should have our rights. We should*
>
> *have the right to walk out because we are doing it for a reason.*

Marisa then goes on to explain what that reason is. The fact that she foregrounds the reason for the walkouts suggests that she recognizes that her principal might view students' actions as disobedient or opportunistic. It seems as if she is attempting to set the record straight, so to speak. She then attempts to establish common ground with the principal by encouraging him to perspective-take.

> *See, Sir, how would you like it if you were an immigrant and you*
>
> *crossed the border and you had to work in the hot sun picking the*
>
> *fruits and vegetables? See, you wouldn't like that.*

Marisa's strategy of inviting the principal to take the perspective of immigrant workers seems to be quite appropriate for this audience. What it suggests is that she recognizes that her principal might not fully understand or support the struggle for immigrants' rights, and that she needs to educate him. This approach seems to be an effective way of persuading him that student walkouts are in support of a worthy cause. In Marisa's second essay, which is addressed to Ms. García, she seeks to establish common ground by beginning and ending with an assumption of agreement.

<u>She begins with</u>:

Hey, Miss, don't you think we deserve our rights?

<u>She ends with</u>:

So, Miss, I know I can count on you.

Because the issue of immigrants' rights was a common topic in Ms. García's classroom, Marisa presumably knew where her teacher stood on this issue. By assuming that she already has her teacher's support, Marisa demonstrates an awareness of a shared set of beliefs and perspectives with respect to immigrants' rights. This is clear when she writes,

"So, Miss, please don't get mad at us if we walk out, because it's for a reason." It is significant that Marisa does not go on to elaborate or explain that reason in her second essay (as she does in her first essay). Again, this suggests that she is aware of her teacher's understanding of the issue. Like Christina, Marisa demonstrates recognition of each audience's position and perspective in relation to her own.

Vocabulary

Finally, Christina's audience awareness is most evident in the key lexical items that differ across her two essays. In the first essay, for example, Christina uses the word "dilapidated" to describe her middle school. This contrasts markedly with her use of the word "ugly" to make the same point when addressing her classmate. Christina also uses a number of colloquialisms in the second essay. Consider, for example, her use of colloquial vocabulary in the following sentences:

> *They're stupid and they **bug**.*
>
> *I feel like **socking** them…*
>
> *The food here **sucks**…*
>
> *…the chicken patty has blood and it's **all** nasty.*
>
> *The food's **nasty**.*
>
> *…and our school is ugly and **wack**.*

This colloquial vocabulary constitutes a specialized lexicon that signals familiarity and solidarity with her classmate. Indeed, many school district officials would presumably be unfamiliar with the specialized meanings of these words and/or would consider such vocabulary inappropriate.

This shift in lexicon was the most common strategy employed by students as a way of shifting their voices between the two essays. Almost all of Ms. García's students shifted their vocabulary in some way between the two essays. Although only a few students incorporated what we considered to be more sophisticated or formal vocabulary when addressing their more formal audience, many of them employed rich colloquial vocabulary when addressing their less formal audience. Andrew's essays, which focus on immigrants' rights, provide another illustrative example. He begins his first essay, which is addressed to Congressman Sensenbrenner (the main sponsor of H.R. 4437), by using relatively standard vocabulary.

I believe immigration rights are important.

This contrasts sharply, however, with his use of colloquialisms in the opening of his second essay, which is addressed to his classmate Samuel.

*What up, **dogg**! Don't you think that new immigration law is **messed up**?*

Like Christina, Anthony signals familiarity and solidarity with his classmate by using a specialized and highly colloquial lexicon.

As this comparison reveals, Christina and her classmates successfully employ various discourse strategies to shift voices between these two essays. Their ability to do so reflects an awareness of different audiences and an understanding of how to effectively communicate with each one. In shifting her voice to address her classmate, Christina demonstrates a wider range of linguistic skills than she does in the first essay alone. As we mentioned above, her first essay is more characteristic of the type of writing that students are expected to produce in school. It seems safe to assume, therefore, that, if we had not explicitly prompted Christina to shift her voice when addressing her informal audience, we most likely would not have seen her impressive range of linguistic skills.

Engaging Christina and her classmates in these curricular activities enabled us to recognize the richness of their everyday discourse practices.

Conclusion

We have gained many valuable insights from working with the students in Ms. García's class, including a greater appreciation of the challenges of making visible everyday language skills and their connection to school-valued literacy. Many bilingual skills, like those involved in translation, are naturalized, seemingly invisible, and largely unrecognized and unvalued. Thus their tremendous potential as leverage for academic literacy development goes untapped. We have suggested some ways that educators can help students recognize the richness of their everyday language practices and utilize the abilities they cultivate through these practices toward the development of academic skills. The development of meta-linguistic awareness, as we have seen, is an essential component of this work.

Teachers can easily adapt these important concepts to their local classroom contexts. To summarize, the basic steps involve **(1) learning about students' translating experiences; (2) helping students develop awareness of the strategies they use while translating; and (3) helping students see how translating skills and strategies can be applied to school tasks**. As we mentioned, a key step in this process is to clearly and explicitly communicate to students that it is acceptable to draw on their full linguistic repertoires. Once students understand that teachers value the skills they possess, teachers can work with them to leverage and extend those skills. In classrooms where few students have translation experiences, teachers can help students to see other ways in which they shift voice when they speak to different audiences and engage in different activities in their daily lives.

To extend the work that we began with Christina and her classmates, we might use their essays as a starting point for a follow-up unit on voice. We could invite students to carefully examine their essays and note the various discourse strategies they used. After identifying and analyzing these strategies, we could encourage students to employ more of the same strategies to shift their voices even further for each audience, or for a new audience. In pairs, students could assume the identity of their partner's addressees and write responses to each other, further developing the relationship of audience and voice.

Our work in Ms. García's classroom has shown us that it is possible to leverage what students are already doing in their everyday lives to help them develop academic literacy skills. Students might not immediately recognize the richness of their translating practices, but educators can help them develop meta-linguistic awareness, and then draw on these linguistic and communicative resources to develop competence in writing. Our work with Ms. García's students represents one concrete, albeit modest, example of how this can be done. Our hope is that others will continue to draw on bilingual students' vast repertoires of linguistic resources to help them recognize and capitalize on the richness of their everyday language practices.

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Toward Expansive Learning
Examining Chicana/o and Latina/o Students' Political-historical Knowledge

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Abstract

This article examines how Chicana/o and Latina/o youth employed their political-historical knowledge to "talk back" to the xenophobia and political contradictions that underlie the (im)migration "debate." A literacy unit that honored bilingual students' everyday translating created opportunities for students to utilize this political-historical knowledge to "translate" their critiques to formal and informal audiences in their writing (e.g., the mayor vs. friends). Pacheco briefly overviews the unit and emphasizes the practices related to voice most relevant to her analysis of sixth-grade students' essays about (im)migration and the plight of (im)migrants. This article demonstrates how students framed (im)migration, positioned themselves within the debate, positioned major political figures, drew on their historical knowledge, and appropriated community discourses of resistance. In many ways, these students already embodied the kinds of critical literacies and position-taking advocated by literacy researchers and educators. This article concludes with a discussion of how educators can draw strategically on students' sociocultural knowledge, as well as their political-historical knowledge, in the service of expanding their critical literacies.

Toward Expansive Learning: Examining Chicana/o and Latina/o Students' Political-historical Knowledge

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Literacy educators and practitioners who work with ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse students have increasingly turned to sociocultural perspectives to inform teaching that emphasize the role of culture in human learning and development (Cole, 1996; Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). These approaches help literacy educators understand how they could develop thematic curricula that employs the *funds of knowledge* available in students' lived contexts and practices (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Other literacy researchers promote curriculum changes that build on the language practices of particular cultural communities, including their hybrid language (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejeda, 1999; Zentella, 2005), translating (Orellana, Reynolds, Dorner, & Meza, 2003; Orellana & Reynolds, 2008), and signifying practices (Lee, 2001). Rather than "fix" non-dominant students to "fit" into classroom literacy practices, these approaches challenge educators to explore how they can best use students' cultural, linguistic, and intellectual resources to enhance their academic potential.

As a member of a design research team, I worked with researchers to develop academic writing tasks around the particular skills Chicana/o and Latina/o bilingual sixth graders used as part of the everyday translating work they employed in a wide range of social settings outside of school (Martinez, Orellana, Pacheco, & Carbone, 2008; Orellana & Reynolds, 2008). As design research, the goal was to build on earlier studies of translation practices and to work with teachers to develop curriculum they could implement based on this work, making appropriate adjustments to this curriculum in the process (Collins, Joseph, Bielzczyc, 2004). These translating skills included their flexible but effective use of English and Spanish, their

understandings of the meanings and statements appropriate in specific settings, their deliberate

focus on meaning making across speakers, and their insights into how power functions through

social interaction. The design study, which I describe in the following sections, coincided with

the massive pro-(im)migrant rights marches in the U.S. in the spring of 2006, so the team

incorporated literacy tasks around this topic in their examination of translating practices with

students and their teacher. Numerous students from this sixth grade classroom had participated in

pro-(im)migrant social actions, so we capitalized on this opportunity to relate out-of-school

circumstances with in-school literacy tasks. For example, we asked students to question the

Spanish versus English translations associated with a sign showing the silhouette of a woman

and child running. The freeway sign is widely perceived as an anti-(im)migrant symbol and

serves to emphasize the local versus official meanings associated with translating across

languages (see Figure 1). In the course of facilitating academic writing tasks through a focus on

the issue of (im)migration[1], I became interested in the broader political-historical knowledge the

students had developed in and outside of school because it represented yet another repertoire of

the socio-cultural resources youth bring to their school settings.

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[1] I use *(im)migrant* rather than *immigrant* because I come at this issue from a historically
concrete position. To perpetuate the notion of "immigrant" with respect to Chicana/o and
Latin@ groups reifies, in my view, the legal and geo-political processes that produce notions
about who belongs in the U.S. southwestern territories and who does not. As eleven-year-old
Margarita voiced in her essay, *estamos en nuestra tierra natal* [we are in our native lands].

Figure 1: California Freeway Sign

The sixth grade students were U.S.-born as well as first-, second-, and third-generation

(im)migrants from Mexico and Central and South American countries; many of them identified

as Chicana/o and Mexican. When given the opportunity to discuss (im)migration in particular,

the political-historical knowledge they demonstrated sophisticated readings of the socio-political

circumstances of their life and schooling experiences. Specifically, they understood the

intersectionality of being Mexican and Chicana/o, growing up in a working low-income

community, descending from Latina/o (im)migrants, and the legal and political processes that

reproduced their non-dominant status. For example, the students who attended Bellfort Middle

School had already developed critiques about how and why schools diminish their politicized,

historicized perspectives on their material experiences as low-income working Chicanas/os and

Latinas/os in East Los Angeles (East LA), California. During a focus group interview, several

students affirmed a peer's analysis that: "Just because we live in East LA they don't think we're

smart" and "They think we can't do nothing about [(im)migration]" (June 13, 2006). Their

political-historical knowledge was reflected in their recognition of the low expectations imposed

on them in part because they reside in a historically low-income, working-poor community and are perceived as members of a powerless, disenfranchised community of color. Their political-historical knowledge was also articulated in their essays about (im)migration and the rights of (im)migrants.

Examining Political-historical Knowledge that 'Counts'

As I read through the students' essays I began a systematic analysis of the origins of their political-historical knowledge: how, where, and with whom did they acquire their knowledge and persuasive ideas. Specifically, content analyses of the students' final essays highlighted their political-historical knowledge in the following ways: (1) their framing of the issue, (2) positioning themselves within the debate, (3) positioning major political figures (e.g., Governor Schwarzenegger) within the debate, (4) effectively applying historical fact, and (5) appropriating community discourses of resistance. Along with their essays, I noted in interviews with their teacher Miss Herrera, and in student focus groups, that the students developed this political-historical knowledge across specific local contexts—in their homes through their families, through the community discourses and social actions of East LA, and in their language arts projects with Miss Herrera. Thus, to better understand how the students had acquired and appropriated this knowledge, I needed to expand my analysis of the local community context with some historical specificity. The students' community context was not merely a backdrop. East LA has a particular history of resistance and social action imbued with the discourses, knowledge, socio-political critiques, and worldviews these bilingual youth appropriated in classroom literacy activity. A more specific description of the community's history with political, grassroots mobilization illuminates the significant resources it made available to youth through continuous engagement with political change over time.

I attempt to capture the form political-historical knowledge took in bilingual students' writing and how a historical analysis specific to East LA deepens understandings about the contingent relationship between communities and student literacy learning and development (Cole, 1996; Moll, 1992; Rogoff, 2003). I also hope to demonstrate how literacy educators can create opportunities for students to recall, appropriate, adapt, or transform their political-historical knowledge in the service of re-imagining new social worlds, or *expansive learning* (Engeström, 1987). It is necessary to recognize Chicana/o and Latina/o students' political-historical knowledge, but the notion of expansive learning challenges literacy educators to pursue joint activity with students and their communities that can generate new ways to reconcile students' dissatisfaction with dehumanizing social categories, perceptions, and laws. In the following sections, I highlight tasks and discussions around (im)migration that in this design study revealed students' political-historical depth and breadth, and their capacity to name, analyze, and shape critiques about the exploitation, racism, and classism that affected their communities (hooks, 1989). I conclude with a discussion of the ways literacy educators can draw on students' political-historical knowledge in the service of expansive learning in their classrooms. I now describe East LA with some historical specificity that locates the knowledge these students brought to bear on classroom literacy activity.

Communities as Sites of Political-Historical Knowledge

Miss Herrera and the research team recognized that (im)migration and the plight of (im)migrants was a relevant issue for Bellfort School sixth graders in the mostly working low-income Chicana/o and Latina/o community of East LA . Between us, we had worked in urban schools, participated in mobilized social actions, lived in Chicana/o and Latina/o communities in Southern California, and understood the unique history of East LA. While popular cultural forms

have demeaned life in East LA through movies like "Born in East LA," the community is revered

for its history of radical political activism (Acuña, 1988; Samora & Simón, 1977/1993;

Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). The community's historical trajectory of resistance and

empowerment is beyond the purview of this article, but some highlight will illustrate the degree

to which East LA continues to be a site of political-historical knowledge for contemporary youth

and future generations.

Numerous examples are available in historical texts, so I highlight a few here for the sake

of specificity. For example, in June 1943, East LA was the site of resistance against White

servicemen who violently retaliated against growing numbers of young Chicanas/os and

Mexican-Americans, who became recognizable for the zoot-suits Whites perceived as

flamboyant. The struggle became known as the "Zoot Suit Riots." The community was also the

birthplace of the 1968 'walkouts' or 'blowouts' organized by Chicana/o high school students

demanding equitable educational opportunities through quality curriculum, respectful teachers,

and anti-discriminatory practices, which typified the broader Chicano Movement of the 1960s.

In 1986, the Mothers of East LA initially mobilized locally and at the state capitol to defeat a

state proposal to build a prison in the community and in later years took up the issue of

environmental racism in their challenge to a proposed incinerator project. At the time of data

collection in the spring of 2006, East LA and other Chicana/o and Latina/o communities

throughout the U.S. once again demonstrated their political determination after the House of

Representatives passed HR 4437 (The Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration

Control Act of 2005).

Massive pro-(im)migrant mobilization demonstrations occurred in East LA during the

three-month period we conducted our research and the Bellfort students, including some in Miss

Herrera's Language Arts class, mobilized walkouts at their school. During our weekly visits to

Miss Herrera's classroom, we learned that Bellfort administrators had instituted school-wide

lockdowns—a disturbing appropriation of a prison tactic—requiring teachers to lock classroom

doors to quell student grass-roots political action. On some days, administrators denied my entry

into the campus and standing outside, I observed students jumping over fences to join their

families in the pro-(im)migrant marches in the vicinity:

> I noticed a student from behind the school gate climbed over it with the help of
>
> his peers but Mr. Tompkins [principal] sent him to the other man with a walkie-
>
> talkie. A minute later, Mr. Tompkins waved the boy over to him and briskly
>
> walked him by the arm toward the front entrance. He told the boy, "I looked *right*
>
> at you and you looked *right* at me and you went ahead and jumped the fence
>
> anyway. You're in tro*uuu*ble!" (Field note, March 27, 2006)

Despite the varying degrees of social consciousness embodied by these students and

advocated by critical literacy researchers (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Luke & Freebody, 1997),

these students' social consciousness and move toward praxis were unfortunately suppressed.

Essentially, the school became an overt site of political struggle. Rather than ignore the emerging

socio-political context around (im)migration and (im)migrant rights, the research team chose to

organize tasks and discussions squarely around this issue. The focus of these practices was to

facilitate students' thinking about the final essay, which required them to articulate their stance

on a social issue of importance to them.

The Design Study

The current analysis emerged from a design study with first-year practicing teachers that

made connections between bilingual students' translating skills and academic writing tasks. The

research team was comprised of one faculty member, a post-doctoral fellow, and three doctoral

students: most of us were fluent English-Spanish bilinguals and had taught in bilingual and mainstream California public schools. In fall of 2005, we recruited a small group of teachers interested in language issues and facilitated discussions about language-based topics, including learning and development, policy, and cultural practices among students such as translating. In particular, Miss Herrera expressed interest in critical pedagogy and a general interest in language issues. When she granted the team permission to implement a design study based on her students' translation capabilities, we held several working meetings to design a unit.

The connections we facilitated between bilingual students' translation capabilities and their academic writing have been analyzed elsewhere (Martinez et al., 2008), and demonstrated the importance of capitalizing on the repertoire of students' linguistic skills and strategies to develop academic writing tasks. In this paper, I highlight the range of political-historical knowledge students demonstrated when the literacy curriculum invoked the social, political, and material dimensions of their life circumstances. Campano (2007), for example, deliberately used "reading, writing, and remembering" to explore (im)migrant and refugee students and their families' personal histories, knowledge, values, and traditions in the service of relational knowledge production. In our work with Chicana/o, Latina/o, and Hmong migrant students, we facilitated sociocritical literacies through analyses of their sociohistorical lives, both local and distant in time and place (Gutiérrez, 2008), and historicized writing that required particular analyses of how race, ethnicity, class, gender, and language intersected in their life circumstances (Pacheco & Nao, 2009). The current analysis further emphasizes that local communities are implicated in sociocultural literacy processes that particular kinds of knowledge, critiques, stances, and worldviews. In other words, communities vary in the ways they mobilize around particular issues (or not), the ways they represent themselves, and the ways they organize social life for their children. The particular kind of political-historical knowledge—including the

critiques and stances—some Bellfort sixth graders revealed about (im)migration could be "located" in the historical concreteness of East LA and in the community's characteristic social and political actions.

Over two months, during the 2005-06 school year, we conducted participant observations in Miss Herrera's sixth grade language arts instructional block (2 class periods), which was comprised of twenty Chicana/o and Latina/o students with varying degrees of English-Spanish bilingualism and divergent experiences in English-only and bilingual programs. Different research team members implemented various literacy tasks and activities, using mostly English, Spanish, and code switching during discussions. We video and audio recorded our implementation of a short language arts unit that connected translating skills to writing skills. As mentioned earlier, we incorporated tasks about (im)migration because the study coincided with various social actions in and outside of school, such as student-initiated 'walkouts' and community-wide pro-(im)migrant demonstrations.

After observing the political-historical knowledge students demonstrated in their talk and actions, I examined participants' personal reflections about other experiences that might have fostered this knowledge. To this end, I conducted two focus group student interviews and one two-hour, in-depth interview with Miss Herrera to explore her overall approach to language arts curriculum throughout the school year. I especially sought her descriptions of literacy goals, her views on literacy teaching and learning, and the kind of practices that reflected her goals. For example, during a writing unit, she facilitated students' understanding of connections between the high rates of incarceration in U.S. prisons and the heavy police presence and brutality experienced in working low-income non-dominant communities (Teacher interview, July 10, 2006).

Miss Herrera: "It's about Social Consciousness"

Miss Corina Herrera was a 26-year-old first-year teacher who identified as Chicana with

a substantive history of community activism around issues related to working low-income

Chicanas/os and Latinas/os. She utilized both the district's adopted English Language Arts and

scripted reading programs, and supplemented these because they lacked writing components. In

weekly discussions about her teaching, Miss Herrera highlighted her focus on writing and her

inclusion of current events that highlighted social in/justice issues based on her orientation

toward critical pedagogy (Darder, 1990; Freire, 1970/1993). For example, she facilitated literacy

tasks around the execution of anti-gang activist and Nobel Prize nominee Stanley Tookie

Williams to engage students in deeper thinking about capital punishment and the prison-

industrial complex.

She articulated her aim to facilitate social consciousness so that students might feel

empowered across contexts and institutions, as reflected here:

> [Curriculum] was more about developing [students'] social consciousness so
>
> wherever they end up, they'd be socially conscious of their standing and still feel
>
> empowered enough to speak up and defend themselves. For me, it was *really*
>
> important for my kids to be politically aware. (Interview, July 10, 2006)

Miss Herrera deliberately connected curriculum to broader social justice outcomes and

recognized that skills mattered insofar as they could potentially help her students to engage in

transformative social actions across their life pathways. From her point of view, social

consciousness reflected the ability to recognize community injustice(s) and to develop the

political praxis to affect community transformation in the service of social justice. Through

deeper analyses of social issues relevant to the material realities in their community (e.g., police

brutality and class reproduction), she created serious opportunities for her students to apply their political-historical knowledge to "analyze their surroundings and do something about it" (Interview, July 10, 2006).

Exploring Social Issues with Students

The design study required pre- and post-assessment essays in which students articulated their stances on a social issue of importance to them to two different audiences. For this article, I focused particularly on the post-assessment, which incorporated oral and written modes and required students to articulate their stances on important issues and to translate this stance to two different audiences. For example, students addressed mandated school uniforms, (im)migration, under-funded schools, and the lack of "caring" teachers at Bellfort School and translated and transposed their stances for formal and informal audiences.

Since stances about (im)migration and the plight of (im)migrants had become central to community life, the team explored how particular signs, like a highly visible freeway sign (see Figure 1), reify anti-(im)migrant sentiment in contemporary U.S. politics. As part of an analysis of signs that mediate the social perception of (im)migrant communities, the team incorporated a popular comedy show segment that mocked the freeway sign: in it, the comedian surveys the public and one Department of Transportation (DoT) representative about whom, specifically, the sign depicts. Most individuals "on the street" refuse to state the sign depicts (im)migrants and one Euro-American woman says outright, "I'm not gonna say." The students were particularly affected when the DoT representative says it depicts "wetbacks," a derogatory word used in reference to Mexican undocumented (im)migrants, as in the 1954 massive deportation effort, "Operation Wetback" (Acuña, 1988; Samora & Simón, 1977/1993). "Wetback" created the discursive space for students' sophisticated political-historical knowledge of racial and identity

politics, stating it was "racist" and unjust to use pejoratives toward individuals who provide

invaluable labor and services (Classroom video, April 24, 2006). In anticipation of the stances

they had to elaborate in their final essays (the post-assessment), these discussions provided

students with resources they could later use.

Content Analysis of Students' Essays

To understand the social-political knowledge represented in students' essays, I followed

methods of content analyses (Gray, 2004; Patton, 2001). I closely read and recorded patterns of

knowledge sources in 18 essays written by nine of the 20 students that addressed stances on

(im)migrant rights, HR 4437, and the treatment of (im)migrants in the U.S. I read through

students' essays and categorized the broad themes around which their essays coalesced: equality

and justice, re-claiming the Southwest, contributions of (im)migrants, humanist perspectives, and

resistance to criminalization of (im)migrants (see Appendix A). Broadly speaking, students drew

on political-historical knowledge of (im)migrants' contributions to local, state, national, and

global economies but criticized how these contributions were wholly devalued in U.S. society.

From their perspectives, (im)migrants made these contributions through demanding labor that is

physically debilitating, disgusting (or "nasty"), and inadequately compensated. Moreover,

students perceived that (im)migrants habitually undertook jobs that U.S. citizens either "do not

want" or "will not take," given the routinely poor working conditions of their low-income, low-

status work (i.e., janitorial duties).

Evident across students' essays was their knowledge of local and national power brokers

and political stakeholders implicated in shaping opinions and legislation around the issue of

(im)migration. They not only named the sponsor of HR 4437, Congressman Sensenbrenner [R-

WI], for example, but also connected the issue to the mainstream media, the mayor of Los Angeles, the East LA community, and President Bush. In their view, the plight (im)migrants experienced was distributed across a collective of individuals with diverse backgrounds and roles, rather than exclusively on (im)migrant communities themselves.

Moreover, students defied the assumptions embedded in popular rhetoric about who does and does not belong in the U.S. Rather than reify the issue by accepting it as valid, they employed political-historical knowledge to question the premises on which the public debate rests. For example, they drew on historical fact to challenge the geo-political boundaries that separates (im)migrants from "natives". Thus, I conducted subsequent content analyses of the ways students located power relations in their complex understanding of (im)migration. While they justified pro-(im)migrant stances from humanist perspectives [i.e., that (im)migrants deserve to be treated like humans], they centered power in the ways they framed the issue, positioned themselves as key players, positioned politicians as complicit, acknowledged historical inaccuracies, and expressed discourses of resistance. Student focus group interviews and an interview with Miss Herrera provided further insights into the range of contexts in and out of school that facilitated this political-historical specificity.

Students' Use of Political-Historical Knowledge

An analysis of the ways students framed the (im)migration debate demonstrates that even within this group of Bellfort sixth graders, they represented a diverse range of stances on this issue. In addition, while broader discourses around (im)migrants and their children sought simple solutions, these students generally employed socio-politically nuanced critiques that drew on local sensibilities. For example, HR 4437 sought to criminalize the 12 million undocumented (im)migrants currently in the country to dissuade the influx of new (im)migrants. Likewise,

vigilante Minute Men projects in Arizona and New Mexico support anti-(im)migrant legislation and a hyper-militarized border. In contrast, these Chicana/o and Latina/o students deployed sound political-historical knowledge that acknowledged the political economy of exploitable labor, various push-and-pull socioeconomic factors, the legacy of racism, the dehumanizing effects of (im)migration legislation, and the deleterious effects of American-style hypocrisy. Recall that the plight of (im)migrants and their children had compelled some students to engage in radical social actions rooted in the histories and discourses of East LA. Moreover, they generated novel visions of a more socially just, humane society.

1. **Framing (Im)migration**

Students framed (im)migration in ways that ranged across and within humanist, civil rights, reciprocity-based, and race-based perspectives. Those who adopted a humanist perspective believed that (im)migrants reflected the human pursuit for a better quality of life, so they sought opportunities in the U.S. that might lead to an improved quality of life for them and their families. Carolina's essay, addressed to local news reporters, illustrates the humanist perspectives some students expounded regarding the treatment of (im)migrants:

"Immigrants should be treated the same way as other people…they are human beings like other people. There's nothing different…They think by coming to the U.S. they could start a new life. That's all they want to do…The immigrants should not be treated like criminals." (May 6, 2006)

While Carolina articulated her belief that (im)migrants are human beings, she also believed they deserved compassion both for their desire to "start a new life" and because broader political discourses criminalize these individuals. From Carolina's humanist perspective, (im)migrants deserve to be treated like the human beings they are, especially since their desire to

start a new life does not constitute a crime.

Other students believed (im)migrants continue to contribute to this country's infrastructure and in California, to its agricultural dominance as one of the world's most powerful economies. For these students, the debate centered on a notion of reciprocity between the individual and the nation-state: because (im)migrants 'pay' with their labor, the U.S. owes these individuals some compassion and gratitude. Other students rejected all or parts of the humanist, civil rights, and/or reciprocity-based perspectives because they firmly believed the discourses around (im)migrants were rooted in racism. In elaborating their stances, students boldly affirmed that the criminalization and de-humanization of (im)migrants from poor and low-income communities fueled current antagonisms aimed at an already vulnerable population.

2. Positioning Themselves within the Debate

Students explicitly positioned themselves within the debate in their alignments with (im)migrant communities primarily through their discursive use of the terms "us," "we," "you," and "they" and through a recognition of their own agency and potential for collective power. For example, students regularly used the words "they" and "them" in their discussions of (im)migrants but also indexed their identification within this community through their use of "us" and "we," as in "they are doing things for our community" or "us immigrants are people too." Several students positioned themselves through an emphasis on their individual agency and rights as residents or citizens to this disenfranchised community. While undocumented (im)migrants have limited avenues for resistance and mobilization, some students believed they justifiably "deserved" their assistance. Furthermore, they believed the school administration's lockdown policy thwarted their ability to realize their convictions, even if they sought to participate in pro-(im)migrant, community-wide walkouts. Maritza, for example, explained to

school district leaders that she had a right to walkout, since disenfranchised (im)migrants deserved her advocacy:

> "We should have the rights to walkout because we are doing it for a reason and we are doing this because the immigrants deserve it because they do some work that the residents don't want to do and they have to suffer because nobody else wants to do it." (May 10, 2006)

Because Martiza believed (im)migrants were at a disadvantage in terms of job opportunities and rights to challenge governmental policies and practices, she believed she had a right—if not an obligation—to exercise her rights to support (im)migrants. Moreover, she expressly challenged the district's institutionalization of lockdowns because she sought to exercise her rights to engage in transformative actions on behalf of individuals who made sacrifices for this country. Thus, students positioned themselves within the debate, but articulated how they were personally implicated across particular aspects of the debate as they distanced or aligned themselves with (im)migrants to varying degrees.

3. Positioning Political Figures

Throughout classroom discussions, President G. W. Bush, HR 4437 sponsor Congressman Sensenbrenner (R-WI), and California Governor Schwarzenegger were the public figures students most commonly referenced to make three particular arguments. First, President Bush, Congressman Sensenbrenner, and Governor Schwarzenegger symbolized the U.S. power structure as students recognized that these figures had the political capital to make substantial changes to how (im)migrants are perceived and treated. Second, students referenced them to substantiate the argument that many U.S. citizens are the direct descendants of (im)migrants who came to the U.S. across historical periods to seek better economic opportunities. Third, students

commented on the political practices and views of Governor Schwarzenegger since his own

personal history as an Austrian (im)migrant, mostly indexed by his accented English, reflected a

degree of hypocrisy. For example, Sofia boldly emphasized the governor's hypocrisy in her essay

to him:

> "You're also an immigrant. So now you're making new laws against immigrants. You
>
> should not be talking because you are also an immigrant. And if I was you, I should keep
>
> my mouth shut." (May 10, 2006)

Sofia appeared to ask, how could these and other Euro-American political figures who

are either (im)migrants or their descendants justifiably represent the antagonistic sentiment that

constructed (im)migrants as criminals and threats? Some of the perceptions these students

expressed during classroom discussions later emerged in their substantiations of their pro-

(im)migrant, pro-social justice stances in their essays.

4. Drawing on Historical Knowledge

These sixth graders not only demonstrated their knowledge of key historical events that

characterize U.S.-Mexico relations, but also strategically incorporated this historical knowledge

to problematize perceptions of Mexican (im)migrants and (im)migration. They particularly

referenced the 1948 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo through which the United States "stole" the

Southwest from Mexico, as well as the Westward Expansion during which the United States

committed genocide against Native American tribes to acquire sizeable amounts of rich, fertile

land. Margarita expressed this interpretation to (im)migrants the following way:

> "After all, they [Euro-Americans] were immigrants also because the Indians
>
> came here and kicked them out, and we are in our land because they stole parts of
>
> the U.S. in 1840 [sic]. The land they stole was California, Texas, New Mexico,

and other states so we are in our property, so if someone should go it's them

because *estamos en nuestra tierra natal* [we are in our native land]." (May 2006)

In her essay, Margarita demonstrated her historical knowledge and used it strategically to suggest that when land is stolen from indigenous populations, the thieves, so to speak, do not have rightful claims to these lands. Moreover, Margarita's use of Spanish added personal and political power to her forceful statement. In stating "*estamos en nuestra tierra natal,*" she not only demonstrated her effective bilingualism (i.e., code-switching) but also positioned herself as a full member of a "we" that is indigenous to California and consequently Spanish-speaking.

Margarita and other students who shared her perspective engaged in re-naming the "real immigrants" in their essays: earlier Europeans settlers who sought economic opportunities in America were the real immigrants. In their re-naming, students challenged Euro-American claims that Chicana/o and Latina/o (im)migrants should "go back to Mexico" since these Euro-Americans are the descendants of the original settlers to the U.S. In essence, these Chicana/o and Latina/o students opposed the very notion of (im)migrant and (im)migration in popular discourses through their strategic incorporation of historical knowledge about U.S.-Mexico relations.

5. Appropriating Discourses of Resistance

As discussed earlier, East LA has a long history of resistance, mobilization, and civil rights actions. The community discourses that characterized the mobilization of disenfranchised 1960s youth disillusioned with the broken promises of social, economic, and political mobility through education were echoed over four decades later in the final essays of Miss Herrera's sixth graders. They incorporated words like "walk-outs", "boycotts", and "protests" in their essays and plead with adults to stand in solidarity to demand collectively the just and humane treatment of

(im)migrants. They appropriated first, a discourse of solidarity that centered on the kind of collective, large-scale mobilization efforts other East LA youth had used in previous generations. Moreover, these students' collectivist orientations contrasted the individualist orientations that schools promote through the persistent focus on individual meritocracy.

In an essay to her mother, Carla articulated the power of "supporting one another" for a pro-(im)migrant cause, particularly since she believed that only a collective group could affect (im)migration policy:

> "I also strongly believe if we all support each other like we've been doing so far, we'll be able to convince the government or president on accepting our thoughts and feelings because we're just as important as anybody else in this country."
>
> (May 10, 2006)

Carla also elaborated how the collectivism she envisioned might challenge anti-(im)migrant policies and practices at the governmental level. However, her stance suggests that the governmental structure reflects the views articulated in HR 4437, since she claims that "we" are equally important as those individuals and groups whose views this structure represents. In other words, this "we" exists outside of this government.

Second, some students appropriated discourses about how (im)migrants sustain the economic vitality of California and the U.S. in general since they acknowledged that without them, these economies might collapse. Similar to arguments put forth in relatively provocative movies such as *A Day Without a Mexican* (2004) that explore California's dependence on Mexican and Latin@ (im)migrants, students acknowledged the economic losses HR 4437 would likely provoke, as Alfonso explained in his essay to President Bush:

> "…If we immigrants leave, the businesses are going to lose a lot of money if they send us immigrants [back] and if they do, they will probably [be] closing down

more businesses and more things because we are going to do walk-outs and

boycotts and more things." (May 9, 2006)

Alfonso made another important point in his essay: (im)migrants as well as their families,

friends, and supporters have the collective power to provoke more sustained economic threats

through boycotting particular businesses. Again, Alfonso emphasized collective rather than

individual power in his stance, which characterized both historical and contemporary approaches

to mobilized resistance, particularly in low-income non-dominant communities.

Analyses of students' essays highlight the political-historical knowledge Chicana/o and

Latina/o students utilized in formal essays about (im)migration, as well as the ways that

communities can facilitate youth's politicized and historicized understandings of social issues.

The politically charged circumstances of life in East LA in spring of 2006 became a central

curriculum concern in the broader design study, and though the team was limited in time and

scope, the essays were typed and mailed to appropriate audiences on behalf of the students. Still,

these powerful essays revealed the sophisticated knowledge that students appropriated across

contexts in and out of school in their community. These students reflected, of course, diverse

experiences and ideologies—their bilingualism and biliteracy, translation experiences, political-

historical knowledge, socioeconomic backgrounds, writing capabilities, and experiences as

(im)migrants and with (im)migration in their families. Still, they represented powerful voices

whose collective potential to affect social change has perhaps yet to be realized but whose

potential for such action was reflected in their social envisioning of a world wherein being

human matters more than legal status.

Suggestions for Practitioners

This section provides three suggestions for how literacy practitioners can learn more

about their students' communities and their histories, deepen their knowledge of students' local knowledge, and develop literacy activities that both build on this history and knowledge in the service of expansive learning (Engeström, 1987).

First, practitioners can deepen their knowledge of students' communities by exploring historical literature and sites that provide insights into the particular circumstances that have affected contemporary circumstances. Local museums and libraries might provide specific information about the events that capture a community's historical concreteness. Practitioners might also enhance their search for historical depth through efforts to understand the inter-generational knowledge of community members (including parents and caregivers), as well as community activists and organizers seeking to affect social change. Moreover, practitioners can take clear notice of the struggles and tensions communities face, as well as the social actions they take to reconcile their dissatisfactions, through ongoing contact with a range of community members. Community walks might also reveal some important historical and political artifacts that reflect a range of critiques, stances, and worldviews, such as this anti-HR 4437 billboard that urged passers-by, "HR 4437: You've already heard enough, now let your voice be heard" (see below).

Figure 2: HR 4437 Billboard in East Los Angeles

In the classroom, teachers can create opportunities for students to identify, articulate, and transform their political-historical knowledge—or the ways they apply politicized and historicized depth and breadth to their life circumstances. For non-dominant students, this approach requires particular consideration for how their racial/ethnic, class, and language backgrounds intersect as well with issues of gender, legal or refugee status, and sexual orientation (Cruz, 2001). Practitioners can organize multiple mediational means for the articulation of political-historical knowledge, similar to the incorporation of (im)migration in the design study in Miss Herrera's classroom. For example, the thoughtful use of *teatro* for young literacy learners to "live alternative ways of knowing and being" (Medina & Campano, 2006), which might include a focus on social issues relevant to community life, provides students an opportunity to express or transform their knowledge and subjectivities through creative means. Practitioners could also choose to invoke community struggles and social actions to explore the type and range of political-historical knowledge students bring to the language arts classroom.

Finally, teachers could use the critiques, stances, and worldviews communities promote among their children and youth and understand this as political-historical knowledge that can be the center of students' literacy activity in the classroom. Practitioners could use historical literature and artifacts obtained from community sites, signs, and artifacts to mediate expansive literacy learning that generates newly envisioned social futures (Engeström, 1987), similar to these sixth graders' social justice appeals. While the research team was limited in time and scope, educators who promote transformative literacies can employ this knowledge in subsequent expansive learning that pushes students to articulate new social futures (Freire & Macedo, 1987; Luke & Freebody, 1997). Writing, particularly narratives about life experience, can facilitate a historical analysis that squarely examines how distinct socio-historical lineages affect present-day life (Pacheco & Nao, 2009). For example, a socio-historical analysis of my life experiences would require a specific examination of *The Bracero Program*, a guest worker program for Mexican agricultural laborers like my father, that lasted between 1942 and 1964 (Acuña, 1988) and is an important aspect of how my family came to call the U.S. its home. My hope is that these suggestions will expand literacy educators' learning *about* and *from* students to re-imagine ways of building on their political-historical knowledge to affect transformative educational praxis.

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Figure 1: California Freeway Sign

Figure 2: HR 4437 Billboard in East Los Angeles

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:HR4437.jpg

Appendix A: Student Responses to HR 4437

Equality & Justice	Re-claiming of Southwest	Contributions of IMs	Humanist Perspectives	Resistance
IMs deserve equal rights as citizens regardless of color, race, or religion **	History shows that (Euro)Americans stole Southwestern property from Mexico in 1840s *	IMs do the U.S. a favor because they suffer & get diseases when they take the hardest, dangerous, low-paying, nasty jobs citizens don't want ******** -manual labor -field work ****** -restaurant dishwasher -construction *** -work in garment industry -clean bathrooms -janitors * -maids -farm hands	IMs are human and deserve respect **** -not wild animals -not aliens -not trash -not criminals ** -not from another planet	Treatment of IMs warrants resistance & subversion -mobilized resistance -walk-outs -boycotts -protests
Immigration reform is step toward justice & abolishing racism *	If someone needs to go, it's (Euro)Americans, not IMs	IMs contribute to local and U.S. economy **** - not to "fool around"	Have sympathy for IMs who get sent back * -want a new start * -want a better life for themselves, children, & families *** -die occasionally on way here -are victims of hostile repatriation efforts -are doing what, historically, IMs did before them -might leave children without parents	IM supporters need to stick together to convince others, especially in a country of dreams & freedom *
Treatment of IMs & Mexicans is racist *****	IMs are on their property and can take back Southwest	IMs take jobs lazy (Euro)Americans don't want *	Emotional loss	Miss H. should cover for students in walk-outs
IMs & Latin@ are majority in LA *	IMs in "nuestra tierra natal" but (Euro)Americans are the immigrants *	IMs contribute to & help community		Acknowledged May 1st protests & marches in LA and around world
IMs deserve thanks		Economic loss * - President will take notice		

* = additional student who shared similar views

IMs = immigrants

Samy, age 15
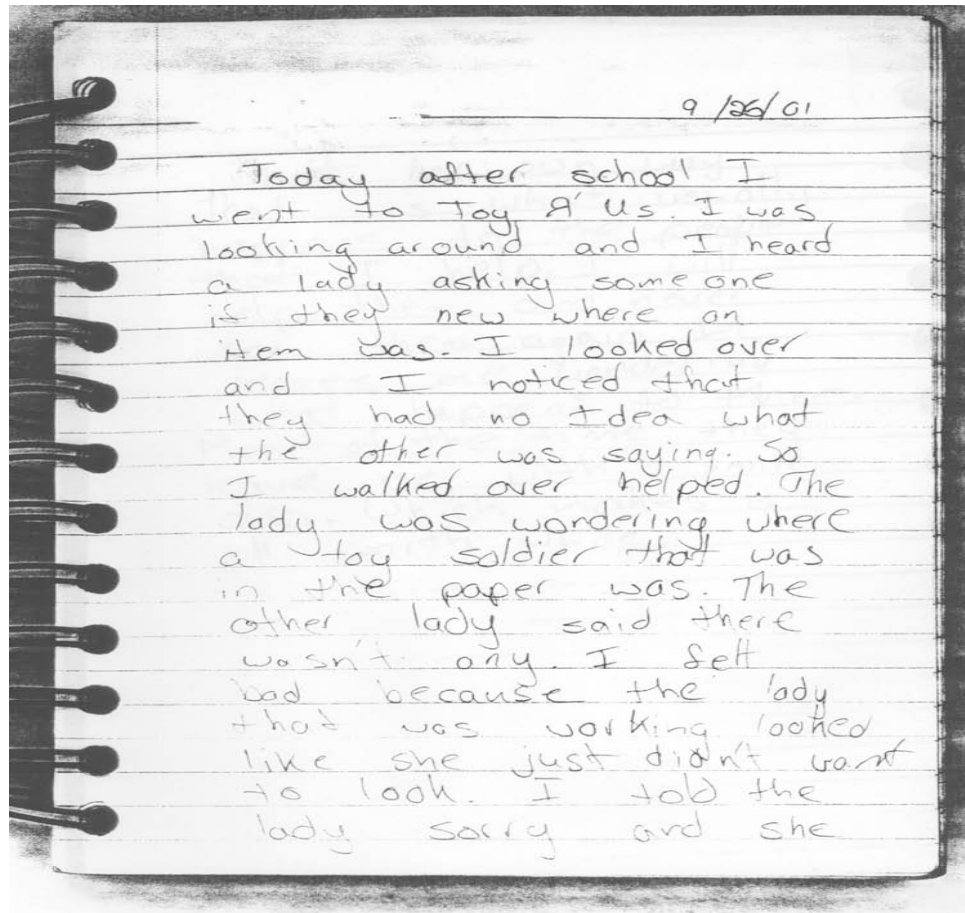
Today after school I went to Toys R Us. I was looking around and I heard a lady asking someone if they knew where an item was. I looked over and I noticed that they had no idea what the other was saying. So I walked over and helped. The lady was wondering where a toy soldier that was in the paper was. The other lady said there wasn't any. I felt bad because the lady that was working looked like she didn't want to look. (Sammy, 15)

Samy, age 15

Today I was caddying for Ms J. She's pretty nice but a little cocky and uptight. Well anyway it was pretty hot and we were walking to the 10th hole. It's a pretty large walks so one of the field workers offered to give us a ride. We hopped on and began talking. I translated back and forth. I felt weird though because I felt that Ms J. didn't really want to talk to him. It made me feel like the guy was thinking of me as a stuck up rich kid. Of course I'm not. It was like Ms J's attitude was being shown through my translating.
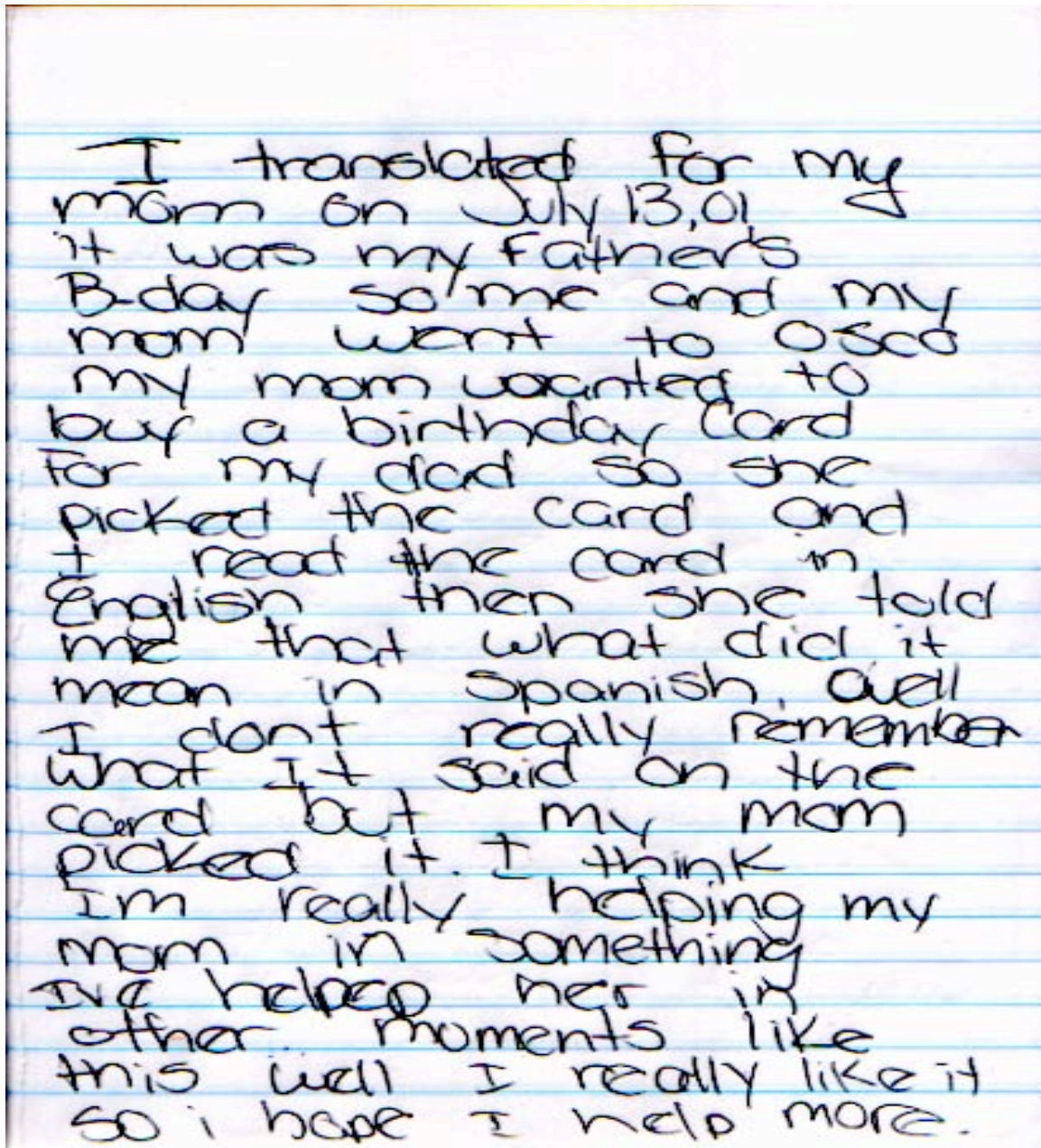
Maria, Age 10

On Tuesday I helped my mom read a book. My mom knew some of the things on the book. So the words that my mom didn't know I help her on. It was a short book, but it was fun. The book I read to my mom was about people that moved. The title was "Why People Move". I had to read it to my mom because on Wednesday, that's tomorrow she went to classes to learn English, and at classes the theacher gave her homework. So that was why I had to help my mom read the book "Why People Move"

Brianna, age 12-

I translated for my mom on July 13, 01. It was my father's B-day so me and my mom went to Osco to buy a birthday card for my dad so she picked the card and I read the cared in English and then she told me that what did it mean in Spanish. Well I don't really remember what it said on the card but my mom picked it. I think I'm really helping my mom in something. I've helped her in other moments like this. Well I really like it so I hope I help more.

Miguel, Age 10
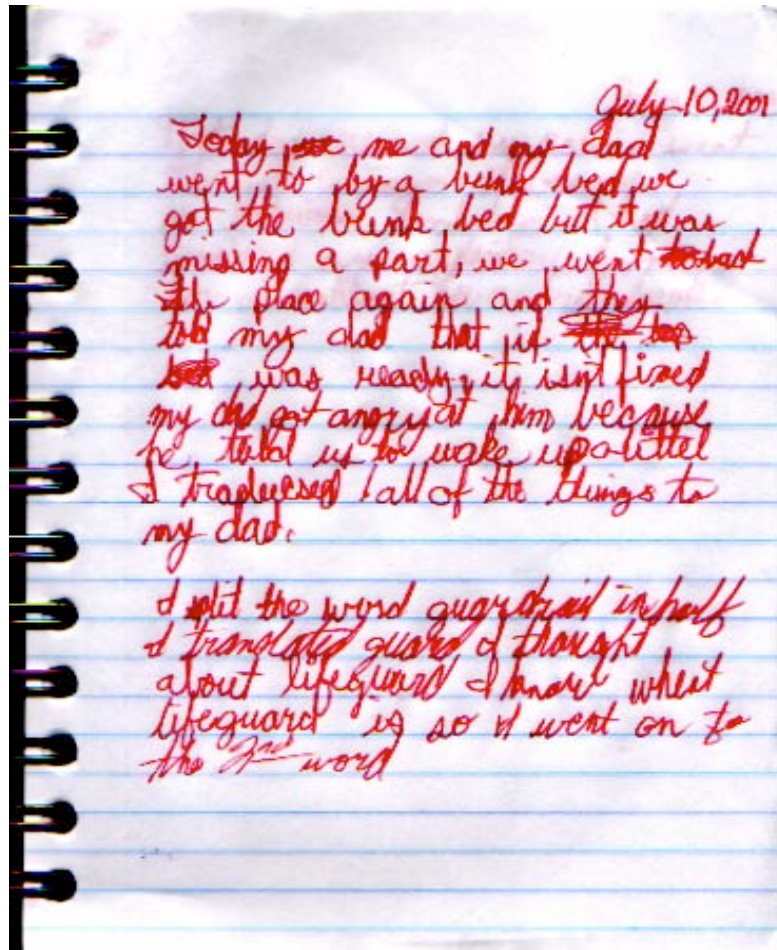
Today me and my dad went to buy a bunk bed. We got the bunk bed but it was missing a part. We went back to the place again and they told me dad that if it was ready it isn't fixed (broken). My dad got angry at hime because he told us to wake up a little. I traduced all those things to my dad.

In Other words:
En otras palabras:

Learning from Bilingual Kids' Translating and Interpreting Experiences

Aprendiendo de las Experiencias de Traducción e Interpretación de los Niños Bilingües

Marjorie Faulstich Orellana

Translating is "probably the most complex type of event yet produced in the evolution of the cosmos."

El traducir es "probablemente el tipo más complejo de acontecimiento que se haya producido en la evolución del cosmos."

(Richards, 1953, in Brislin, 1976)

Note: In this brochure we use the terms "translating" and "interpreting" to refer to the many ways in which bilingual children use their knowledge of two languages to read, write, listen, and speak for other people. Some researchers refer to this as "language brokering" or "natural translation." In some of our work, we use the term "para-phrasing" because we want to show how the skills that children use to move between two different languages can be used to support school literacy activities (for example, when teachers ask students to take something they have read and summarize it or "put it in their own words").

Nota: En este folleto utilizamos los términos "traducir" e "interpretar" para referirnos a las muchas maneras en las cuales los niños bilingües emplean su conocimiento de dos idiomas para leer, escribir, escuchar y hablar para otra gente. Algunos investigadores se refieren a esto como "mediadores del lenguaje" o "traducción natural." También usamos el término "para-frases" porque queremos mostrar cómo se pueden cultivar las habilidades que emplean los niños para moverse entre dos idiomas diferentes para apoyar sus actividades de aprendizaje en la escuela (por ejemplo, cuando los maestros les piden a los estudiantes tomar algo que ellos hayan leído y que lo resuman o que "lo pongan en sus propias palabras").

Child Translators

Niños traductores

We have been learning about children's experiences as translators for their immigrant families through several research studies conducted in California and the Chicago area. Our data include:

- A survey of 280 fifth and sixth graders at a Chicago public school about their language usage and translating experiences.
- Interviews with 66 children about their translating experiences.
- Observations in the homes and classrooms of 18 children who are translators for their families.
- Audiotapes of children translating in a range of situations.
- Journal entries in which children record their translation experiences.
- Interviews with parents and educators.
- Children's school records and work samples.
- Reading assessments we administered to children.

Through this work we have found that children use their knowledge of English in many different ways to listen, speak, read, write, and do things for their families. We have explored how children feel about translating, how they deal with problems that arise, and how adults can support their work. We have also looked at what children learn from translating, and we've thought about how schools can further develop these skills.

When we talk with people about our work, we find that some think that translating puts an unnecessary burden on children. Others think that what children do is easy. They assume that if someone speaks two languages s/he should naturally be able to translate between them. When we listen to children, we learn that translating is a part of their everyday lives; it's "just normal." Some have told us they appreciate learning about other kids' experiences because it has helped them to see that what they do is something special.

We hope that this brochure will help you to see that immigrant children's work as translators is special *and* important. We also hope to show you that it's not as easy as some people think. And we'll offer advice from kids to other kids, as well as suggestions for teachers and parents who want to support children's translating work.

Hemos aprendido sobre las experiencias de niños que sirven de traductores para sus familias inmigrantes por medio de varios estudios académicos conducidos en California y el área de Chicago. Nuestros datos incluyen:

- Una encuesta con 280 alumnos en el quinto y sexto grado en una escuela pública de Chicago sobre sus usos del lenguaje y experiencias de traducción.
- Entrevistas con 66 niños sobre sus experiencias de traducción.
- Observaciones en las casas y las aulas de 18 niños quienes son traductores activos para sus familias.
- Audiograbaciones de niños. traduciendo en varias situaciones.
- Diarios en los cuales escriben los niños sobre sus experiencias de traducción.
- Entrevistas con padres y maestros.
- Reportes de la escuela y ejemplos de tareas.
- Evaluaciones de lectura que administramos a los niños.

Por medio de este trabajo hemos descubierto que los niños usan su conocimiento del inglés de muchos modos diferentes para escuchar, hablar, leer, escribir, y ayudarles a sus familias. Hemos explorado qué piensan los niños sobre la traducción, cómo resuelven los problemas que surgen, y cómo pueden los adultos apoyar su trabajo. También hemos observado lo que aprenden los niños sobre la traducción, y considerado cómo puede la escuela fortalezer estas habilidades.

Cuando hablamos con alguien acerca de nuestro trabajo, encontramos que algunos creen que la traducción le pone una carga innecesaria a los niños. Otros creen que lo que hacen los niños es fácil. Ellos presuponen que si alguien habla dos idiomas, naturalmente debería poder traducir entre los dos. Cuando escuchamos a los niños, aprendemos que la traducción es parte de la vida diaria; es "normal." Unos nos han dicho que aprecian la oportunidad de aprender sobre las experiencias de otros niños porque esto los ha ayudado a ver que lo que ellos hacen es algo especial.

Esperamos que este folleto le ayude a comprender que el trabajo de niños traductores es algo especial e importante. También esperamos mostrarle que no es tan fácil como alguna gente cree. Y le ofrecemos consejos de niños a otros niños, así como sugerencias para maestros y padres que quieran apoyar el trabajo de traducción de los niños.

"It happens everywhere"
"Esto ocurre por todas partes"

When we first began this research, we didn't realize all of the different places, situations, and ways in which children translate and interpret for others. We soon came to see that translating happens everywhere, everyday, and in every way.

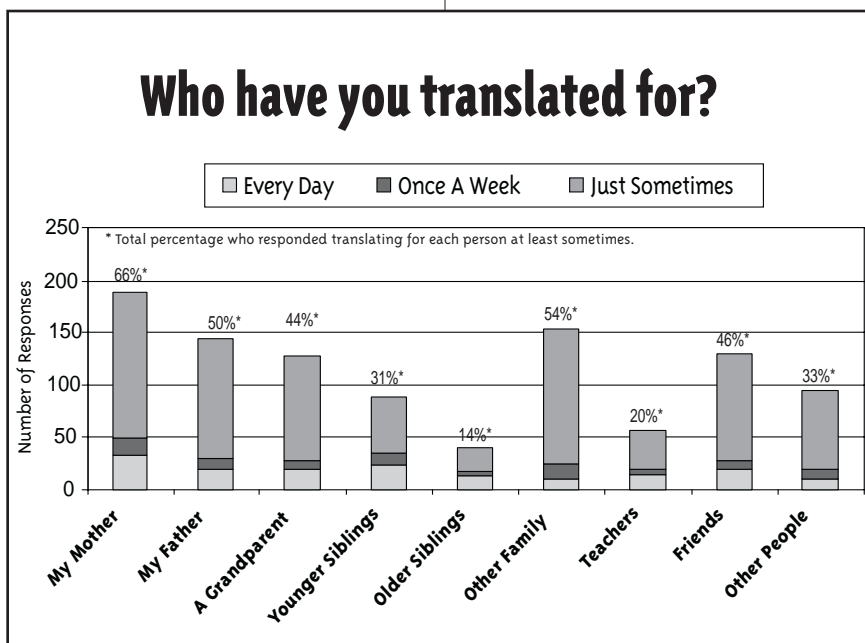**Interviewer:** What would you tell someone who doesn't know about kids who translate?

Sammy: I'd probably tell them, "You've got to get out more." Because, I mean, it happens. And it just doesn't happen in Hispanic communities, or doesn't happen just at a small taco stand here. It happens in downtown office buildings. It happens everywhere. I've been places where I had to translate, where I never thought I would. Downtown, train stations, the train, the bus...

Cuando comenzamos estas investigaciones no sabíamos que eran tan variados todos los sitios diferentes, situaciones, y maneras en que los niños traducen y sirven de intérpretes para otros. Pronto nos dimos cuenta que la traducción ocurre por todas partes, todos los días, y en todas formas.

Entrevistador: ¿Qué le diría Ud. a alguién que no sabe nada sobre los niños que traducen?

Sammy: Yo probablemente les diría "Ud. tiene que salir más." Porque, de verdad, ocurre. Y esto no ocurre solamente en comunidades hispanas, o no ocurre solamente en un pequeño puesto de tacos. Esto ocurre en edificios de oficinas del centro. Esto ocurre por todas partes. He traducido en sitios donde nunca pensé que tendría que traducir. El centro, las estaciones de tren, el tren, el bus ...

Who have you translated for?

Legend: ☐ Every Day ■ Once A Week ▨ Just Sometimes

Number of Responses

* Total percentage who responded translating for each person at least sometimes.

- My Mother — 66%*
- My Father — 50%*
- A Grandparent — 44%*
- Younger Siblings — 31%*
- Older Siblings — 14%*
- Other Family — 54%*
- Teachers — 20%*
- Friends — 46%*
- Other People — 33%*

Survey responses of 280 bilingual fifth and sixth graders at a Chicago Public School to the question: "Who have you translated for?"

Las respuestas de una encuesta, a 280 niños bilingües del quinto y sexto grado en una escuela pública de Chicago, a la pregunta: "¿Para quién traduces?"

Dentist: We go there often but there's no translating because the secretary talks Spanish & English and she does the translating for my mom.

Dr. Joe E.
Dentist

Inside my house, I translate for my mom on the phone. But most of the time I am either watching tv, on the computer, on the phone, eating, and sleeping. That is basically what I do during the day. On the weekends, we just stay home and clean, after we are done with the chores, we go out to eat and get some movies to watch. Sometimes we go visit other people but I don't translate much with my dad around. If we are watching t.v, and it's English my mom asks us what they are saying so we have to tell her.

Then later, we go to the park either walking or on the bikes. There's really no translating going on in the park because most of the kids that are there know English.

sometimes also translate letters and bills.

MTV

When I go to the pharm at walgreens, I have to translate for my mom. Usua the person that works there talks English, so my mom doesn't really understand.

13-year-old Jessica, the daughter of immigrants from Mexico to Chicago, drew a "typical day" in her life, noting where and when she sometimes translates for her mother.

Jessica (13 años) hija de inmigrantes de México a Chicago, dibujó "un día típico" en su vida, notando donde y cuando ella a veces traduce para su madre.

Where have you translated?

At Home	63%*
Stores	51%
On the Street	38%
Doctor's Office	35%
At School	34%
Restaurants	28%
Dentist's Office	28%
Parent-Teacher Conferences	20%
Other places	9%

Total percentage that marked translating at these various places

Survey responses of 280 bilingual fifth and sixth graders at a Chicago Public School to the question: "Where have you translated?"

Las respuestas de una encuesta, a 280 niños bilingües del quinto y sexto grado en una escuela pública de Chicago, a la pregunta: "¿Dónde has traducido?"

"We translate all kinds of things"
"Traducimos de todo"

"I have to translate insurance bills, like the time when my dad gets his credit card bills, I have to tell him each and everything he used his credit for and stuff like that. And with my mom, I have to write her checks and stuff, and then banking, it's mostly like banking. And sometimes it's just government mail, like water and stuff, regular tax stuff." —Robby, age 12

The children of immigrants use their knowledge of English to listen, speak, read, and write for other people – mostly for their families – in many different ways. Translating can involve:

- Being in the middle between speakers of different languages at parent-teacher conferences, doctor appointments, in stores, restaurants, and on the street.
- One-way interpretations of television shows, movies, radio programs, and public assemblies.
- Reading and explaining English texts, such as insurance papers, mortgage information, computer manuals, coupons, receipts, report cards, and storybooks.
- Doing things for others such as writing checks, running errands, and making phone calls.
- Helping others with homework, applying for jobs, and filling out forms.

"Tengo que traducir cuentas de seguro, como cuando mi papá recibe sus cuentas de tarjeta de crédito, tengo que decirle cada una y todas las instancias en que usó crédito y cosas así. Y con mi mamá, tengo que escribir sus cheques y cosas del banco. Y a veces el correo del gobierno, como el agua y otras cosas, y correspondencia de pagos de impuestos." —Robby, 12 años

Los niños de inmigrantes usan su conocimiento del inglés para escuchar, hablar, leer, y escribir para otros – sobre todo para sus familias – de muchos modos diferentes. La traducción puede implicar:

- Intervenir entre personas de varios idiomas en conferencias de maestro/padre, citas de doctor, en tiendas, restaurantes, y en la calle.
- Las interpretaciones de una vía de programas de televisión, películas, programas de radio, y asambleas públicas.
- Lectura y explicación de textos ingleses, como periódicos, documentos de aseguranza, información de hipoteca, manuales de computadora, cupones, ingresos, informes escolares, y libros de cuentos.
- Haciendo cosas para otros como escritura de cheques, haciendo recados, y llamadas telefónicas.
- Ayudando a otros con la tarea, solicitación de empleos, y llenando formularios.

What kinds of things have you translated?

Things translated	Number/Percentage of students who marked		
Words	160 / 57%	Conversations	105 / 38%
Letters	132 / 47%	Signs	92 / 33%
Phone calls	128 / 46%	Report Cards	75 / 27%
Movies	123 / 44%	Bills	73 / 26%
Homework	122 / 44%	Radio Shows	42 / 15%
Other School Information	117 / 42%	Bank Statements	47 / 17%
Television Shows	111 / 40%	The Newspaper	45 / 16%
The Mail	103 / 37%	Legal Documents	34 / 12%

Survey responses: of 280 bilingual fifth and sixth graders at a Chicago public school to the question: "What kinds of things have you translated?"

Las respuestas de 280 niños bilingües de quinto y sexto grado en una escuela pública de Chicago a la pregunta: "¿Qué clases de cosas has traducido?"

It's harder than it seems
Es más difícil de lo que parece

People don't always realize how hard translating can be. Many people think that anyone who knows two languages can easily translate between the two. They think of translating as simply "moving words" between languages. But translating is hard even for people who know both languages really well. It's not just words that have to be translated, but *ideas*.

These are some of the reasons translating is hard. Translators have to:

• Choose words that are appropriate for the genre, topic, and context.

• Choose appropriate ways of speaking that the audience can understand. (This includes dialect, word choices, tone of voice, and the degree of formal vs. informal speech, among other nuances.)

• Assume appropriate social roles – for example, as children speaking to and for adults in authority positions.

• Attend to the needs and expectations of multiple audiences – for example, a parent and a teacher.

• Convey information while juggling these competing social demands.

This is one of the many kinds of things that families receive in the mail that require translation. A 14-year-old girl in our study translated this jury summons for her mother.

Esta es una de muchas clases de cosas en inglés que las familias reciben en el correo. Una muchacha de 14 años en nuestro estudio tradujo esta cita de jurado para su madre.

La gente no siempre comprende lo difícil que es traducir. Muchas personas creen que todos los que saben dos idiomas pueden traducir fácilmente. Creen que traducir simplemente significa "mover palabras" entre los idiomas. Pero la traducción es difícil hasta para la gente que sabe bien ambos idiomas. No son solamente las palabras que tienen que ser traducidas, sino también las *ideas*.

Estas son unas de las razones que explican lo difícil que es el traducir. Los traductores tienen que:

• Escoger las palabras que son apropiadas para el género, el tema, y el contexto.

• Escoger maneras de hablar apropiadas a las que la audiencia puede entender. (Estas incluyen el dialecto, opciones de palabras, el tono de voz, y el grado de formalidad o informalidad en el discurso, entre otras cosas.)

• Asumir papeles sociales apropiados — por ejemplo, como niños que hablan con y para adultos en posiciones de autoridad. .

• Atender a las necesidades y las expectativas de un público múltiple - por ejemplo, un padre y un maestro.

• Transmitir información mientras balancea diferentes exigencias sociales.

Kids learn a lot from translating
Los niños aprenden mucho de la traducción

By observing children as they translate in different kinds of situations, studying transcripts of their translations, and talking with young people about the strategies they use to translate, we have identified a variety of skills that youth translators may develop. These include:

- Vocabulary
- Audience awareness
- Cross-cultural awareness
- "Real-world" literacy skills (experience with various genres, purposes, and domains)
- "Real-world" math skills (see Cindy's quote, page 7)
- Metalinguistic awareness (ability to reflect on language)
- Teaching and tutoring skills
- Civic and familial responsibility
- Social maturity
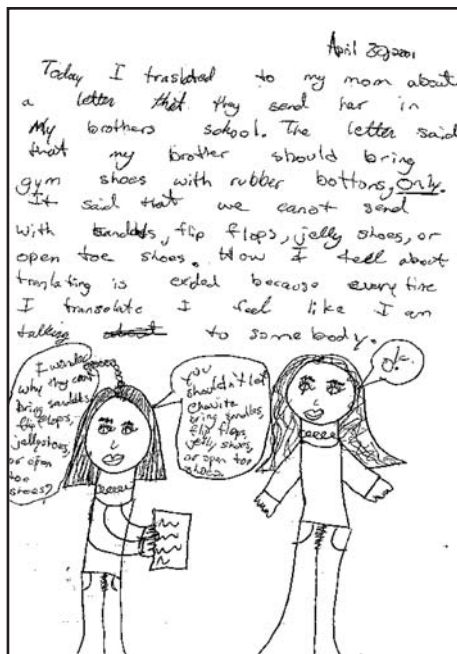
Journal entry by María (age 10)

Observando cómo otros niños traducen en diferentes situaciones, estudiando las transcripciones de sus traducciones, hablando con los jóvenes sobre las estrategias que ellos usan para traducir, es como hemos identificado una variedad de las habilidades que pueden ser desarrolladas al traducir. Estas incluyen:

- El vocabulario
- La conciencia sobre la audiencia
- La conciencia multicultural
- Habilidades literarias de la vida real (la experiencia con varios géneros, propósitos, y dominios)
- Habilidades de matemáticas de la vida real (ver cita de Cindy, página 7)
- La conciencia metalingüística (la capacidad de reflejar sobre el idioma)
- Habilidades sobre la enseñanza
- Responsabilidad cívica y familiar
- La madurez social

Our analyses of translators' school records indicate that translating may help kids do better in school. The students that we identified (on the basis of their survey responses) as active translators did significantly better on standardized tests of reading and math in fifth and sixth grade than did their peers. This was true even when we controlled for early school achievement and other factors.

Even as children learn, they help their parents and other people to learn, too. María writes:

On Tuesday I helped my mom write a story. The story that I helped my mom was about going to a market and buying food. She got the food from papers. I helped my mom write the book. Words that she didn't know how to spell I helped her spell. I felt happy because I like to help my mom and write stories. I had to help my mom because tomorrow she had to go to classes to learn English. When it was tomorrow and my mom went to English class at my school. My mom gave her teacher the book. She said it was a very good book. She liked it. Then it was over and we went home. —María, age 10

Nuestro análisis del logro escolar de los traductores indica que la traducción puede ayudar a los niños a salir adelante en la escuela. Los estudiantes que identificamos (basándonos en sus respuestas a la encuesta) como traductores activos, tuvieron mejores resultados en los exámenes de lectura y matemáticas en el quinto y sexto grado, que sus compañeros que no son traductores activos. Esto ocurre aún cuando tomamos en cuenta sus capacidades en los primeros grados y otros factores.

Aún, mientras los niños aprenden, también les ayudan a sus padres y a otros a aprender. María escribe:

El martes le ayudé a mi mamá a escribir un cuento. El cuento al que le ayudé a mi mamá era sobre ir de compras a un mercado. Ella consiguió la comida con un formulario. Le ayudé a mi mamá a escribir el libro. Con las palabras que ella no supo deletrear yo le ayudé a deletrear. Me sentí feliz porque me gusta ayudar a mi mamá y escribir cuentos. Tuve que ayudarle porque mañana ella tiene que ir a clases a aprender el inglés. Cuando era mañana y mi mamá fue a la clase de inglés en mi escuela. Mi mamá le dió el libro a su maestra. Ella le dijo que era un libro muy bueno. Y le gustó. Entonces se terminó la clase y nos fuimos a casa.
—María, 10 años

between years 99-98
his situation happed
Dont know the date but I thing it was when I was 8-9
when I was about 89 years old
we went to the doctor because my
baby brother was 1 month or so he had
to go for a checkup and a doctor told
my mom if she was going to give my
baby brother milk from he breast but
I did not know what breast meant so I
told doctor if she could explain what
breast ment She was nice and kind
and said yes of course she touched
her breast and told my mom what the
doctor was saying as far I can remember.
this was the scariest translating
thing I ever done I did not traslate
things that much this week but
I did wrote long time ago translating
stuff well I felt so nervous to
translate for the doctor because
I thouth I would not be able to
understand the big words doctors.
use so I remember about this

"I'm not just trodding down people
of my own age, but some people
they just ask for things, like 'can I
have a bike, can I go swimming,
can I go to summer camp, can I
have a new pair of Nikes?'...Their
parents keep saying, 'Do you know
how hard I work for the money to
pay the bills?' They don't know
exactly how much is in their bank
deposits, the bills and stuff. But I
know personally because I write
the bills. I write the checks."

—Cindy, age 14

"No estoy criticando la gente
de mi edad, pero algunos piden
solamente cosas, como "puedo
tener una bici, puedo tomar clases
de natación, puedo ir al campa-
mento de verano, puedo comprar
unos Nikes" ...Sus padres les dicen,
"Uds. saben cuánto trabajo nos
cuesta conseguir el dinero para
pagar las cuentas?" Ellos no saben
exactamente cuánto dinero hay,
depósitos bancarios, las cuentas y
otras cosas. Pero yo sí sé personal-
mente, porque pago las cuentas.
Escribo los cheques."

—Cindy, 14 años

You can make it easier
Ud. puede facilitar el proceso

When someone is translating for you, these are some things you can do to make it easier and more rewarding:

- Explain background information (anything you know about the topic, people, situation or text that will be translated, to orient the translator).

- Speak in short phrases.

- Use body language and gestures.

- Explain things in more than one way, especially complicated information.

- Ask the translator if s/he understands; if not, give more explanations.

- Give the translator time; translators sometimes need to pause to gather their thoughts.

- Realize that your body language and tone of voice will be read by others and will influence how your message will be understood.

- Be patient and remember that translating is hard.

- Use the translation situation as a learning experience for both of you.

- Thank the translator for his/her time and talent.

Cuando alguién traduce para Ud., estas son algunas cosas que puede hacer para hacerlo más fácil y más provechoso:

- Explicar la información a fondo (todo lo que Ud. sabe sobre el asunto, la gente, la situación o el texto que será traducido, para ayudar a orientar al traductor).

- Hablar en frases pequeñas.

- Usar el lenguaje corporal y gestos.

- Explicar las cosas en dos o más modos, especialmente la información complicada.

- Preguntarle al traductor si él/ella entiende; si no, darle más explicaciones.

- Darle tiempo al traductor; los traductores a veces tienen que hacer una pausa para organizar sus ideas.

- Comprender que su lenguaje corporal y tono de voz serán "leídos" por otros e influirán como su mensaje será entendido.

- Ser paciente y recordar que la traducción es difícil.

- Usar la situación de traducción como una experiencia educativa para ambos.

- Agradecer al traductor por su tiempo y talento.

When Adalia translated the jury summons on page 5, her mother helped by explaining what juries are, using an example of a time when she had to go before a jury. She also supplied some of the Spanish words that Adalia didn't know (such as the Spanish word for "jury"). Adalia learned about juries, and her mother solved the problem of what to do with the form that she had received in the mail.

"I believe that it helps him because he learns from this. Because if he didn't...have to translate to anyone then I think that he would talk only in English...Words that he doesn't know how to tell me in Spanish I also try to help with what they mean. So he learns what they mean."
—Miguel's mother

Cuando Adalia tradujo la cita de jurado en la página 5, su madre le ayudó explicándole qué son los jurados, usando un ejemplo de una ocasión cuando ella tuvo que ir ante un jurado. Ella también le explicó unas de las palabras españolas que Adalia no sabía (como la palabra en español para "el jurado"). Adalia aprendió sobre jurados, y su madre solucionó el problema de qué hacer con la planilla que ella había recibido en el correo.

"Yo creo que sí le sirve porque él mismo va aprendiendo... Por que si no...tuviera que traducirle a nadie yo creo que se quedaría no más con el puro inglés... También trato de ayudarle con las palabras que él no sabe decirme en español. El también va aprendiendo, qué es lo que significan."
—la madre de Miguel

Advice from kids to kids:
Consejos de niño a niño:

Strategies to deal with the challenges of translating

When you're "in the middle" between two people:

- Try to find out ahead of time what you'll be translating and who you'll be translating for.
- Ask the speaker to talk slowly and clearly and in small phrases.
- Ask the speaker to tell you what s/he knows about the topic and the audience.
- Tell the speaker up front that you may ask him/her to repeat things if you don't understand.
- Take the time you need to gather your thoughts.
- Use body language and gestures.
- Watch the person you're translating for; if s/he seems confused, back up and try again.
- Try substituting words that sound similar in either language.
- Try saying things in different ways.

When you're translating written texts:

- Take time to look over the material first; try to understand the main ideas.
- Ask the person you're translating for what s/he knows about the papers.
- Use your past experience translating similar things to figure out what information is the most important to translate.
- Use illustrations or graphics to help you understand.
- Skip words or sections that are confusing – you can go back later.
- Try substituting words that look or sound similar in either language.
- But be careful not to make up information, as Sammy warns:

"My best advice would be, if it's a real important conversation don't try to make up a word for the word that you are translating because it might end up blowing the whole conversation out of proportion…Once I was translating and I could not understand a phrase and I just made up a phrase for it and it ended up going, the conversation ended up going in a whole different direction and the whole conversation just got out of proportion." —Sammy, age 14

Estrategias para resolver las dificultades de la traducción

CUANDO ESTÁS "ENTRE" DOS PERSONAS:

- Trata de averiguar de antemano qué vas a traducir y para quién.
- Pídeles que hablen despacio y claramente y en frases pequeñas.
- Pídeles que te expliquen lo que saben sobre el asunto y sobre la audiencia.
- Aconséjales que repitan algo si no entiendes.
- Toma el tiempo que necesites para organizar tus ideas.
- Usa lenguaje corporal y gestos.
- Mira a la persona para quién traduces directamente; si parece estar confundida, inténtalo otra vez.
- Trata de sustituir palabras que suenan similares en ambos idiomas.
- Trata de decir las cosas de formas diferentes.

CUANDO TRADUCES LOS TEXTOS ESCRITOS:

- Toma tu tiempo para revisar el material primero y trata de entender las ideas principales.
- Pregúntale a la persona de qué se trata el texto a traducir.
- Usa tu previa experiencia en traducir ideas similares para entender la información más importante de traducir.
- Usa dibujos para ayudarles a entender.
- Omite las palabras o secciones que son confusas — siempre puedes volver a estas después.
- Trata de sustituir palabras que se parecen o suenan iguales en ambas lenguas.
- Ten cuidado de no inventar la información, como advierte Sammy:

"Mi mejor consejo sería, si es una conversación muy importante no trates de inventar palabras sobre lo que estás traduciendo pues estas palabras podrían derrumbar la conversación... En una ocasión cuando yo traducía y no entendía una frase, inventé una frase y la conversación tomó un rumbo completamente diferente y se salió del tema."
—Sammy, 14 años

Suggestions for teachers
Página en inglés para maestras/os

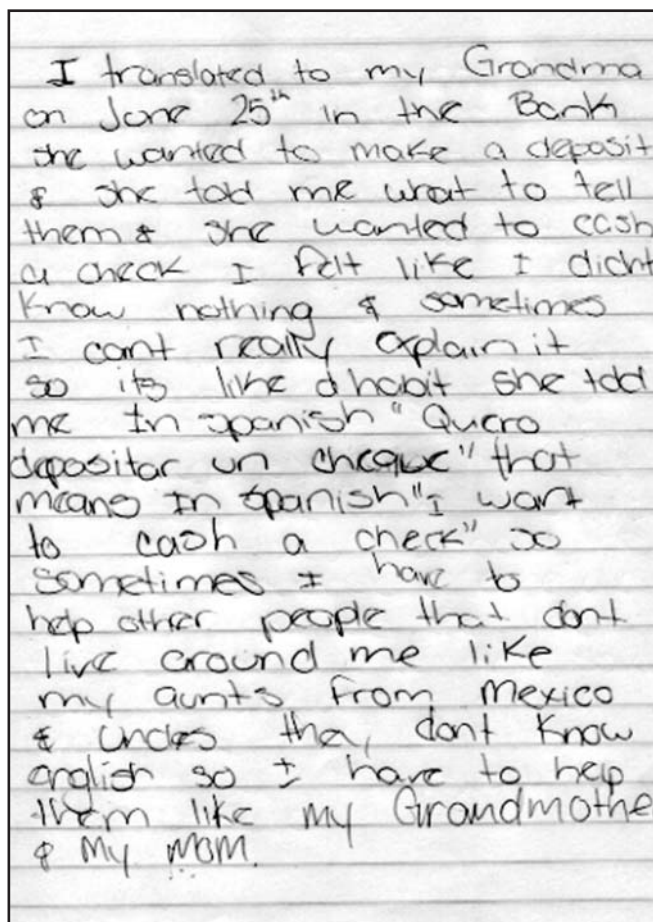**Learn more about children's translating experiences and validate them**

- Invite your students to keep journals that track their experiences.

- Invite them to bring texts they have translated to class.

- Consider giving extra credit, or homework credit, to kids who help their families by translating at home.

- Make time for students to talk about these experiences with each other. (Many children told us they never realized other children translated as they do. Your students can learn a lot from listening to each other's experiences.)

Help kids develop awareness of the strategies they use while translating

- Students can re-enact translation situations and talk about the challenges they encounter. You can help them to identify more (and less) effective strategies that they use for different audiences, contexts, situations and purposes.

- Students can work together to translate written materials, and talk with each other about the challenges they encounter. They can compare their translations and discuss what makes translations more or less effective for different audiences, contexts, situations, and purposes.

Help kids see how translating skills and strategies can be applied to school tasks

- Instead of explaining worksheets or activity directions to students, invite your students to explain the instructions for you or for each other. This allows children to apply their translating skills – putting someone's words into other words – to English paraphrasing activities.

- Choose a variety of texts for your instruction, including those that have real-world purposes, like the kinds of texts your students may translate at home.

- Have students think about the main ideas in texts – and their purposes – before focusing on details. Encourage them to do this when they translate, too.

- Think with your students about choosing the right words, ideas, dialects, and genres for different audiences, contexts, situations, and purposes.

- Demonstrate that they can use their knowledge of cognates to make sense of English vocabulary. You don't have to speak their language to help them in this way. You can ask them, "Does this word look like any word you know in your language?"

- Draw parallels between searching for cognates and seeking common word morphology – for example, by identifying Latin and Greek roots of words in both English and Spanish.

- Leverage students' experiences with real-world math activities (for example, paying bills, writing checks, and completing sales transactions) for math learning in school.

- Build on their experiences with different domains (for example, legal and medical matters) for subject area learning.

Resources/Recursos

We are preparing numerous academic papers about our work. Visit our website at http://www.sesp.nwu.edu/ProjectSites/CLL/Index.html. This brochure is also available for downloading there.

These papers are currently available:

Marjorie Faulstich Orellana, Lisa Dorner and Lucila Pulido. (Forthcoming: December 2003). Accessing Assets, Immigrant Youth as Family Interpreters. *Social Problems.*

Marjorie Faulstich Orellana. (Forthcoming: December 2003). Children's Responsibilities in Latino Immigrant Homes. *New Directions for Youth Development: Theory, Practice and Research.* (Special issue on Social Influences in the Positive Development of Immigrant Youth.)

Marjorie Faulstich Orellana and Philip Bowman. (In press). Cultural Diversity Research on Learning and Development. *Educational Researcher*

Marjorie Faulstich Orellana (2001). The work kids do: Mexican and Central American immigrant children's contributions to households and schools in California. *Harvard Educational Review, 71* (3): 366-389.

Marjorie Faulstich Orellana, Jennifer Reynolds, Lisa Dorner and María Meza. (2003). In other words: Translating or "para-phrasing" as a family literacy practice in immigrant households. *Reading Research Quarterly, 38* (1), 12-34.

Other books that may be of interest:
(For a more complete list of references, including journal articles, see the reference lists in the above articles)

M. Coulthard and P. Odber de Barbeta (Eds.) The knowledge of the translator.. Lampeter, Dyfed, Wales U.K.: The Edwin Millen Press.

Anne Fadiman. (1997). *The spirit catches you and you fall down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures.* New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux.

Esmeralda Santiago. (1998). *Almost a woman.* New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Miri Song. (1999). *Helping out: Children's labor in ethnic business.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Amy Tan. (2001). *The bonesetter's daughter.* New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's.

Guadalupe Valdés. (2002). *Expanding definitions of giftedness: The case of young interpreters from immigrant countries.* In R.J. Sternberg and W.M. Williams (Eds.), The Educational Psychology Series. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Olga Vásquez, Lucinda Pease-Alvarez & Sheila Shannon. (1994). *Pushing boundaries: Language and culture in a Mexicano community.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

R. W. Brislin (1976). *Translation.* New York: Gardner Press, Inc.

"The neighbors, they talk to my parents. I translate to my parents what they're talking about. And usually, when my mom tells me something, I have to tell back the neighbor something. So it's sort of like a relationship thing, and I'm the main key in the conversation… If they were just out there talking and nodding their heads, they wouldn't know what they were talking about."
—Cindy, age 14

"Los vecinos, se dirigen a mis padres. Les traduzco a mis padres lo que ellos dicen. Y por lo general, cuando mi mamá me dice algo, tengo que traducírselo al vecino. Entonces esto es como una cosa de relación, y soy la clave en la conversación... Estando solos, ellos hablarían y cabecearían, pero no sabrían de lo que hablan."
—Cindy, 14 años

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