



Winter 2020

# Soleado

Promising Practices from the Field

## Student-Led Equity Councils and Classroom Approaches to Critical Consciousness: Transformation Through the Fourth Pillar

by Mia De Villegas-Decker—Palisade IB Freshman, Gabriela Reitz—Palisade IB Senior, Laura Meinzen—IB Diploma Programme Coordinator and Teacher, Palisade High School, and Michele Rewold—DL Program Facilitator and Teacher, Dual Immersion Academy, Mesa County Valley School District 51, CO

### The Fourth Pillar: A Foundation in Critical Consciousness

How can we as educators foster critical consciousness among teachers and students? As a dual language program facilitator for elementary and middle school and a high school International Baccalaureate coordinator, we began working together in an effort to create more access for native Spanish speakers to our district's IB Diploma Programme.

We quickly discovered the alignment in the philosophies of our two programs. In 2019, we attended a powerful La Cosecha Conference together and were inspired

by a session that promoted the idea that critical consciousness should be included as a fundamental pillar of dual language education alongside the other three pillars. In *Bilingualism, Biliteracy, Biculturalism, and Critical Consciousness for All: Proposing a Fourth Fundamental Goal for Two-Way Dual Language Education* (Palmer, Cervantes-Soon, & Heiman, 2019), the authors define critical consciousness as the ability to

... reflectively discern the differences in power and

privilege rooted in social relationships that structure inequalities and shape the material conditions of our lives; to *read the world* also includes recognizing one's role in these dynamics (p. 123).

As educators we discussed how we might embed critical consciousness into our own practices and daily instruction with students. We focused on the four elements listed in the article as central to critical consciousness

in two-way dual language education: continuously interrogating power, historicizing schools, listening critically, and engaging with discomfort.

### Creating a Student-Led Equity Council—A Systemwide Approach to Critical Consciousness

Gabi writes:

*The Student-Led Equity Council is a group that teaches and promotes equity and cultural competency in our school and community. We provide a safe space for students to discuss inequities they have experienced, conduct workshops to educate on cultural competency, and consult with administration on equity issues. This is my third year on the Equity Council, and each year has presented different experiences.*

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The student-led equity council promotes equity and cultural competency in the schools and the community.

### Inside this issue...

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- ▣ Implementing GLAD Strategies in a Distance-Learning Context
- ▣ DLeNM—2021 Winter Institute Professional Development Opportunities



# Experiencing Education Through Our Tlingit Culture

by Disney Williams—Tlingit Culture, Language and Literacy Program Manager,  
Harborview Elementary School, Juneau, AK

Promising practices...

Three students in the Tlingit Culture, Language, and Literacy (TCLL) program in Alaska's capital city began the 2020-2021 school year harvesting with their families. Fifty-nine jars of sweet *kanat'á* (blueberry) jam and 100 bags of freshly picked and dried *s'ikshaldeen* (Hudson Bay or labrador tea) later the students are excited to continue their subsistence-based projects. In her second year in TCLL at Harborview Elementary School, Patsy was so thrilled to receive her harvesting kit from her teachers that she immediately called her grandma to put in a request for a batch of freshly picked *kanat'á*. It's no surprise that she promptly received two whole gallons. Patsy's grandmother is known to harvest all kinds of berries throughout the picking season near her home in Hoonah.

Upon receiving her grandmother's bounty by way of the regional ferry, Patsy went straight to work. For six nonstop hours, Patsy was so focused in the kitchen that even her mom was surprised! Aside from assisting Patsy with the more precarious aspects of making jam, like boiling the ingredients and handling scalding hot jars, Patsy's mom, Jessie, said she barely had to lift a finger. Aligning with her Tlingit culture and values, Patsy will give her *kanat'á* jam to Elders in Juneau and Hoonah.

With so many changes and challenges this school year, bringing language, culture, and history into the home is no small feat. However, the TCLL Program and its stakeholders seize every opportunity to ensure that all students in kindergarten through fifth grade have a chance to experience their education through the lens of their Tlingit culture. Teachers send harvesting kits, rawhide drum-making kits, and Northwest

Coast Native formline art kits home to students. At home, the learning experience is extended to TCLL families, connecting them to their land and culture through berry picking and other traditional practices.



*Patsy Fred proudly shows the results of her hard work preparing berry jam to share with the Elders of her community.*

The Juneau School District works in partnership with various Native organizations to support the TCLL program. Currently, much of the work is funded through Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI), which is a non-profit organization working to enhance Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian language and culture, as well as promote cross-cultural understanding. This collaborative effort allows TCLL teachers to continue to make culture a priority when educating their students. Over the course of this summer, and through the pandemic lockdown, TCLL staff had the time and financial means to begin developing a culturally rich, place-based curriculum.

TCLL is one of three optional programs currently offered in the Juneau School District (JSD). In developing this curriculum, the TCLL program aims to enjoy the same independence as its parallel programs. This shift would not only move decision-making into the hands of parents and staff, but also ensure that students receive an education that integrates Tlingit culture and language while keeping in line with the District's core content.

When TCLL started in 2000, the program's goal was to become a bilingual immersion school with Tlingit culture and language as capstone instructional features. TCLL added one grade at a time, eventually growing into three multi-graded K-5 classrooms at Harborview Elementary School. In its first three years, high interest in the

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*The Tlingit Culture, Language and Literacy Program (TLLL) in Juneau, Alaska focuses its instructional program on developing a culturally rich, place-based curriculum.*

program resulted in a long waiting list and a lottery for student selection. The first decade of TLLL's existence proved that imparting Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian values directly into the instructional program contributes to Southeast Alaska Native student success, fostering an environment that grows leadership skills, self-confidence, and creativity. While the impact TLLL had on students and families involved in the program included increased test scores and graduation rates, stakeholders also began to reconsider other factors that influence Alaska Native students academic achievement.

Factors such as preserving heritage language, having a strong voice, pride in cultural identity, as well as contributing to family and clan all play a significant role in ensuring healthy transitions to adulthood among Alaska Native students. How does TLLL accomplish this? Today, respected Tlingit Elder speakers work in each classroom, mentor students, tell traditional stories in Tlingit, and meet regularly with teachers to guide language instruction, even in a virtual setting.

Not only do Elders help language teachers in pronunciation and work with staff in their own language-learning journeys, they nurture the Tlingit way of life across all generations involved in the program. As Elders collaborate with teachers and students to develop new material unique to the program, their work transcends translating content from English to Tlingit or vice versa: Elder speakers provide grounding

context and depth in the language, breathing life and history into phrases, classroom norms, and commands so that they truly come from *Lingít tundataani* (Tlingit worldview).

Language teacher, Seigóot Jessica Chester, says that Elders will add stories to the pictures when she is teaching language lessons: "For example if it's seal skin, Grandma Selina would talk about sliding down the seal skins when they were stretched. She would talk about her dad hunting seals ... cooking seal with her mom. She would talk about missing the food when she lived away from Alaska. She would talk about subsistence rights ... about moccasins. It often depended on what she was thinking about."

It's not unusual for students to see and hear Elders adjust language usage among teachers mid-lesson. Seigóot says "It doesn't necessarily change our lesson: it enhances it and adds cultural knowledge. It's really powerful for kids to see the interaction between teachers and Elders and how correcting is done with love and humor. It's something I never saw growing up in JSD."

While teaching alongside Tlingit Elder speakers, language teachers increased instruction from 30 minutes to 75 minutes a day, with Tlingit vocabulary and commands incorporated in classrooms throughout the day. To increase the number of language teachers, this year SHI and TLLL began working in partnership with the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS),

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## Proponiendo mi propia versión de la historia: El empoderamiento de estudiantes de lenguaje dual por medio de la integración de las artes del lenguaje y los estudios sociales

por Jesús D. Díaz Peña, EdD, Maestro Líder, Programa Dual, Distrito Escolar U-46, Elgin, IL

*Para poder enseñarte, tengo que conocerte—Lisa Delpit*

Todo proceso educativo debe ser orientado a la liberación de los individuos con el fin de desarrollar un sentido de justicia (Freire, 2000). En este contexto, la educación de los niños debe ser enmarcada en la abundancia de oportunidades para desarrollar destrezas de pensamiento crítico. En el marco de un programa de lenguaje dual hace falta la intención del educador y del educando para elevar el estatus del español y desarrollar destrezas de lecto-escritura en español e inglés. Con varios años de implementación en la escuela media, el bloque de humanidades en el distrito escolar U-46 es un ejemplo de cómo integrar objetivos de contenido y lenguaje (Valero, 2016). En síntesis, El bloque de humanidades promueve una integración curricular que abarca diversos temas categorizados en 4 unidades temáticas (textos narrativos, informativos, argumentativos y líricos) dirigidas a estimular el conocimiento de gentes, lugares y ambientes. Por medio del contenido de la clase de estudios sociales, el maestro promueve el desarrollo del lenguaje y capacita a los estudiantes para configurar enlaces metacognitivos entre el uso del lenguaje y herramientas propias de las ciencias sociales.

La integración de objetivos de contenido y lenguaje fortalecen el desarrollo cognitivo de los estudiantes. Desde una perspectiva sociocultural, los individuos se apropian de las voces de aquellos que residen en su entorno cultural y las reproducen como parte de sus herramientas semióticas (Wertsch, 2009). Un estudiante, expuesto a un escenario lingüístico-cultural como lo es el bloque de humanidades, puede apropiarse y replicar la voz del maestro, las voces de autores y literatos de renombre y de aquellos que procuran ofrecer lecciones de alto rigor académico. En un programa de lenguaje dual, las herramientas sociolingüísticas se duplican, enriquecen el repertorio de referencias contextuales y facilitan la comprensión de escenarios culturales complejos. El lenguaje entonces figura como herramienta dinámica que provee acceso a un contenido curricular que se valora en la medida en que se va

refinando el lenguaje. Es decir, el lenguaje provee acceso a un contenido curricular y el contenido promueve el desarrollo de habilidades lingüísticas.

El propósito de este escrito es destacar y promover las virtudes de la integración de las artes del lenguaje con los estudios sociales. Con este fin, se destacan elementos teóricos y prácticos pertinentes a maestros que enseñan a estudiantes bilingües. Estos elementos teóricos y prácticos deben permitir al maestro, por sobre toda otra consideración, diseñar lecciones que prometan a los estudiantes oportunidades para hacer configuraciones de la historia desde su propia condición de estudiante, adolescente y, probablemente, como miembro de grupos minoritarios. Es en términos de esta última consideración que se promueve el empoderamiento de los estudiantes conforme al reconocimiento de los pilares de la justicia social en la educación.

En primer lugar, es necesario entender el concepto de identidades académicas. De acuerdo con la Asociación Nacional para la Educación Multicultural, NAME por sus siglas en inglés, la identidad académica de un estudiante se refiere a la configuración que un individuo hace de sí mismo con respecto a la escolarización y el aprendizaje. En otras palabras, la identidad académica positiva considera “cómo los estudiantes se perciben a sí mismos y a miembros de su mismo grupo identitario como intelectualmente capacitados y dispuestos a lograr un alto rendimiento académico (National Association for Multicultural Education). Grupos minoritarios como los estudiantes que aprenden el inglés pueden configurar una identidad académica positiva en la medida en que haya: 1) altas expectativas académicas por parte de los maestros, 2) relaciones entre estudiantes y maestros basadas en una genuina preocupación por el éxito estudiantil, 3) un plan de estudio que se conecte con lo que los estudiantes ya conocen, en inglés *funds of knowledge* (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Vélez-Ibáñez, & Greenberg, 1992) ) y 4) el uso de estrategias didácticas personalizadas conforme a las más recientes investigaciones. En este sentido, Porlán (1993) hace un planteamiento contundente cuando dice que mecanizar el proceso de enseñanza-

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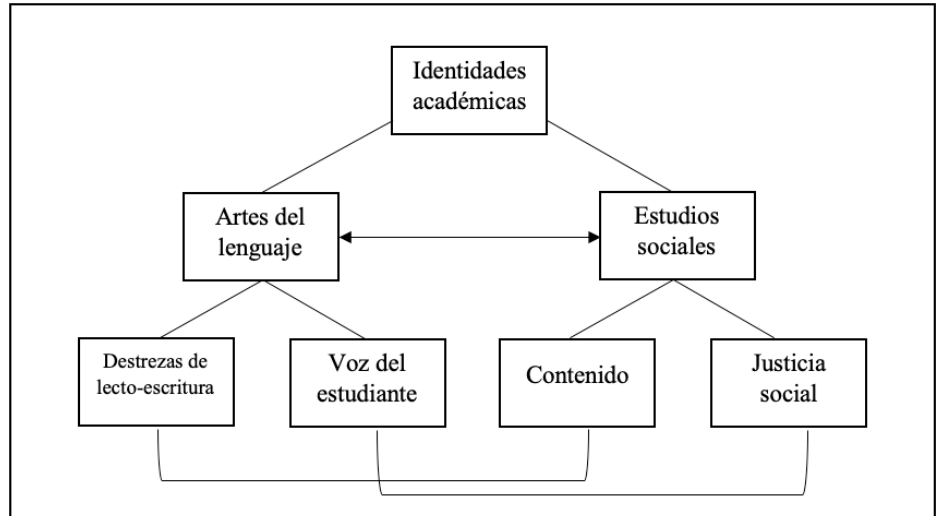
aprendizaje resta efectividad a lo que bien pudiera ser un proceso enriquecedor. Para no mecanizar la educación, una alternativa probada es la integración curricular, particularmente el diseño de un andamiaje académico que considere la identidad del estudiante en el contexto de las artes del lenguaje y los estudios sociales (De La Paz, 2005).

En segundo lugar, la integración curricular de dos o más disciplinas no es asunto nuevo y se ha definido de diferentes maneras y desde distintas perspectivas. Para propósitos de este escrito nos enfocaremos en la integración de las artes del lenguaje en español (ALE) y los estudios sociales en el contexto de un programa de lenguaje dual al nivel del 7mo y 8vo grado. Hace unos años escribí sobre el desarrollo de identidades académicas en un contexto más académico (Díaz Peña, 2017). En esta ocasión quisiera enfocarme en dos ejemplos prácticos que he utilizado en mi salón de clase y que son el resultado del esfuerzo de maestros y administradores del Distrito Escolar U-46. Con la compra de libros de literatura auténtica hispanoamericana, el distrito y su Departamento de Estudiantes que Aprenden el Inglés han realizado un esfuerzo extraordinario para exponer a los estudiantes a textos narrativos, informativos, argumentativos y líricos de primer orden en español. Es dentro de cada una de estas unidades temáticas que la integración curricular fluye.

El primer ejemplo de esta integración curricular se enfoca en elementos de geografía y cultura, pero también asuntos tan sensitivos como la inmigración de hispanos hacia los Estados Unidos y la pobreza. *Ecos del desierto*, de la autora Silvia Dubovoy (2007), relata la historia de un adolescente y su experiencia al cruzar la frontera entre México y Estados Unidos. En síntesis, Miguel, el personaje principal, experimenta situaciones y condiciones sociales que permean en la conciencia colectiva de inmigrantes hispanoamericanos. El dolor, la familia, la melancolía, la identidad, el tema de la diáspora y la muerte son temas subyacentes a esta historia. El segundo ejemplo que presentaré hace alusión a la Ciudad de México, D. F. y los sismos que con frecuencia experimenta la ciudad. En este

aspecto, *Ciudad equis 1985*, del autor mexicano Juan Carlos Quezadas (2013), narra la historia de un joven obrero, trabajador de día y escritor de madrugada. Con cientos de historias ricas en contenido y técnicas literarias sin publicar y escondidas en un armario, un día decide compartir sus historias con el mundo. Ese día, el 19 de septiembre de 1985, sacudió a la Ciudad de México un terremoto de 8.1 en la escala Richter devastando gran parte de la ciudad, perdiendo la vida más de 5,000 personas.

Para continuar la discusión debo destacar la aseveración que hace De La Paz (2005) en torno a la efectividad de integrar artes del lenguaje y los estudios sociales, especialmente en términos de objetivos de lenguaje y contenido. El diagrama a continuación presenta la conexión entre estos dos elementos:



Representación integral del currículo de las artes del lenguaje en español con los estudios sociales fortaleciendo la noción de las identidades académicas.

Nótese la correspondencia entre las destrezas de lecto-escritura con el contenido y la voz del estudiante con asuntos de justicia social. Es precisamente en esta convergencia que la integración de ALE con estudios sociales ocurre de manera natural, pero también de forma intencionada. Es decir, la lecto-escritura como vehículo de análisis y producción de artefactos académicos (cuentos, ensayos, cartas y poesías) y el contenido que es la base sobre la cual se producirán esos artefactos académicos. A su vez, la voz de estudiante se atañe a postulados de justicia social para expresar su visión de mundo sobre temas complejos. Esa visión de mundo se articula por medio de las competencias adquiridas a través de la lectura y el contenido.

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# Implementing GLAD Strategies in a Distance-Learning Context

by Sara J. Robles—Dual Language Instructional Coach, School District U-46, Elgin, IL

Promising practices...

## Necessity is the mother of invention—Plato

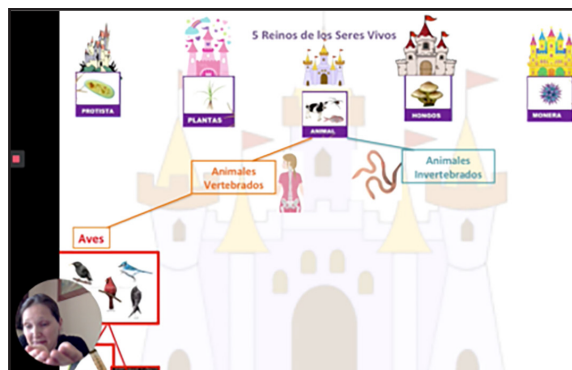
While none of us expected to move drastically from in-person to online instruction, that is exactly what we did in March of 2020. Like many of you, I was left with questions of how to adapt my dual language instruction to a virtual space. *Where do I start? What does this look like? What, if anything, from my physical classroom can be adapted and used successfully in a distance-learning format?* Through this period, I was fortunate to discover the Seesaw platform, which, in concert with Project GLAD strategies and Loom recording tools, turned out to be a marvelous combination. Through some trial and error, I found ways to adapt some of my go-to GLAD strategies with the aim of developing all four language domains. Students were given both asynchronous and synchronous lessons during the week, which worked together in tandem. Rather than describe a single lesson, I will describe what I refer to as “lesson threads” which refers to the work done by students throughout the course of a week, both independently and in “live” sessions, all connected to a central content and language objective.

## Asynchronous Introduction to a New Concept: Developing Oracy and Key Content Vocabulary

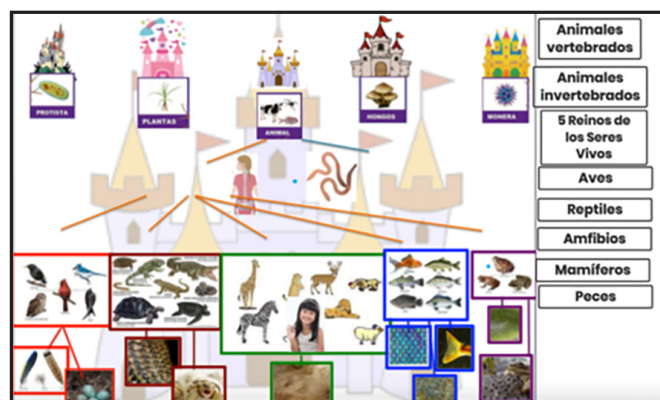
To kick off the final science unit of the year, I wanted to continue to use the Graphic Organizer Input Chart. I realized that showing a huge paper chart during a Zoom session would be logistically challenging, so I moved from paper to a slide presentation. Using the Loom recording option to show both the presentation and my face simultaneously, I moved slowly and systematically through the Graphic Organizer Input Chart, offering a bird’s-eye view of material from the unit. Students could see my face as I presented key terms from the unit and could practice the TPR gestures along with me, even asynchronously! Even though they would be watching the video on

their own, I was sure to leave pauses for students to practice both gestures and words along with me, as we had once done in person in the classroom. As in the classroom, I kept the video short (less than 10 minutes). Once it was complete, I included the Loom video as the first step of the Seesaw activity instructions. Students were asked to watch the video, repeat and gesture along with me, and then respond in Seesaw. Their first Seesaw response was to leave me a video showing me the TPR/key terms they had learned in the video. Second, students were given a template of the same organizer from

the video without the labels, in which they read and placed the “word cards” where they belonged. Just like in-person GLAD instruction, I used color-coding, and the multiple types of responses mimicked the repetition we would have had



The Graphic Organizer Input Chart was presented using Loom so that students could see the teacher’s face and follow her TPR gestures.



in the classroom, reviewing the organizer over several days. Seesaw was a fantastic medium for this introduction, as students could navigate independently through the work and respond in multiple ways. Being able to respond with voice messages allowed ongoing back and forth exchanges between the students and me, similar to the feedback of the in-person classroom. Reviewing students’ response videos and word-card work served as formative assessment and allowed me to prepare to clarify concepts and to offer a deeper application of content vocabulary in later lessons.

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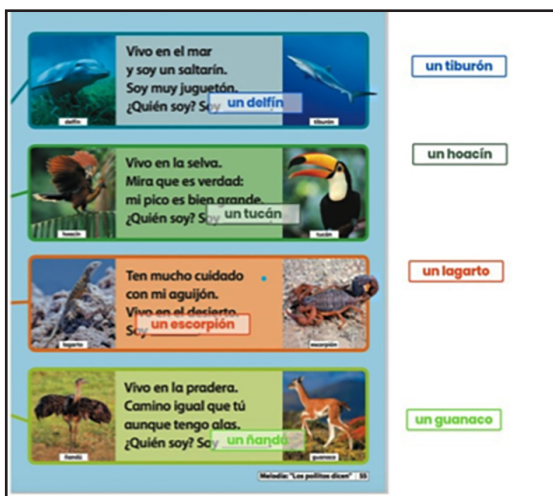
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**Synchronous Advanced Application: Clarification of Concepts, Differentiation, and Deeper Application of Content**

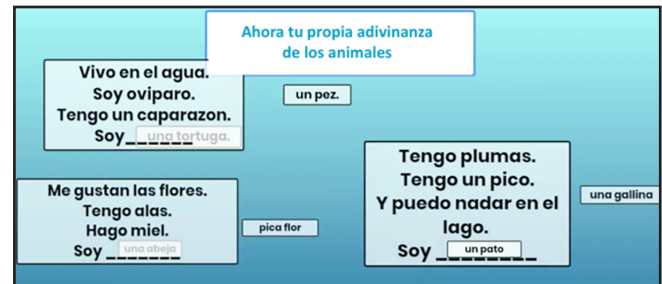
A few days after students were introduced to the new topic of study with the Graphic Organizer Input Chart, we met as a class via Zoom. I wanted to be sure to clarify a few concepts, such as the characteristics of amphibians vs. reptiles, which I noticed had been a sticking point when I reviewed the students' video responses to the Input Chart. After I clarified this aspect, then came the moment to add difficulty and differentiation. After a quick teacher-led review, I asked for students with higher proficiency in the target language to take over as the teacher while all the other students participated, either making the TPR gesture or repeating the key vocabulary. Finally, the class played a game *¿Quién soy?* in which students asked yes or no questions to guess which animal they were. The guesser closed their eyes while the rest of the class could see a photo of a mystery member of the animal kingdom. The guesser used key vocabulary and deductive reasoning (i.e., *¿Soy mamífero?* *¿Tengo plumas?*) while the rest of the class answered questions with thumbs up or down. Students of all proficiency levels were engaged listening and asking questions, as well as offering the occasional *pista*, if the guesser was stuck.

**Asynchronous Reading and Writing**

To conclude the week, students were given a passage from our district's literacy resource. The activity required students to read riddles about the animal kingdom and answer them using a word bank. I set it up in Seesaw so that students first read the passage for fluency (recording their voice as they read), and then later answered questions for comprehension (either writing or moving words on the page).



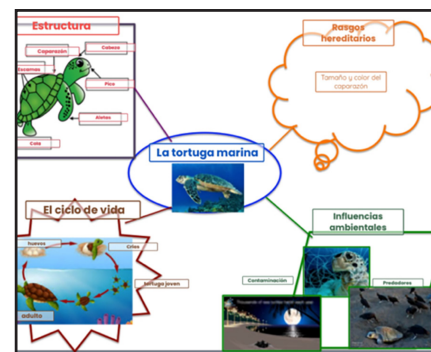
The final step was for students to write original riddles using both writing and audio recordings. It was fun for everyone to guess and give more clues in an ongoing conversation, all centered around the key content vocabulary presented from the Input Chart. After I read and responded to students' work, I shared the results with the whole class, so the class community could see and celebrate each other's efforts.



**Additional GLAD Strategies**

After this initial lesson thread, the unit continued with the support of a variety of GLAD strategies via Seesaw and Loom. Below is an overview of subsequent lesson threads, based on key GLAD strategies.

🕒 **Pictorial Input Chart** Using the same technique of a Loom recording with both PowerPoint and video combined, I presented an example from the Graphic Organizer Input Chart to the students. Just like in-person teaching, I presented and organized specific categories in comprehensible chunks that were color-coded. Since we were looking in depth at the animal kingdom, I presented an example of a reptile—the sea turtle. In this case, instead of having students respond in writing, I requested that they respond orally, telling me something they learned and sharing any remaining questions. In the classroom, I would have physically modeled this and given the students sentence frames. In Seesaw, sentence frames appeared as dialogue bubbles along with oral instructions and supports. Similar to the Graphic Organizer, the second part of the response to the Pictorial Input Chart included sorting “word cards” and having students move either pictures or text onto the chart as an additional layer of processing and reflection.



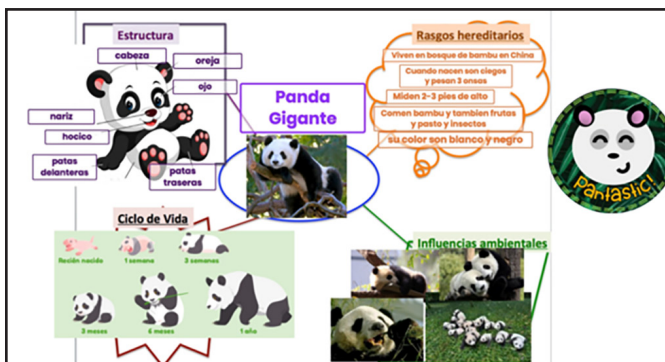
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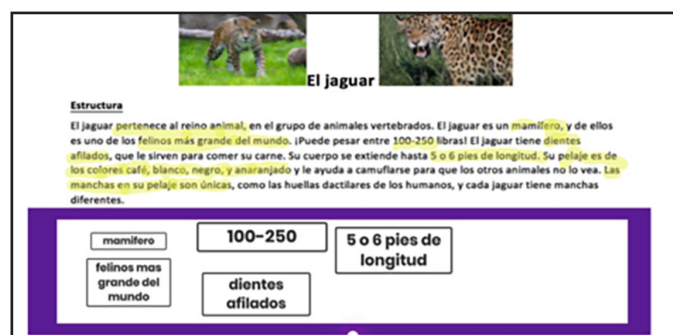
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Unlike in the classroom, where we might have presented only one part of the Pictorial at a time, I recorded the entire thing, since students had the whole week to watch the video as many times as they liked in the asynchronous format. Students' initial Seesaw responses were only the jumping-off point, as I continued to leave and receive voice messages on activities long after the initial submission. The remaining assignments during this week were all interconnected to this initial Pictorial, such as a sea turtle-related *dictado*, a biliteracy strategy from Literacy Squared® that supports cross-linguistic transfer and the development of metalinguistic awareness (K. Escamilla et al, 2014), and a subsequent word-work lesson, as well as a virtual sea turtle field trip and reflection. The synchronous meeting for this lesson thread also included a sea turtle read aloud and ongoing questions added to our inquiry list.

⑧ **Independent Pictorial Input Chart:** After interacting in numerous contexts with the initial Pictorial Input Chart, students were given a blank Pictorial template, with the same, color-coded categories. In the classroom, groups of students might have selected an additional member of the animal kingdom to study, but in the asynchronous-instruction world, this became an independent project. Using student-friendly websites, such as National Geographic Kids, students used pictures and words to describe their selected animal in each of the predetermined categories. Seesaw allowed students to answer these questions through pictures, photos, text, and voice recordings. Students shared what they had learned during this lesson thread's Zoom session. Some students created art projects to represent their research, others showed their finished Pictorial Input Chart. This thread lasted over the course of several weeks, as students then used their personal Pictorial to write informational text in small chunks over a period of days, using the Seesaw tools to edit and give feedback.



⑨ **Expert Texts:** After the sea turtle Pictorial and their own personal Input Charts, I reintroduced expert texts, which we had begun using in the classroom before the quarantine. Again, this strategy was layered on top of the other GLAD strategies, and followed the same color-coded categories, to help aid in comprehension and chunking information. Seesaw is a powerful tool for differentiation, as assignments can be copied and slightly varied, to account for different student needs. Students at grade level and above read the expert texts, highlighted key points, and used drawings/text to keep notes.



Students who needed more support were able to listen to audio recordings of the expert text in each category and respond with pictures and notes, as they were able. Student work was celebrated both in synchronous meetings and in the community space on Seesaw, where students gave each other “likes” and asked questions about their work, similar to the sharing process in the physical classroom.

While we never could have predicted the rapid shift to distance learning that happened last spring, this time of challenges has also given birth to new ideas and approaches. The necessity to reach our language learners, while still offering high-quality instruction has pushed the limits of how we can apply GLAD strategies in multiple contexts and formats, both in person and with multiple technologies. Since then, my district has adopted a new Learning Management System, but Project GLAD continues to prove an invaluable tool, moving with us from the brick-and-mortar school building into the virtual-instruction space.

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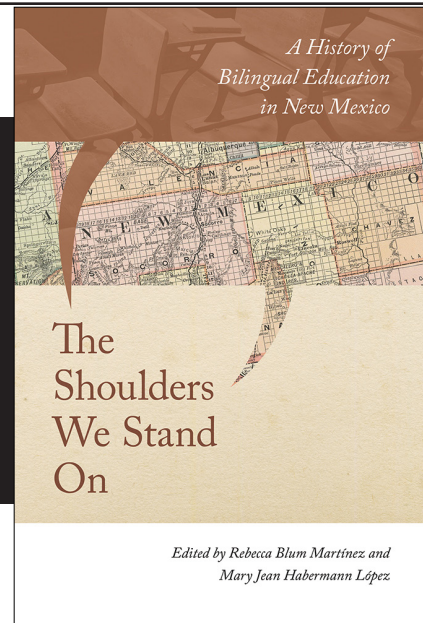


# The Shoulders We Stand On

A HISTORY OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN  
NEW MEXICO

Edited by Rebecca Blum Martínez &  
Mary Jean Habermann López

SOUTHWEST • SOUTHWEST



*The Shoulders We Stand On* traces the complex history of bilingual education in New Mexico, covering Spanish, Diné, and Pueblo languages. The book focuses on the formal establishment of bilingual education infrastructure and looks at the range of contemporary challenges facing the educational environment today. The book's contributors highlight particular actions, initiatives, and people that have made significant impacts on bilingual education in New Mexico, and they place New Mexico's experience in context with other states' responses to bilingual education. The book also includes an excellent timeline of bilingual education in the state. *The Shoulders We Stand On* is the first book to delve into the history of bilingual education in New Mexico and to present New Mexico's leaders, families, and educators who have pioneered program development, legislation, policy, evaluation, curriculum development, and teacher preparation in the field of bilingual multicultural education at state and national levels. Historians of education, educators, and educators in training will want to consider this as required reading.

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Mary Jean Habermann López was the state director for state and federal bilingual education at the New Mexico Public Education Department for most of her professional career. She also has extensive classroom and university teaching experience.



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Mia writes:

*I have been a part of this Equity Council for three years now, two years in middle school with the Dual Immersion Academy program and now as a freshman in high school. We have learned about the cultural proficiency continuum, read different books including *Everyday antiracism: Getting real about race in school* (Ed. Pollock, 2008), and participated in the school district's Minority Advisory Council.*

Our students have taught us that critical consciousness in schools starts and ends with giving students power and engaging students as peers to reimagine and co-construct more racially just schools. In the spring of 2019, we received a grant from the Colorado Education Association's Equity Council for Race and Culture "to engage students of color in social justice and equity projects led by educators" and "to educate, engage, and empower students of color to create culturally, racially, and socially minded schools that dismantle institutional racism." We partnered with students we knew were passionate about equity: a group made up mostly of students of color who decided to use the grant to support the growth of greater cultural awareness among their peers. As a team, we continuously strive to move from teacher-directed to student-centered to student-created initiatives. The students' initial project was to develop a student-friendly version of the cultural competency continuum created by Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2009) and adapted by Dr. José Medina for his session at La Cosecha in 2016.

There were essential first steps for this work that set the stage for students to develop their idea for a student-led equity council, pitch their idea, be awarded a \$10,000 grant underwritten by the Gates Family Foundation, and subsequently implement a pilot equity council. They are:

(1) *Find students who are passionate about and committed to the cause of equity.*

Our high school group started because one student had given a presentation on the nuances of racial stereotypes. When the above-mentioned grant became available and was shared with her, she rallied a group of equally passionate friends. The initial group of students at the middle school were nominated by their teachers as students demonstrating leadership promise. The second year, we surveyed students and asked them to submit their names if they were interested

in working on the topic of equity and cultural proficiency.

(2) *Ground the work in each person's why (iteratively).*

At our first meeting with middle and high school students, we sat in a circle and shared our personal 'whys' - introducing ourselves and our passion for equity work. Initially our 'whys' were very surface level, but as we practiced, modeled vulnerability, and built relationships with each other, the expressions of our 'whys' became deeper and more powerful. Students eventually shared these 'whys' with teachers and other students in the workshops they designed. Their 'whys' are a part of the reason the workshops have been so effective.

Gabi writes:

*My first year on the Council, I did a lot of learning. Honestly, if you asked me sophomore year I wouldn't have known the difference between equity and equality. I think I joined because the topic is interesting, and especially to see how it's present within our school and my life.*

(3) *Set up community norms.*

Using resources from Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence's RULER approach to Social Emotional Learning (ycei.org), we listed words for how we wanted to feel in our group ("In this work we want to feel..."), then listed the actions that promote those feelings, ("So we will..."), and finally, the restorative actions for when we miss the mark ("If there is unhealthy conflict or unwanted feelings, we will...").

(4) *Access students' stories.*

It wasn't until we read *Everyday antiracism: Getting real about race in school* (Pollock, 2008) that students' stories started to flow—stories of students' experiences with racism, what they've seen in their community and in schools, and what it's been like to construct their own cultural identity. Many students were surprised by the similarities in their experiences despite having different racial and ethnic identities and being from different school communities. Listening to students' accounts and hearing their experiences and feelings echoed in others' stories led students to want to create something more permanent that could be replicated at other schools—safe spaces for sharing

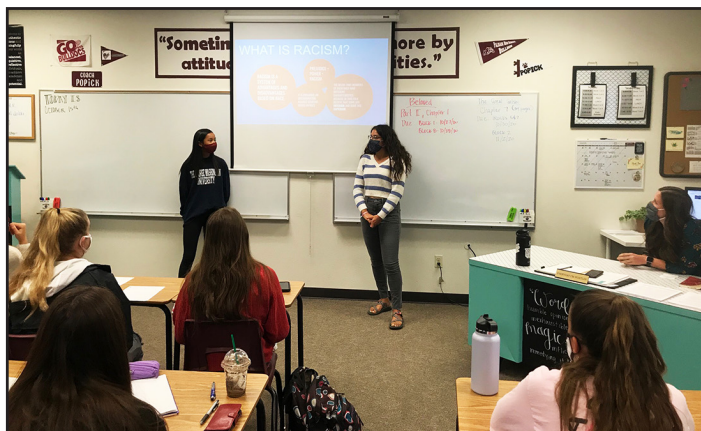
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experiences with racism and inequity, where students can take action together to make their schools more equitable.

Mia writes:

*I was a part of the Dual Immersion Academy throughout my elementary and middle school education, so I got to experience more diversity in the classroom than other students outside of this program and now I want them to be able to get that experience. Being a minority student, there aren't many opportunities for us to share our opinions and have our voice actually heard. The Student-Led Equity Council provides that.*



Mia and Gabi present in classrooms and host workshops for teachers and administrators.

conversations about racism and equity and should be centered in these conversations to make schools more equitable. In the summer of 2019, we participated in the Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) Innovation Fellowship in Youth Activation. For every workshop the adults attended, we ran a workshop for our students—developing user statements, community mapping, and brainstorming our riskiest

assumptions, as well as other design-thinking strategies to help students strengthen their ideas. Doing this work affirmed our belief that students should not only have a voice, but are capable and necessary partners in the design work of innovating better educational systems.

Gabi writes:

*This past spring, two fellow students, Ms. Meinzen and I, attended K12 Futures Fest, a design-thinking conference at Stanford University's d.school. The conference was intended for educators, so we were among the only students there. It was powerful to work with experts in education, but even more powerful to see the excitement they expressed towards our work. They truly listened to what we as students had to say, and some of the educators even took note of what we were doing to implement a similar program in their own school.*

#### (5) Educate yourselves so you can educate others.

We were thrilled to find the text *This Book is Antiracist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work* (Jewell, 2020). We purchased a text for every student on our Student-Led Equity Council and used it to reflect upon our own identities, learn about the difference between race and ethnicity, understand what institutional racism means, and to start to understand the power at play in the dominant culture. We were just getting into ways to disrupt and take action against inequities around us when we went to remote learning because of Covid-19. We are hopeful that we can continue to use this text with our students.

Mia writes: *“The council is very important because it gives students the opportunity to share their opinions and have a “safe space” to have these controversial conversations.”*

#### (6) Fight against adultism by giving students access to the same learning we are doing as adults.

Very early on we recognized that we all had much learning to do and that teachers and students were on a journey together. We strongly believe that our students can handle

#### (7) Gradually release responsibility.

We started by leading equity workshops for students, and then, as co-facilitators with students, led workshops for future principals at our local university and for educators across Colorado. Now our students are leading workshops on their own—for peers, for teachers, and for other school support staff.

Gabi writes:

*This year, my third year, we have been focusing on creating change in our community. We are presenting in classrooms and hosting workshops with teachers and administration, educating on equity and spreading our cultural competency*

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curriculum. This past year has definitely been my favorite of my time on the Equity Council (although Stanford was super cool, too) because I can see change happening right in front of me.

(8) Help students get access to influence power structures.

Students from the Equity Council wanted to be a council not just a club. Students are now meeting regularly with our administrations and consulting about everything from dress-code policy to suspensions.

Mia writes:

*I had the opportunity to attend the Minority Advisory Committee for our district earlier this year (pre-COVID) where some of our members got to learn about the steps the school district is taking to have academic equity in the schools, and where we were able to share our perspectives with district leaders.*

(9) Engage in a school needs assessment and develop a PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) cycle.

Each student team at each school does their own needs assessment and chooses projects that it believes will be most impactful. The Student-Led Equity Council doesn't do just one thing. It is iterative and responsive to the needs of each school.

At the middle school, we began the work of empowering students to consider equity issues to address (PLAN), implemented a plan to address the issue (DO), evaluated the effectiveness of the plan in making a positive change (STUDY), and reflected on what helped accomplish their goals (ACT). It is our hope that students will continuously be working in mini PDSA cycles for constant improvement.

Our first PDSA cycle was grounded in the study of our district and schools' student expulsion and suspension data desegregated by ethnic subgroups. Our students were perplexed that expulsion and suspension rates for Hispanic and Black/African American students were significantly higher than for White students, when White students make up 70% of our district population. Our conversations

led students to generate the following questions: Why are suspension rates so disproportionate? Who identifies students for suspension and expulsion? What are the examples of specific actions that led to suspensions of White students vs. non-White students? Our students plan to discuss these questions with administrators to gain a better understanding of the situation and create positive change around the inequities of expulsion and suspension.


(10) Empower students as gatekeepers, evaluators, and advisors for teacher equity work.

Students hope to use our grant money to offer microgrants to teachers in our school district to do equity work in partnership with students. Students are working to design the grant criterion and establish a committee to evaluate and award microgrants, thus multiplying student-centered equity work in our district and reinforcing a student-centered theory of change.

Objectives: Identify and explain the difference between race and ethnicity

Calculate percentages of diverse student populations in District 51.

Compare suspension data of students in District 51

Warm Up: Read page 17 and use a  to define dominant culture and institution

Melanin  
Latinx  
social constructions

Plan <sup>administration</sup>  
Ask clarifying questions about suspension data for non-dominant culture students at our school.

Do  
Students: Prepare good questions to help us understand the data.  
Teacher: Ask our principal to meet with us.

Act  
How will we reflect on our actions?  
• Did we get an answer to all of our questions?  
• Did we create our next steps to help make our school more equitable?  
• Did our plan change suspension data for non-dominant students at our school?

Study  
After our questions are answered, we can identify our next steps as Student-Led Equity Council!

Gabi writes:

*I hope the Equity Council continues to grow in numbers, and expands beyond racial equity. There's a whole range of issues to be addressed in our schools, and I believe the Equity Council could be the group to tackle them.*

**A classroom approach to critical consciousness: Examples of interrogating and co-constructing curriculum with students**

*Elementary School: Michele's 4th grade classroom*

With inspiration from My Name My Identity: A Declaration of Self ([mynamemyidentity.org](http://mynamemyidentity.org)), my students this year are working on critical listening through telling the story of their names. Using the mentor text, *Me llamo María Isabel* by Alma Flor Ada (1993), we are learning and discussing the

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importance of a person's name: from pronouncing it correctly to the story of how they were given that name. Students will interview their families about the history of their name, share the story of their name, and understand the dignity of their own and other's names.

### *Middle School: Michele + Ryan's unit for Spanish Social Studies*

Last year my colleague Ryan McLaughlin, eighth grade Spanish Social Studies teacher, and I embarked on a journey to address critical consciousness with our eighth-grade dual language students through the concept of historicizing schools and educational-policy contexts by deconstructing mainstream explanations of the past. We took a social studies unit on the civil rights movement and explicitly taught students how the struggles of language-minority and immigrant parents, landmark court rulings such as *Lau vs. Nichols* (1974) and *Castañeda vs. Pickard* (1984), and legislation around bilingual education are part of the civil rights movement in the United States, and resulted in what they now have the privilege of: a dual language education. We developed the following essential questions:

- To what extent has the civil rights movement provided equity for all?
- What role has bilingual education played in the civil rights movement?
- What role does critical consciousness play in society today?
- What impact do you plan to have in your community with your critical consciousness and bilingual education?

The passion and understanding our students demonstrated after this unit were inspiring. We realize that we need to continue to ensure our students learn about the history of bilingual education in order to empower them to be advocates for two-way dual language education and language minority communities.

### *High School: Laura's IB Theory of Knowledge class*

In our History and Knowledge unit, students worked towards understanding and interrogating historical lenses. In the first half of our unit, students heard from virtual guest speakers on local less-told histories (José Luis Chávez on the local Chicano movement and Dr. John Seebach on the local Indian boarding school that operated from

1886 to 1911). Dr. Erika Johnson, a historian from our local university spoke to students virtually about her research using zine (independently made mini magazine) archives. We engaged in a self-care check-in zine-making workshop (adapted from Van Anh Tran's *Radical Healing Zine Making Workshop* at Columbia Teachers College Reimagining Education Summer Institute 2020) as preparation for their first assessment—making a zine on a piece of forgotten, erased, or less-told history and collectively building a homemade zine library of the stories our students thought should be told in history classes. In the second half of the unit, we watched *Precious Knowledge* (2011), a documentary about the Mexican American Studies Program at Tucson High School. Students then examined different ideas and models for social studies education, including Teaching Tolerance's Social Justice Standards (<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/social-justice-standards>) and articles from *Rethinking Schools* featured books ([rethinkingschools.org/books/](http://rethinkingschools.org/books/)): *Rethinking Ethnic Studies* (2019), *Rethinking Multicultural Education* (2014), and *Rethinking Bilingual Education* (2017), to create their own group proposal for a K-12 social studies curriculum.

What started as a shared passion for equity, affirmed and clarified at La Cosecha Conference, continues to multiply and impact students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in our district. We've learned that critical consciousness requires choosing to continuously engage *en la lucha*—continually interrogating ourselves, our instructional practices, our curriculums, and our school policies, in partnership with and following the leadership of our students.

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anticipating building capacity among emerging heritage-language teachers by providing opportunities for scholars to experience teaching through a cultural lens and in bilingual settings. Through these opportunities, TCLL hopes to encourage emerging language teachers to continue to seek guidance from the Elders during classroom instruction.

Like so many schools across the country, TCLL staff and families feel the effects of the pandemic. As classroom and language education have gone virtual, district-wide reductions in live instructional time limit students' interaction with their teachers. As a result, teachers, families, and Elders alike must learn to navigate this new virtual environment and prioritize what is most important to the community. However, with strong support from the JSD and SHI, the Tlingit Culture, Language, and Literacy Program continues to infuse culture in their live sessions by greeting TCLL students and implementing math in the Tlingit language and singing traditional songs.

Although students aren't in the building this year, many amazing things continue to happen outside of school. With the help of TCLL, families are coming together to practice traditional harvesting. Martin and Edith, who are both in 2nd grade, used the harvesting kits as an opportunity to explore new areas to pick *s'ikshaldeen*. Ann, Martin and Edith's mom, said this was their first time harvesting as an extended family, representing multiple generations, including their grandma. Like Patsy, Martin and Edith uphold their Elders. With the help of their mom, who works for the Tlingit & Haida Elders Program, they will gift all 100 bags of tea to 100 Elders across the City and Borough of Juneau.



*The Stepetin family is committed to instilling tribal values in their children.*

### **The Stepetin Family**

*We are the Southeast Alaska Stepetins. My name is Ann and I live in Juneau with my husband Martin Sr. and our four kids: Bryson, Edith, Martin Jr., and Kaiya. Both Martin and I work for the Tribe. I am Tlingit/Japanese from Angoon and my husband is Aleut from St. Paul Island. We are raising our kids in an advanced technological world while instilling Tribal values and showing our children Our Way of Life.*

### **Patsy Fred**

*My name is Patsy Fred and I am six years old. My mom's name is Jessie Wright, Luknax.adi from Hoonah, Alaska, and my dad is Marti Fred, Kaagwaantaan from Angoon, Alaska. They were both born in Mt. Edgecumbe. I am Luknax.adi (Raven/Coho) as I follow my mom's clan. My maternal grandparents are Deborah Picken and Frank Lee. My paternal grandparents are Bessie and Matthew Fred. I am the youngest of four girls. My sisters' names are Shae, Deborah, and Hayden. I'm from Juneau, Alaska and I still live there. I've been at TCLL since I was in kindergarten. My teacher usually takes us out berry picking and we make jam, but because of the virus, we are not able to be in school. We got kits to make jam at home. Gunalchéesh to TCLL for providing us the ingredients to make it at home. My mom says that next year my parents will teach us to harvest fish!*



*Wook'ei yee yéi jineiyi! You all did good!*





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## January 9, 2021 Developing Student Language During Distance Learning

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—continuación de la página 5—

En el contexto de los textos mencionados, el maestro puede preparar lecciones que ayuden a profundizar en los temas abordados por los libros. Por ejemplo, con relación a *Ecos del desierto* el maestro puede integrar aspectos relacionados a la geografía del desierto, el cambio de temperatura, elementos de los mapas, latitudes y longitudes. También elementos socioculturales como el idioma, el shock cultural, el discrimin y la cultura en general. Estos temas se pueden integrar entonces a la composición de un texto narrativo como una historia corta o un cuento donde el estudiante narre la historia de Miguel desde su propia experiencia de vida. ¿Cómo llegaron el estudiante o sus familiares a los Estados Unidos? ¿Qué historias narra la abuela en torno al flujo de personas entre el norte y el sur? De esta forma se fomentan actividades que atienden los objetivos de lenguaje y contenido desde una perspectiva más personal, narrando los estudiantes su propia historia.

Por otro lado, *Ciudad equis 1985* permite al maestro examinar el tema de las catástrofes como un asunto de sensibilización y hasta de carácter filosófico existencialista. Al nivel de 8vo grado, discusiones relacionadas a la fragilidad de la vida, el trauma de las catástrofes naturales y sus consecuencias conectan al estudiante con el humanismo, lo cual provoca reflexiones muy profundas. Como muchos de mis estudiantes son de descendencia mexicanoamericana, para algunos el D.F. es parte de su identidad ya sea porque los padres provienen del área o existe algún vínculo identitario adicional. Esta identificación se hace más latente cuando se incorporan elementos de geografía, por ejemplo, lo que llaman los sismólogos el cinturón de fuego e impacto sobre la vida en México. Más aún, el 19 de septiembre de 2017 la Ciudad de México, D. F. sufrió otro movimiento telúrico. En esta ocasión el temblor fue de 7.1 grados en la escala Richter. Es dentro de este contexto que los estudiantes exploran nuevamente los elementos de los textos narrativos mientras estudian la narrativa de Juan Carlos Quezadas. La creatividad y el rigor académico se aprecian en la medida en que los estudiantes crean sus propias historias mientras consideran la experiencia humana desde la perspectiva de un personaje ficticio. En resumen, la integración de las artes del lenguaje con los estudios sociales permite a los estudiantes y maestros del programa de lenguaje dual del Distrito Escolar U-46 diseñar lecciones que fusionan objetivos de lenguaje y contenido. Esta integración permite personalizar con testimonios de vida las

actividades y tareas que los estudiantes completan a lo largo del año académico. El principio fundamental de esta integración consiste en cómo se destaca la infusión de la voz del estudiante y su identidad utilizando como medio de expresión los textos narrativos, informativos, argumentativos y líricos. Por conducto de estas unidades de las artes del lenguaje en español, el contenido de la clase de estudios sociales se humaniza y se hace pertinente a la vida del estudiante. Esto de por sí evita la mecanización de la educación.

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The graphic features a dark blue background with large, semi-transparent numbers '2021' in the background. In the center, there is a stylized orange sun partially obscured by a golden wheat stalk. Below the sun, the text 'La Cosecha' is written in white, and 'NOVEMBER' is written in large, bold, orange letters. At the bottom, the dates 'NOVEMBER 10-13' and the website 'WWW.LACOSECHACONFERENCE.ORG' are displayed in white.