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Academia Cuauhtli Teachers: Additive Teaching in Subtractive Contexts

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Academia Cuauhtli Teachers: Additive Teaching in Subtractive Contexts

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents Guadalupe and Rogelio Rubio. Mamá, quiero agradecerte por tu amor, por guiarme, por velar por mí, y por enseñarme a ser fuerte como tú. Papá, gracias por compartir tu sed por aprender y conocimientos conmigo. Gracias a los dos por darme todo.

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Abstract

Academia Cuauhtli Teachers: Additive Teaching in Subtractive Contexts

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Having been deprived of their languages, cultures, and community-based identities in the process of getting schooled, teachers of color must not only cope with the cumulative and damaging, impacts of subtractive schooling in their own lives, but they must also enter educational contexts as professionals where the same logic of cultural and linguistic subtraction exists, if not altogether thrives. At the same time, the desire to establish equitable and inclusive schooling policies and practices for linguistically and culturally diverse student populations gets treated as separate discourses from those of teachers of color, failing to address how these intersect in space and time. This qualitative study uses oral history methods, to examine the prior personal and professional schooling experiences of nine bilingual and dual-language educators who teach in a fourth- and fifth grade Saturday Academy that is part of a community-based language and cultural revitalization project in Central Texas (Academia Cuauhtli). Accordingly, this study also examined through the teacher narratives, the impact of their participation in the Saturday academy in both their personal and professional lives. Throughout their personal and early professional schooling experiences, the bilingual educators in this study reported feeling a need to hide

their own cultural and linguistic resources within the traditional school space, due to a continued feeling of alienation and marginality. They described Academia Cuauhlti as a space where they could find reprieve from these subtractive schooling structures and found empowerment for themselves as well as for their students, families and communities. This study concludes with implications for teacher preparation, teacher supports, and the need for culturally relevant education.

Table of Contents

List of Tables xiii

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

Statement of the Problem 3

Purpose of the Study 8

Significance of the Study 10

Overview of the Methodology 11

Limitations and Assumptions 13

Context 14

Origins and Key Partners of Academia Cuauhtli 19

Proyecto Maestría 20

Tejano History Curriculum Project 21

¡Adelante! Conference for Bilingual and Dual-Language Educators 22

Austin Independent School District 23

Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center 24

Texas Center for Educational Policy 24

Organizational Structure 25

Nuestro Grupo 25

Personal Vision and Mission for Cuauhtli 27

Academia Cuauhtli Coordinators 29

Student Recruitment and Community & School Liaisons 31

Curriculum Development 33

Cuauhtli Teacher Recruitment and Participation 34

Chronology 35
Summary of the Chapter 40
Chapter 2: Literature Review 41
The Burden of History: A Historical Perspective on Teacher Segregation 41
Desegregation: Ideology and Responses 42
Research on Teacher Segregation 44
Teacher Diversity 47
Teacher and Student Demographic Data 48
Effects of Current Reform on Teacher Recruitment and Retention 51
Alternative Curriculum and Pedagogies 55
Multicultural Education and Curricular Recognition 55
Bilingual and Multilingual Education 57
Conceptual Framing 58
Summary of the Chapter 62
Chapter 3: Research Design 63
Research Methodology 63
Quality in Qualitative Research 64
Research Design 66
Participants 66
Data Collection Instruments & Procedures 69
Data Analysis 70
Positionality 71

Chapter 4: Participant Biographical Sketches 72
Overview 74
Bella 75
Dahlia 76
Damaris 78
George 79
Linda 81
Miguel 85
Micaela 86
Sabrina 89
Valeria, Kindergarten Teacher 97
Summary of the Chapter 104
Chapter 5: Cross-Case Analysis 105
Personal and Professional Schooling Experiences 105
On Family, Community, Language, and Culture: *Ser Educado* 105
On Becoming a Teacher 110
Motivations: *Sentido de Deber* & Community Rootedness 111
Teacher Preparation 113
On Being a Teacher 116
Deficit Thinking Among Peer Educators 116
Standardized Testing and Language Proficiency Assessment 120
Why Cuauhtli? 123
Empowering Self and Empowering Others 123

Lasting Impact of Proyecto Maestría 128
Summary of the Chapter 131
Chapter 6: Discussion and Recommendations 133
Discussion of Findings 133
Personal Schooling Experiences 134
Professional Schooling Experiences 135
Impact of Cuauhtli 137
Implications for Policy and Practice 139
Recommendations for Future Research 141
Appendix A: Academia Cuauhtli Accomplishments & Lessons Learned 2014-2017 144
Appendix B: Thematic Units and Lesson Plans 155
Appendix C: Academia Cuauhtli Scope and Sequence, 2016-2017 156
Appendix D: Recruitment Email 158
Appendix E: Teacher Interview Protocol 159
References 160

List of Tables

Table 1: Teacher and student ethnic composition in percentages for 2001-2002 and 2011-2012. 49

Table 2: Study participants biographical information.......... 75

Chapter 1: Introduction

Over a number of years, I have engaged in scholarship and participatory action research aimed at addressing issues raised by the Latina/o community and the educators who serve them. I have met various Latina/o bilingual educators within these professional networks who have confided in me that they felt or had the need to hide from their school administrators and other teachers their own cultural and linguistic resources that, in my estimation, made them successful teachers for Latina/o students. For example, they described how "ugly" it felt to be "caught" by peers speaking Spanish outside of delivering the necessary classroom instruction and described the various responses and consequences they faced for doing so.

I have been intrigued by the irony that bilingual education teachers who I knew to be advocating for social justice and transformative multicultural, bilingual educational opportunities for their students and families carried with them an embedded sense of internalized and institutional oppression. They seemed readily willing to confront oppressive experiences for the sake of their students, yet their critical awareness and responses to confronting their own oppression within these same schooling institutions appeared to be much more tempered. This is not to imply that they did not demonstrate agency or resistance, but rather, that at the heart-center of their efforts was their commitment to students, not a preoccupation with self. Freire's statement on self-love applies here.

Freire (2000) states in naming the world through dialogue we transform it and find significance as human beings:

> Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their

> cause—the cause of liberation… If I do not love the world—if I do not love life—if I do not love people—I cannot enter into dialogue. (p. 89-90)

The teachers I have worked with often talked about their commitment to advocating for and empowering their students and parents. I have never doubted their *sentido de deber* (commitment to students and each other as an act of love) towards their students and families, most of who are Latina/o, dual-language teachers. The guiding cultural values of mutualism and reciprocity, after all, are been embedded in our Latina/o communities; they are ancestrally derived principles evident in the Mayan principal of "In Lak Ech," meaning *tu eres mi otro yo*, or you are my other self.

Although the Latino community claims collectivist cultural values, they inhabit a society that does not practice egalitarian principles and sees them as the "other," the marginalized, the oppressed. Furthermore, the increasingly restrictive educational reforms of our time that discourages expressions of Latino identity manifest in ways that increasingly disempower our teachers. On the other hand, change is always possible. Preliminary observations led me to wonder whether the "additive schooling" (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011) in the form of culturally relevant programing and curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009) we so desperately seek out for our students could not only provide the professional spaces and materials for teachers to explore and transform their pedagogical practice and advance their *concientización* (critical evolutionary process; Freire, 2000). The hope is that this will lead to the teachers' liberation and, in turn, strengthen their role as transformation agents in their schools.

This study examined the schooling experiences of bilingual and dual-language Latina/o educators who taught in a fourth- and fifth grade Saturday academy that is part of a community-based, language and cultural revitalization project in Austin, Texas. The Saturday academy, named *Academia Cuauhtli* (Eagle Academy), was born from the efforts

of *Nuestro Grupo* (Our Group), a group of community advocates with various backgrounds, experiences, knowledge, and expertise, who sought to address the scarcity of culturally relevant Latina/o children's literature and teaching materials. Academia Cuauhtli, described in detail in Chapter Two, commits to be an "additive" (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011) learning space that promotes the curricular recognition of alternative epistemologies and the development of pedagogies that recognize and foster the students' culture, language, and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992).

The next section addresses the problem facing the teachers in this study, the purpose and significance of the study, research questions, context, and overview of the methodology, limitations and assumptions. I also describe the origins, key partners, and organizational structure of Academia Cuauhtli, the site of my research.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Equity-minded educators, researchers, and policymakers are increasingly uneasy as the majority-minority student makeup becomes pronounced and the pervasive student "achievement gap" persists over time (Valencia, 2015; Villegas & Davis, 2008). At the same time, a growing body of research showing that teachers of color have a positive effect on student achievement, including increases in standardized test scores, attendance, and retention, has encouraged reformers to address the underrepresentation of teachers of color and their growing turnover rate (Dee, 2004; Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien, & Rivkin, 2005; Meiers, Wrinkle, & Polinard, 1999; Villegas & Davis, 2008). Today's teachers of color are yesterday's students of color. Yet, some reformers continue to view equitable and inclusive schooling policies and practices for linguistically and culturally diverse student populations gets as separate policy discourses from the experiences of teachers of color. Consequently, they often fail to address how related policy trajectories intersect in space and time

(Villegas & Davis, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2004). Though often overlooked, the life histories and schooling experiences of teachers of color who are more likely to work and remain in schools that serve predominately students of color can be instructive (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Irizarry, 2011).

In an ideal world, educational reformers would simultaneously consider equity-based measures for students and teachers of color. The use of subaltern histories, related theoretical frameworks, and research evidence could help us avoid piecemeal reforms while simultaneously reversing the negative impacts of subtractive schooling for both students and teachers of color. Valenzuela (1999) stated that in a context where educational policies as a whole are geared toward eviscerating students' languages and identities, categories of analysis cannot be neutral, nor can they accurately describe the schooling of United States minorities. Schools are either subtractive or additive (Bartlett & García, 2011). Hence, the extent to which subtractive schooling adversely affects students and Latina/o teachers is always at play regardless of where they narrate their experience on a life history timeline. Once deprived of their languages, cultures, and community-based identities as students, teachers of color must not only cope with the cumulative and damaging impacts of deficit narratives in their lives, but they must also face the same logic of cultural and linguistic subtraction that exists and often thrives (Valenzuela & Rubio, 2016) among the students that they teach.

Policy streams and society are less than ideal, however, and do not always work in tandem. Villegas and Lucas (2004) vividly describe the academic trajectory for students of color aspiring to become teachers as a leaky pipeline where many of them fall through the cracks at different junctures, including high schools, higher education institutions, and teacher preparation programs. They face special challenges in colleges and universities. They often find it difficult to navigate a professional career that is increasingly restrictive

and lacking in professional support and regard (Darling-Hammond, 2012; La Vonne, Sleeter, & Kumashiro, 2014). Also, they are likely to work in schools that have students with the highest needs and least resources to serve them (Cannata, 2010; Ferguson, 1991; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Weber, Baker, & Oluwole, 2014). A continued experience of marginality and oppression as racial minorities in the United States (for example, see Blauner, 2001; McLemore, & Romo, 1998) often leads to disproportionate turnover and attrition rates relative to the predominantly Anglo teacher population (Donato & Hanson, 2012; Irvine & Irvine, 1983; Irvine 1990; Weber et al., 2014).

Status and power relations between the dominant and subordinated groups exert a major influence on school success and failure among culturally diverse students (Cummins, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). A long history of discrimination spanning generations is especially evident among groups that fail academically. According to one researcher, "they react to this discrimination along a continuum ranging from internalization of a sense of ambivalence or insecurity about their identities to rejection of, and active resistance to, dominant group values" (Cummins, 2000, p. 40). Reversing patterns of academic underachievement requires that educators actively challenge coercive power relations and reject disempowering discourses and pedagogy (Banks, 2004; Cummins, 2000, 2009, 2013; Nieto, 2000, Sleeter, 2002; Sleeter & Stillman, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). This suggests that we must consider how teachers of color experience schooling structures that continue to marginalize minority students' cultural and linguistic identities (Banks, 2004; Cummins, 2000, 2009, 2013; Nieto, 2000, Sleeter, 2002; Sleeter & Stillman, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999). To what extent are these spaces increasingly restrictive and disempowering for the teachers themselves (Darling-Hammond, 2012; La Vonne, Sleeter, & Kumashiro, 2014)? Researchers remind us that such structures are not monolithically oppressive; rather, they vary in kind and degree as teachers of color are differentially

equipped with the tools and level of support that they need to make sense of and respond to this oppression in small and large ways (Sonn & Fisher, 2003).

The literature on teacher preparation is helpful when it calls on all teachers to be reflective of their ideology, identity, and positionality so that they can inspect how these influences effect their pedagogical choices (King, 1991; Korthagen, 2004; Meijer, Korthagen, & Vasalos, 2009). If teachers of color are as marginalized as students, and this experience goes unquestioned in the context of their higher educational attainment and teacher preparation, they stand to internalize the oppression and reproduce the very same marginalization toward students of color in their classrooms (Urrieta, 2010). “Internalized oppression,” refers specifically to situations or contexts where negative, dominant-group judgments and stereotypes of one’s group, assume an “oppressor role” or thought process against members of their own group (Valenzuela, 2008).

Britzman (1986) agrees with the previous assessments when she acknowledges the different cultural predispositions that prepare teachers for different eventualities that they facet:

> [Teachers] bring to their teacher education more than their desire to teach. They bring their implicit institutional biographies–the culminative experience of school lives – which, in turn, inform their knowledge of the student’s world, of school structure, and of curriculum… [this] serves as the frame of reference for prospective teachers’ self-images. (p. 443)

Stated more simply, Hamachek (1999) says that, “consciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are” (p. 209).

Adding to the challenges, once the teachers find themselves in schools they have to contend with the lack of recognition that they need support to meet the challenge of internalized oppression. Currently, professional development opportunities for practicing teachers who work in schools that serve predominantly minority and low-income students

are decreasing. At the same time, the development opportunities that do exist, focus on subject content (Wei, Darling-Hammond, & Adamson, 2010). In other words, practicing teachers who wish to engage in the exploration and reflection on their identity and ideology will typically find few programmatic opportunities to address the problems that they may be facing.

While the research literature points strongly to equity-centered pedagogical approaches, such as culturally relevant pedagogy, as the antidote to subtractive schooling for youth (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Sleeter, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999, 2016), less scholarly attention is given to how a culturally and linguistically relevant, afterschool, Saturday academy can personally and professionally impact additive teachers' practices.

This study considers veteran Latina/o bilingual teachers who, in the face of subtractive contexts, must persevere. These elementary school teachers, with three or more years of experience, teach in dual-language classrooms with instruction in English and Spanish. They serve in schools located in the historically segregated east side of the city. Educators and community members from this area have been battling the latest reform and restructuring efforts that grew out of No Child Left Behind in 2001 and have resulted in the closure of schools. Restructuring has also meant that teachers in these schools have had to reapply for their positions year after year. In addition to the continued threat of restructuring and closures, the district schools are competing with growing numbers of charter schools at the same time that the community continues to experience the rapid, ravaging effects of gentrification, discussed in detail in the 'context' section of this chapter. The displacement of low-income, minority residents has led to an overall drop in student enrollment and negatively impacted student demographics in the dual-language classrooms.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study investigated the lives of "*Cuauhtli* teachers," who were otherwise full-time, veteran bilingual and dual language faculty in their own respective Austin Independent School District (AISD; Austin ISD) elementary classrooms. The purpose of this qualitative study is two-fold. First, using the oral life histories of Cuauhtli teachers, I sought to understand how they have understood and coped with their subtractive schooling experiences as students and professionals. I also wish to understand how their past experiences have shaped their pedagogical practice. Second, using additional ethnographic interviews and data collection methods, I examine critical learnings and insights that have result from their participation in Academia Cuauhtli and explore shifts in their practice that may have occurred as a result.

Subtractive and additive theoretical frameworks guide this study (Valenzuela, 1999 Bartlett and Garcia, 2011). Bartlett and Garcia (2011) found that additive schooling resulted in an astonishing 16.6% higher four-year graduation rate when compared to their peer schools in 2008. While the researchers point out that this is an incredibly promising schooling model for Latina/o immigrant youth, they also lamented that larger economic and political structures conditioned their success (beyond schooling)—demonstrating that many students struggled with the transition into work or postsecondary education.

In order to appreciate the Academia Cuauhtli experience, it is necessary to describe it. Nuestro Grupo, as the sponsoring organization of Academia Cuauhtli connects the initiative to the Latino community of Austin. It also serves as a focal point between partners that include the University of Texas, Austin ISD and the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, a community center that serves the Latino community. Educators representing these institutions came together in 2014 concerned primarily with literacy issues but quickly turned to larger questions related to pedagogical and content

concerns. The members of Nuestro Grupo, university faculty, graduate students, and community activists, developed curriculum, hosted professional development workshops with dual language teachers in the district, and negotiated with district officials the establishment of the Saturday morning academy. Its goals included the teaching of Mexican American Studies curriculum in Spanish and with proven instructional techniques. They also sought to form an institutional space that would offer the members of Nuestro Grupo the opportunity the freedom to use best practices for the intellectual development of all involved.

Academia Cuauhtli promotes the curricular recognition of alternative epistemologies and the development of pedagogies that recognize and foster the students' culture, language, and funds of knowledge. It also promotes the co-construction of place-based, culturally relevant educational materials and professional development opportunities for teachers in and out of Academia Cuauhtli. The genuine community-district-city-university partnership born out of long-standing professional networks made it possible to offer a parent academy that addresses topics of importance to the parents. The members of Nuestro Grupo also sought systemic change in the public schools by deed and creed. Teachers are welcomed and trusted as professionals. The breadth and depth of participation from the various groups served as a testament to the thirst the community has for additive schooling spaces.

The research questions guiding this qualitative study were:

1. What are the personal schooling experiences that lead veteran dual language teachers to participate as teachers in an additive schooling space?
2. What are the professional schooling experiences that lead veteran dual language teachers to participate as teachers in an additive schooling space?

3. What impact has this additive Saturday academy had on the veteran, dual language teachers personally and professionally?

By examining the life history of these nine Cuauhtli teachers, this study sought to understand the extent to which they feel their own schooling was additive or subtractive, i.e., to understand the extent to which they were allowed to explore and utilize their own social, cultural, and linguistic assets as students and now as teachers. Another goal was to understand how their experiences as youth continued to impact their ability to negotiate as bilingual, Latina/o educators in schools that promote assimilation—that is, why were they ultimately driven to seek out and recognize the additive space that is Academia Cuauhtli. The third question was intended to uncover some of the ways by which additive schooling may impact the teachers in and out of the additive space where they are trusted and encouraged to exercise their profession, free of restrictive policies and practices.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to understand the experiences of bilingual and dual language Latina/o teachers along a continuum, focusing on their journey from the beginning of their own K-12 education up to their professional experiences in schools and seeks to understand the impact of an additive space on their experiences. By exploring the schooling experiences of Latina/o teachers, this study contributed to our understanding of what motivates these teachers to undertake and remain in the teaching profession and to work in schools that have the least resources and the students with the highest needs (Cannata, 2010; Ferguson, 1991; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Weber, Baker, & Oluwole, 2014).

At the same time, schooling experiences provide insight into the impact of additive schooling spaces on the teachers themselves. This will no help us better understand why students are not selecting the teaching profession when they enter colleges and universities.

The problem is significant. The Learning Policy Institute published in September 2016 a set of comprehensive reports that utilized several national datasets to examine the teacher shortages across the country (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Student enrollment is projected to continue growing, resulting in an estimated 20% increase in teacher demand, at the same time that enrollment in teacher preparation programs has fallen by 35% and attrition remains high at 8% (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). While the overall population of teachers of color has grown as well, from 12% to 18% from 1987 to 2012, the rate of growth does not come close to matching the growth of students of color, from 28% to 49% during the same time period (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016).

While research findings offer great insight on the overall trends in teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention, they also compartmentalize the issues based on these milestones, rather than discussing them as a continuum. They also ignore the context and power dynamics within schools. Furthermore, these researchers have failed to account for the history the underrepresentation of teachers of color in the work force. This has been a continuing problem emerging out of desegregation mandates. The reform efforts that followed have continued to reinforce the problem with protecting the jobs of teachers of color (NCDTF, 2004; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Oakley, Stowell, & Logan, 2009; Parker, 2008).

OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study that sought to gain in-depth, detailed information on the lived schooling experiences of Cuauhtli teachers and description of their experiences in Academia Cuauhtli (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002). The oral life histories of the

teachers gathered through in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to focus on the past and determine how their personal and professional lives evolved (Mertens, 2010).

To safeguard the quality of the study, the researcher employed the criteria listed by Mertens (2010), including the related concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and transformative throughout the research process. This information appears in Chapter Three and is briefly describe here. Credibility speaks to internal validity while transferability examines external validity. The question of dependability parallels reliability, confirmability looks to ensure researcher objectivity, and the transformative criteria situate the research within social justice concerns (Mertens, 2010). Checks and balances enriched the data collection and analysis.

The participants in the study resulted from purposeful group sampling (Patton, 2002). They all taught in Academia Cuauhtli and participated in workshops on the curriculum. Data collection included two semi-structured interviews with each of nine Cuauhtli teachers. They gave permission to voice-record their individual interviews. The transcribed oral narratives were coded using MaxQDA qualitative analysis software. I conducted informal observations of the Cuauhtli classroom during the Saturday morning teaching session and weekly planning meetings involving the teachers and Nuestro Grupo.

I conducted a document review of the data and provided a detailed description of the experiences of Cuauhtli teachers in this additive space. I also included non-confidential materials and archival data that emerged from these classes and meetings (e.g. minutes, curriculum, workshop activities, etc.). The observation and document materials were meant to capture the ways in which the participants engaged and implemented the program curriculum and materials.

The first round of coding categorized the data in groups that are conceptually similar (Mertens, 2010; Patton, 2002). These categories were further categorized into

schemes and reduced into concise and consumable themes that emerge. The themes were organized and interpreted based on the additive schooling in subtractive contexts framework of this study.

LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

There were limitations to this study. Given my professional history, relationships with individuals, and personal investment in the project, the research participants may have wanted to please me, and my personal connection could have influenced my objectivity as a researcher. However, I employed the criteria listed by Mertens (2010) to mitigate these effects: I conducted member checks and peer debriefing to mitigate issues with internal validity and external validity.

My long-standing professional relationship with the participants, born from my prolonged engagement with this community of professionals, afforded the participants and the researcher a level of comfort that allows for mutual trust and honesty. Most of the teachers have not demonstrated any reservation in the past when it comes to bringing up concerns or disagreements with the structure of the program. In fact, this type of participation was strongly encouraged by the program and me. As far as researcher objectivity, I recognized that my deep investment exerted an influence on my analysis of the research that could not be completely eliminated. However, I mediated the impact by having continuous conversations with critical friends and peer debriefing.

The participants in this study were chosen through purposeful group sampling (Patton, 2002). However, they were chosen to participate in the program through snowball sampling (Patton, 2002). That is, Cuauhtli teachers were recommended by their peers and AISD administration for being master teachers. I did not conduct classroom observations in their AISD classrooms, nor in the Academia Cuauhtli classroom, for the purpose of

evaluating their pedagogical skills. I accepted the recommender's assessment that these are exceptional teachers and the participants' words about how the program impacts their pedagogy. This study did not directly require master teachers as a criterion and is not aimed at evaluating their pedagogical practice. This meant that the value of this study was in the extensive, detailed description of their schooling experiences and the program. It will be up to the reader of this research to extract the applicable findings to their own context (Mertens, 2010).

CONTEXT

In this Context section, I offer the history of the project through which the seed for Academia Cuauhtli was sown, provide information on the origins and key partnerships that helped deepen Cuauhtli's roots, and describe the organizational structure and program components that blossomed, including the standard policies and procedures.

On September 20, 2013, public educators, administrators, advocates, scholars, librarians, historians, parents, students, and other community members from a large urban city in Central Texas came together for a public conversation hosted by the Texas Center for Education Policy (TCEP) on the lack of culturally relevant and appropriate Latina/o children's literature and teaching materials. The discussant panel was comprised of a local library advocate and a retired history professor turned young-adult book author. The library advocate shared that since the 1970s, less than five percent of published children's literature was written by or about Latina/os. This statistic was shocking to the audience, who was further appalled after learning this figure did not take into consideration whether the publications were culturally responsive or relevant, meaning that a book could be about negative, offensive stereotypes but still count toward this figure. Bilingual education teachers in the audience further spoke to the difficulty of locating educational materials in

Spanish for use in their classroom. They described having to resort to traveling to book fairs in Mexico in search of materials in Spanish, which were not without flaws given varying regional dialects.

In places like Texas and the City of Austin, where Latina/os now constitute the largest portion of the "majority minority" population, the scarcity of culturally relevant reading and teaching materials in both English and Spanish is immensely problematic. The shortage hinders the ability of educators to develop and implement an authentic, inclusive and responsive curriculum. The Austin Independent School District, where this research was conducted, is the 5th largest district in Texas. Austin ISD data show that of nearly 84,000 students in the district, 74.2% of the student population are students of color, with Latina/os making up the largest portion of the overall student population at 59.5% (Davis Demographics & Planning, Inc., 2015). Additionally, 27.7% of the student body are English Language Learners (ELL), and 59.9% are considered economically disadvantaged (Davis Demographics & Planning, Inc., 2015).

Educators in the audience raised the question that if students could not identify with the materials, if they cannot see themselves, their language, or their culture reflected in the curriculum, how could they invest and build a sense of ownership over their own educational experience? Scholars who study successful teachers of students of color have demonstrated that it is important to understand, appreciate, and incorporate the students' cultural knowledge into teaching practices. In order for these practices to be authentic, an educator must also critique oppressive power relationships in order to mitigate the effects in the classroom and beyond (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Sleeter, 2002; Valenzuela, 1999, 2016). In a bilingual education classroom, Palmer & Martínez (2013) explain, "learning is often equated with learning in English; primary language and literacy skills are rarely

acknowledged and even more rarely used to facilitate learning; and teachers' monolingualism is not generally problematized, only students' bilingualism" (p. 273).

Rather than linger on the sense of disappointment and frustration, the conversation quickly moved on to strategizing action steps to address this inequity as well as the rapid gentrification of the Latina/o community. A community-based organization called *Nuestro Grupo* (Our Group), of which I am a founding member, was established. The group was purposeful and unabashed from the beginning about our explicit objective: cultural and linguistic revitalization for the city's Mexican American and Latina/o community.

According to McCarty and Nicholas (2014), language reclaiming is a growing field of educational research, mainly theorized around indigenous mother tongues, that explores the forced subordination of languages and the efforts by communities to regenerate their languages. Language regeneration encompasses the process of reviving a language that is no longer spoken and revitalizing a language already in use (McCarty & Nicholas, 2014). While it might seem odd to some that the group sought to revitalize the Spanish language, the history of English-only, anti-bilingual education sentiment that permeates across the region "endangers" the language (Riegelhaupt, Carrasco, & Brandt, 2003). Furthermore, the Spanish language, which was introduced to the Americas in the 1500s with the first colonization of indigenous peoples, has since "become one of and sometimes the only language of Indigenous peoples" (Riegelhaupt, Carrasco, & Brandt, 2003).

Given the wide array of professional and formal educational attainment found within Nuestro Grupo, there was an extensive knowledge base on the academic research and literature about serving Latina/o students, parents, and communities. Coupled with this knowledge base is a heart-centered instinct based on a theory in the flesh (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1981) connected to a shared, collective experience of oppression that helped to readily identify what our children and community needed. Specifically, they sought an

organic, grounded approach premised on our own wealth of community, cultural, and linguistic knowledge that ultimately drove Nuestro Grupo in the direction of an authentic, place-based curriculum, culturally relevant pedagogy, and partnership with the AISD and the City of Austin.

According to Taylor (2004), a social imaginary is "the ways in which [people] imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations" (p. 23). A social imaginary is shared by a large group of people and makes possible common practices as well as extends a "widely shared sense of legitimacy" (Taylor, 2004, p. 23). There was something innate and personal that drew each of us together and drove our desire to serve our community. Even across our differences, there is something collective that we seek.

The project quickly evolved into what became a legal partnership with the local school district and the city's parks and recreation department who also sought to serve the community and counter the gentrification. The overall student population in the district has declined since 2013, and is projected to continue declining by 6,100 students, or 7.4%, per year for the next ten years, through 2025 (Davis Demographics & Planning, Inc., 2015). They attribute this shift on a declining birth rate, a lack of affordable housing, and an increase in competition from private and charter schools (Davis Demographics & Planning, Inc., 2015). Due to its proximity to downtown and the university, the East Austin region is projected to have the greatest losses, almost 30% of its overall elementary student population with some attendance zones projecting a loss of up to 43% of their elementary student population over the next ten years (Davis Demographics & Planning, Inc., 2015). However, the overall Latino population in the city continues to grow, accounting for 45% of the growth from 2002 to 2012 (Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Initiative, 2013). It is

likely that while the overall student population is decreasing, the number and proportion of Latino student representation in the district will continue to grow.

All three partners worked toward the following goals: first, to co-construct a culturally relevant, place-based curriculum in the areas of history, civil rights, immigration, indigenous heritage, and the cultural arts; second, to conduct teacher preparation workshops for public school teachers on the co-constructed curriculum in tandem with pedagogies that recognize, respect, and foster the students' cultures with alternative knowledge and pedagogies; and third, to conduct a Saturday academy for emergent bilingual students attending three geographically proximate Title I schools.

Nuestro Grupo entered into a three-way partnership with AISD and the City of Austin where X Saturday School takes place. We inaugurated our Saturday school on January 17, 2015. Academia Cuauhtli is a Saturday school that serves Spanish-bilingual, fourth grade students and parents—and expanded in its second year to fifth graders—from three elementary schools located in East Austin. Situated in this interlocking network of supportive organizations, the partnership through Academia Cuauhtli addresses the subtractive elements of schooling. The theory of action is that by addressing our dual language teachers' expressed need for culturally and linguistically relevant curricula together with institutional support to teach it, subtractive schooling will get effectively countered and the achievement gap will get addressed. To wit, a large and growing research literature suggests as much (Dee & Penner, 2016; Cabrera, Milem, Jaquette, & Marx, 2014; Lipka, 2005; López, 2016; Valenzuela, 2016). Together with exclusive, Spanish language instruction that promotes biliteracy, Academia Cuauhtli's "additive" approach mitigates students' sense of alienation and powerlessness while affording them with an enhanced sense of themselves, their parents, history, and community. López (2016) examined the explicit link between teacher beliefs and student achievement and found a positive

correlation between teachers who employed an additive approach to instruction and student reading outcomes.

Origins and Key Partners of Academia Cuauhtli

Part of what made the work of Nuestro Grupo so unique, in my experience, was that there was a critical mass of representatives in various key positions with a long history of advocacy work that far predated our gathering and facilitated the establishment of Academia Cuauhtli. Research on representative bureaucracy investigated the relationship between bureaucratic agencies and population demographics and its effect on policymaking and implementation (Meier, 1993). This body of literature argued that bureaucrats make decisions based on their own values, attitudes, and norms, which are shaped by an individual's background and experiences that may not be shared across gender and race divisions (Meiers & Nicholson-Crotty, 2006). Thus, a bureaucratic agency that is representative of the general population is more likely to be responsive and make decisions that are congruent with the desires of the public (Meiers, 1993).

At the teacher level, this research showed that simply having a Latina/o teacher improves student outcomes when compared to Anglo teachers of the same "quality" (Meier, Wrinkle, & Polinard, 1999). However, this effect was less evident at the administrative level; they did not find a direct correlation between having a principal of color on student outcomes (Meier, Wrinkle, & Polinard, 1999). This was partly attributed to the likelihood that the higher the rank, the more removed the individual is from the public and the more likely they are to adopt the norms of the organization. Accordingly, a critical mass of representatives in higher positions is essential for wider policy to take hold. Thus, while I am not saying that Academia Cuauhtli came together without hurdles, I was

struck by the otherworldly synergy, the perfect, albeit uncanny, evolution of events, that brought our partnership, and thusly, Academia Cuauhtli, into being.

The following section provides a brief description of the various organizations and their respective leaders that helped pave the way for our partnership. This is a list of the organizations whose impact was more immediate and visible. I recognize that there is a much longer history of social justice and bilingual education advocacy that far predates this work, making our work possible. It is also important to state that many individual members had overlapping and varying roles within in each of these organizations and finally, that all of these individuals and organizations were represented in the aforementioned pivotal September 20, 2013 community conversation that took place at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (ESB-MACC).

Proyecto Maestría

Proyecto Maestría was a specialized master's program under curriculum and instruction: bilingual/bicultural education at the University of Texas at Austin run by associate professor, Deborah Palmer. The program was aimed at developing bilingual teacher leadership within the local district and had a strong social justice emphasis; it worked to enhance the critical perspectives on bilingual education (Palmer, 2018). The program was targeted at bilingual education teachers with five years of teaching experience or more and was made accessible by offering courses during the evening hours. With the support from a U.S. Department of Education grant, they received full tuition support in exchange for their agreement to serve the district for at least three years after graduation. A total of five cohorts and 53 teachers graduated from the program between 2008 and 2013. Some Proyecto Maestría graduates also went on to secure positions within the AISD Department of Multilingual Education. A number of Proyecto Maestría graduates continue

to be actively involved in advocacy work through their participation and leadership in local dual-language educator organizations, including Academia Cuauhtli, where they teach, develop curriculum, and help guide other program components. (Palmer, 2018). The participants in this study who graduated from Proyecto Maestría spoke to great lengths about the immense impact this program had, not only about their pedagogy, but also on the enhanced way they view themselves as teachers, leaders, advocates, and Latina/os; this is further discussed in Chapter Four.

Tejano History Curriculum Project

The Tejano History Curriculum Project[1] (THCP), originally established during the summer of 2010 as an extension to the Tejano Monument Project, represents a point of origin in the development of Nuestro Grupo and Academia Cuauhtli. Its curriculum covered Tejana/o history from the colonial period through the early twentieth century. Dr. Emilio Zamora, Department of History the University of Texas at Austin, led the THCP, with support from Dr. Cinthia Salinas, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, at UT Austin. Six master students, who were also Proyecto Maestría teachers working for the local school district, implemented the initial fourth grade THCP curriculum. Thirty-six pre-service teachers developed the teaching modules under the supervisions of Drs. Zamora and Salinas. The entire curriculum was made available through a University of Texas at Austin website. The faculty and students that developed the THCP presented their work at conferences and made the curriculum available through a university website. However, the THCP participants also sponsored professional development workshops for teachers employed by the Austin ISD.

[1]A Tejana/o is a Texan of Mexican descent and is used to denote a regional identity. The Tejano Monument Project erected the Tejano monument at the Texas Capitol ground.

¡Adelante! Conference for Bilingual and Dual-Language Educators

The early history of Nuestro Grupo and Academia Cuauhtli also involved a cohort of Proyecto Maestría students who conceptualized and planned the *¡Adelante!* Conference for Bilingual and Dual-Language Educators under the guidance of Dr. Deborah Palmer. The first conference, held on March 2013, was hosted in partnership with AISD's department of English language learners (now known as the multilingual department), the Austin Area Association for Bilingual Education (AAABE), and the teachers' and Education Austin, a teachers' union.

The Proyecto teachers also held membership in some of these organizations. The conference offered the planners an opportunity to reenergize interest and increase district teacher participation in AAABE, whose membership and presence in the community had been dwindling in recent years. ¡Adelante! funds were managed by the University of Texas the first year, but this responsibility was handed over to AAABE teachers the second year. I was invited by a Proyecto Maestría graduate and hired by Dr. Palmer and AISD to coordinate the first two years of this conference.

One of the primary purposes of the conference was to continue building teacher leadership and bilingual education advocacy work. Over 35 teachers and employees from AISD and the surrounding school districts volunteered and organized into committees charged with planning different aspects of the conference. The conference was expected to draw about 150 participants but reached an attendance of 279 participants from AISD and nine other Texas school districts. This included over 35 district teacher and employee committee members who planned the conference, 19 presenters and 55 Bilingual Education Student Organization (BESO) volunteers. Approximately 59 teacher and employee members volunteered to plan the second-year conference (March 2014). Attendance expectations were once again shattered with approximately 460 participants including 40

parents, 40 BESO volunteers, and 40 presenters. The third year, the conference grew beyond the capacity of the conference center used the first two years and had to be moved to a larger venue. This represented a growing interest for professional development opportunities for bilingual educators with critical perspectives of bilingual education and who seek opportunities to network with other critical bilingual educators.

Austin Independent School District

Dr. Pauline Dow, AISD's former Chief Academic Officer, along with Dr. Olivia Hernandez, Director of the Department of English Language Learners (now known as the Multilingual-Education Department), and their dedicated staff focused on serving the largely Latina/o student population and their families. Dr. Dow had been hired under an earlier administration, spearheaded by Superintendent Dr. Meria Carstarphen had hired Dr. Dow to implement dual language education throughout a majority of elementary schools in the district. The local school district serves English language learners (ELLs) through both their one-way and two-way, dual language immersion programs. One-way models are those that offer bilingual instruction to a single language group of learners, e.g. Spanish speakers are taught in English and Spanish (Austin ISD Dual Language: One-Way and Two-Way, 2016). In a two-way model, classes are comprised of equal number of students who are proficient in English and students who are English language learners with the academic instruction provided in either English or the other language, most commonly Spanish (Austin ISD Dual Language: One-Way and Two-Way, 2016).

Although Dr. Dow left the district to secure other employment in Fall, 2015, she solidified the legal, three-year, partnership contract with Nuestro Grupo and the City of Austin ESB-MACC. Her influence left an indelible mark on the community-based initiative. A crucial contribution involved the selection of the three, east side schools to

feed Academia Cuauhtli. This was a strategic decision benefitting all parties. For the ESB-MACC, it would tap into the adjacent community that it was already serving through its afterschool program. Moreover, since the students are not only socioeconomically disadvantaged and attending schools with large portions of English Language Learner students, Title I and Title III dollars were dedicated to cover the costs of the initiative.

Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center

The ESB-MACC, established in November 2005 has served as the site of Nuestro Grupo and Academia Cuauhtli. The center grew out of the leadership of the east Austin Mexican American community that focused on Latino cultural arts. According to Martha Cotera, an elder who participates in Nuestro Grupo and Academia Cuauhtli, the ESB-MACC originally intended to house a Saturday academy (Cotera, 2013, personal communication). Cotera, as well Laura Esparza, Division Manager in the History Arts and Nature Division of the city's Parks Division, supported the establishment of Academia Cuauhtli. Esparza reasoned that it was philosophically congruent with the ESB-MACC. The establishment of the academy and partnership with Nuestro Grupo and AISD helps the ESB-MACC grow its audience participation, growth that has been challenged in recent years by gentrification. The MACC has also gained resources. The ESB-MACC's contribution to the program is the classroom space and some services and support from the staff.

Texas Center for Educational Policy

Another key partnership crucial to the establishment of Academia Cuauhtli was the Texas Center for Educational Policy (TCEP) and the National Latina/o Education Research and Policy (NLERAP) project, directed by Dr. Angela Valenzuela, Professor in the

Department of Educational Administration at the University of Texas at Austin. The NLERAP project is a national initiative that promotes, among other things, a "grow-your-own" Latina/o teacher preparation pipeline. NLERAP serves as the fiscal agent for Nuestro Grupo. TCEP was the chief sponsor of the September 20, 2013, community conversation with the local partnership drawing inspiration from NLERAP's national model as conveyed in Valenzuela (2016).

Organizational Structure

The following section contains a brief description of organizational structure and program components that grew out of our shared governance; all major decisions were made as a Nuestro Grupo community. Appendix A, *Academia Cuauhtli: Accomplishments and Lessons Learned 2014-2017* (Rubio & Valenzuela, 2017), contains a detailed report of the organizational structure and program components.

Nuestro Grupo

The group is comprised of community members and advocates, including librarians, historians, public school teachers, administrators, parents and students, and university professors and graduate students representative of five Central Texas universities: South University, St. Edwards University, Texas State University, Huston Tillotson, and the University of Texas at Austin. The group meets most Wednesdays throughout the academic year and a few times over the summer to plan and coordinate Academia Cuauhtli. Meetings begin with *Flor y Canto* ("Flower and Song"), an indigenous poetic and spiritual tradition of celebrating and honoring life, family, and community by sharing a reflection that encourages or inspires. Beyond resolving administrative and

logistical Cuauhtli matters, these meetings also allow the group to discuss current concerns and issues facing our local Latina/o community.

One of the most crucial and ongoing topics of conversation for Nuestro Grupo, from the moment Academia Cuauhtli was first conceptualized, was *el proposito de ser educado*, the purpose of *being* educated. This is different from the concept of schooling and obtaining an education, which implies a banking system (Freire, 2000), a transferal of knowledge from teacher to student. To the members of Nuestro Grupo, *el ser educado* implied much more beyond a unidirectional deposit of knowledge. Rejecting this dominant ideology on education, Nuestro Grupo envisioned Academia Cuauhtli as an institution where we could increase our collective consciousness, develop shared values, and an opportunity to become *aculturados* (cultured), to have an appreciation for the cultural arts and music. The group developed the following vision statement for Academia Cuauhtli in 2014 (Rubio & Valenzuela, 2017):

> Honor our community's cultural heritage, social justice consciousness, and reclaim our collective identities in pursuit of educational freedom.

This vision continues to guide our strategy around the continued development of program components.

All of us who take part in Nuestro Grupo and Cuauhtli have family, university school work, and professional work, among other responsibilities, that we balance in order to serve our students, families, and community through Cuauhtli. Our teachers and coordinators are the only paid positions, pay that is negligible when considering the overall amount of time spent meeting, organizing, and planning—time that takes away from our other responsibilities. However, it would not be fair to describe our work in Cuauhtli as a sacrifice when we, ourselves, feel nourished and renewed through the critical work and supportive relationships we have built. It has always been important that we acknowledge

and honor the commitment we willingly make to Cuauhtli and to each other. I should mention that our original teachers and coordinators were mobilizing and organizing to create Cuauhtli before there was ever an offer by the district to fund these positions. The teachers who participated in this study made it clear they are willing to continue serving regardless of funding. While we are genuinely grateful for the financial support of the district, it is the authentic relationships, knowledge, and support from the individuals in these key positions that we value the most. You can't buy love.

Personal Vision and Mission for Cuauhtli

To reiterate, Academia Cuauhtli is situated in an interlocking network of supportive organizations and partnerships that rely heavily on the respectful and trusting relationships formed by those within. Along with many of those who were present at the public conversation in September 2013, I am a cofounder of Academia Cuauhtli. As with ¡Adelante!, I am also the initial coordinator of the academy. I played a central role in planning, organizing, and institutionalizing the two projects, including setting up the administrative policies and practices and establishing contracts to formalize the partnerships being built. However, I also helped conceptualize Academia Cuauhtli and built my own vision and mission for Cuauhtli—a simple task in that most of us had and continue to have an overlapping, authentic desire to serve our students and families, to support our bilingual educators, to protect our schools, to strengthen our Latina/o communities, and to drive systemic change

My vision of Cuauhtli was to build a safe space where critical conversations and critical learnings could take place; a space where our focus could continue to be on meeting the needs of our students. I also saw Cuauhtli as offering us, critical Latina/o, bilingual educators, access to the network, supports, and resources we needed to reenergize and meet

our own needs. When you fly, the attendants reminds you that, in the case of an emergency, you should put on your oxygen mask before assisting others—Cuauhtli was partly my way of ensuring the educators who were best positioned to help our Latina/o and bilingual students and continue advocating for our families and communities, were putting their masks on first.

I wanted our teachers to have a space that continued in the same spirit of Proyecto Maestría, where they could explore their identity at the same time that they were building their pedagogical practice and understanding their critical education. I was well positioned to draw from the history, knowledge, expertise, and capital, such as the professional networks, offered by the many educational leaders, including our teacher leaders, that I had come surround myself with; those that I had come to know well and deeply admire.

I readily acknowledge that I am not a teacher. I cannot purport to truly know or understand the difficulties of being a teacher. Although I maintain high standards and expectations for any teacher, I could not, in good conscious, assign blame or make demands for better educational opportunities for our Latina/o students if I, myself, was not contributing as a researcher and administrator. Initially, I saw myself as someone who could support their work by creating the space and strategically building the policies and practices that would offer our teachers the freedom to grow their critical, culturally relevant educational praxis. I trusted that if provided the resources and supports they needed, they would deliver materials that would not only benefit Cuauhtli or their respective traditional classrooms, but that could also be used by others seeking alternatives. I wanted the culture within Cuauhtli to recognize our teachers for the master teachers they are and to encourage them to be creative, to teach in a manner they have always dreamed but had not felt was possible or allowed by the current system, and to create the classroom materials they often

lacked. In other words, they needed to have the freedom to create our own educational Aztlan (Anzaldúa, 2012).

I was also cognizant of my position as an external-insider (Banks, 1998). I am a member of a growing community of critical scholars and activists whose work focuses on bilingual education, immigrant rights, and community advocacy. Moreover, I had no roots in Austin and knew I would eventually leave. I knew from experience that an educational program such as ours would be meaningless without a shared sense of ownership. Any meaningful change that occurs as transformative leaders take their place, is likely to disappear the second the person overseeing the effort moves on. I wanted our teachers to know Cuauhtli was theirs and I wanted to build a shared sense of commitment to Cuauhtli's success. I was and continue to be purposeful about the language I use when talking about Cuauhtli.

Academia Cuauhtli Coordinators

The fall of our first year, I partnered with Julia Hernandez, the district's Bilingual/Dual-language PK-5 curriculum specialist. She was responsible for developing dual-language curriculum, support program implementation, conduct community and parent outreach, provide professional development for the district's teachers, and organize the bilingual and teacher institute for new dual-language teachers. Cuauhtli fell under the scope of her work under an established professional relationship through Proyecto Maestría and ¡Adelante!. It was natural and easy to work with her, in tandem, to communicate between the district and Nuestro Grupo to accomplish the necessary administrative tasks. We relied on Julia's expertise to develop the initial scope and sequence for Cuauhtli instruction and conduct the training and professional development for our teachers. Kristina Gutierrez and Juanita Madrigal, district employees in the Department of English

Language Learners, also offered their expertise and unwavering support to help establish Cuauhtli as they had for ¡Adelante!.

During the second year of Cuauhtli, Julia took a different job with a neighboring district and I stepped away from the role of coordinator, partly, to focus on my research. I would most likely be leaving the City of Austin after graduating from the doctoral program in the coming years. I was concerned about having sufficient time to transition someone else into these two pivotal roles. From the inception of Cuauhtli, I have felt that it is crucial to build a sense of ownership by all involved (coordinators, teachers, volunteers, parents, students, liaisons, etc.) since I feel this is the best way to ensure long-term sustainability and growth.

I also saw the coordinator position as a great opportunity for graduate students committed to community- and student-centered education. It would offer a modest source of income while they worked toward defining and building their own action research agenda. It was only logical to place another educational policy graduate student in the Nuestro Grupo Cuauhtli Coordinator role and a bilingual education graduate student in the AISD Cuauhtli Coordinator role. There was no need to conduct a search since the ideal candidates were already volunteering in Cuauhtli since the first year. Anthony Martinez took on the role of Nuestro Grupo Cuauhtli Coordinator and Randy Bell as the AISD Cuauhtli Coordinator. Irene Gómez has been serving as the Assistant Coordinator for the past three years. Sandra Telles-Rojas arrived in Austin in 2017 to attend The University of Texas at Austin and has since become a welcome addition to the coordinator team. Anthony and Randy are doctoral seeking students. Sandra is currently pursuing her master's degree and Irene is completing a bachelor's degree.

Student Recruitment and Community & School Liaisons

Academia Cuauhtli recruited fourth grade students from three dual-language schools located in a historically segregated Mexican American neighborhood. It is an area that today is undergoing rapid gentrification due to its proximity to downtown, the State Capitol building, and the University of Texas at Austin (Ward, 2015). Academia Cuauhtli has since expanded to include fifth grade students and serves two additional dual-language elementary schools that also serve a large Latina/o student population.

For all of us involved, it was important to establish a similarly respectful and trusting relationship with the schools and families. No one was more vocal and active in this respect than Modesta Treviño, a retired bilingual educator who is still very active in her advocacy work for the community. The first year, after I laid out the initial bus route, she took it upon herself to drive to the homes of each of our Cuauhtli students to introduce herself to parents and to walk the path each student would take to get to the bus stop. She wanted to make sure there was a safe route for every student to get to and from the bus stop and that it was an accessible path for the bus driver. We made any necessary changes based on her recommendations.

Modesta, Christopher Milk, and I took the lead with an individual school to build a relationship with them as community and school liaisons. We wanted them to know we were there not only there to offer a program but also to support their schools in any way possible. We met with the principals and introduced ourselves to the teachers, who then helped us recruit students for Cuauhtli. We shared our personal phone numbers with them and included it on the enrollment forms so that parents could reach us any time they had questions or needed more information about the program.

Assistant Professor Christopher Milk took the lead in institutionalizing the parent component, which has evolved over the years. The first year, we invited parents to stay at

the ESB-MACC during program hours to have coffee and have informal conversations about any issues that might be occurring in schools. Chris and other teachers spoke on how the school system is structured, parents' rights, bilingual education, and how they can advocate for their children. Over the years, Cuauhtli began hosting more formal conversations that included guest speakers who were experts in particular areas our parents had interest in such as an immigration lawyer who could talk to them about immigrant rights and the naturalization process. Parents also expressed their desire to remain in the Cuauhtli classroom with their children because they were equally interested on the curriculum content being shared—they were also learning their own history and learning about culturally relevant books and materials they could share with the rest of their families. Many of our parents and siblings also enjoy participating in the *Danza Mexica* curriculum (described in the next section) offered through Cuauhtli.

Siblings, regardless of age, have always been welcome in Cuauhtli as well. The only restriction is that anyone under the age of five and/or under the age of 18 who are not enrolled in an AISD school, cannot ride the school bus. This is solely for liability reasons. We try to engage the older siblings in more of a mentor role in the Cuauhtli classroom, charged with helping our teachers with instruction and their siblings to complete projects assigned in the Cuauhtli classroom. While toddlers and infants are also welcome, the mothers sometimes choose to coordinate among themselves for childcare during discussions and events; one parent will watch them in the ESB-MACC library, located across the hallway.

The community and school liaison role expanded to include work assisting the AISD Cuauhtli Coordinator to maintain the budget, as well as to be the point of contact with the participating schools, register students, organize field trips with parents, field questions from parents, and maintain open communication across partners in order to

ensure compliance with the rules and regulations germane to both AISD and City of Austin Parks and Recreation policies.

Curriculum Development

As shared earlier, the THCP provided the foundation for the development of curriculum for Academia Cuauhtli. Dr. Emilio Zamora was the content expert who wrote the first iteration of the lesson plans for THCP. This curriculum was first taught in the teacher preparation program in two classes taught by Dr. Cinthia Salinas, and under the supervision of Dr. Zamora. Students were responsible for preparing the curriculum in the form of journey boxes. The process also involved numerous meetings with the teachers that resulted in adjustments to the contents of the journey boxes. Dr. Maria Franquiz also assisted with supervising the teachers and in helping to amend the journey boxes.

Under Cuauhtli, Dr. Zamora continued to provide the subject expertise and content knowledge for the curriculum writers. He worked with the Cuauhtli teachers, Randy Bell and Juan Ramirez, who took the THCP lesson plans already written by Dr. Zamora and Proyecto Maestría teachers and completed missing sections and translated into Spanish. The second phase consisted of taking this curriculum and redesigning the lesson plans into the district's curriculum roadmaps and aligning it with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards. During year one of Cuauhtli, the lesson plans were: The Tejano Monument, Mobility: Migration and Immigration, and Latino Civil Rights.

This process was followed to create additional lesson plans for Academia Cuauhtli year two: Indigenous Heritage, Mestizaje, and Danza Azteca. This Cuauhtli curriculum is offered through the district in third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eleventh grade. However, as a teacher, you would not necessarily know it exists unless you are told about it and it is difficult to locate. The curriculum can be found in the AISD Multilingual-

education library website. Portions of the curriculum were also embedded into the existing social studies lesson plans, which means, it is not offered in its entirety.

Appendix B contains a list of the thematic units and lessons that have been developed while the Appendix C contains the scope and sequence of lessons offered through Cuauhtli for the 2016-2017 academic year.

Cuauhtli Teacher Recruitment and Participation

Teachers who were already a part of the existing network of dual-language teachers through Proyecto Maestría and ¡Adelante! and I were responsible for recruiting the teachers for Cuauhtli. The teachers were known to have a critical perspective on bilingual education—they were involved in organizing the dual-language teacher association, coordinating and presenting at their teacher-led conference, leading the local teacher union, creating opportunities for engaging and collaborating with families and community, encouraging and supporting students who want to organize and protest against inequities in their communities including school closures, etc.

After the first year, under the guidance of Dr. Chris Milk and Randy Bell, the Cuauhtli teachers have been purposeful about continuing to recruit not only from within their networks, but to reach out to novice teachers who they believe would be open to and could benefit from working with Cuauhtli. Randy explained that when he observes teachers as part of his role as a facilitator for the University of Texas at Austin teacher education program, he looks for dual-language teachers who have an authentic connection with students and families. He further described this as a teacher who is student-centered, genuine, engaging, and respectful; "happy interactions" between teacher and student. He also invites teachers that are already going out of their way to provide culturally relevant

books, materials, and other opportunities for their students. Randy explained that much of the decision to invite a teacher to Cuauhtli is not conscious but, rather, intuitive.

The scope and sequence of the curriculum was decided the first year by the AISD coordinator and teachers signed up to teach through a shared Google Document. The open sign-up caused a few issues because some teachers signed up to teach a single class within each unit and/or, if they were first to sign up, they signed up to teach multiple times. While Nuestro Grupo welcomed their eagerness and commitment, a single curriculum unit is taught over the course of three- to four-weekends. If a teacher only taught once of these lessons, it lead to confusion over what was covered and what needed to be covered the following class. This fragmented presence also hindered to some extent the teachers' ability to have a well-establish a relationship with students and parents. Furthermore, those that signed up late, were often only left with the option of joining during a fieldtrip—all teachers and students' family members were welcome to participate in the fieldtrips.

Cuauhtli teachers now meet at the beginning of the year to plan instructional activities and to set the scope and sequence for the year. During this time, they also sign up in sets of two or more teachers to teach a unit. This allows for continuity and consistency through the entirety of a unit, allows for teachers to build stronger relationship with the students and for more teachers to participate in the program. Cuauhtli teachers work in sets of two or three—minimally two every Saturday—in order to avoid burnout since all of these teachers teach full time in their regular fourth grade classrooms within the district.

Chronology

I entered the Cultural Studies in Education Master's Program at The University of Texas at Austin in the fall of 2011, during the same time the final cohort of Proyecto Maestría commenced. It was during these classes that I first connected with some of these

students. A year later, a Proyecto Maestría student enlisted me to coordinate the first ¡Adelante! Conference for Bilingual and Dual Language Educators. I was initially hesitant to undertake this role given the short three month's time frame to put together a conference originally intended for 150 AISD teachers. However, I was drawn in by the energy and commitment of these educators, many of who were full-time bilingual education teachers. In addition to more than 20 teachers planning the conference, there was also more than half a dozen district staff from the Department of English Language Learners in the group, who I warmly referred to as the "army ants" because of their extremely coordinated and diligent work ethic. We also had the leadership of Dr. Palmer, Dr. Dow, and Olivia Hernandez who are strong proponents of bilingual and student-centered education.

All involved made the time to meet weekly for at least two hours in the late evenings, mid-week as a whole group and also met frequently or worked individually to conduct their respective committee work. This group of educators showed up even after putting in a full day's work, after fulfilling other afterschool commitments, regardless of having a long commute, and sacrificing time with their own families. I felt the utmost respect and admiration for each and every one of these educators and wanted to honor them back, reciprocate through my work—this was my *sentido de deber* (commitment as an act of love) that I continue with my work in Nuestro Grupo and feel was also reflected by other members.

The second year of ¡Adelante! overlapped with the beginning of Nuestro Grupo, of which I am a founding member. Nuestro Grupo emerged following the TCEP public conversation on the lack of culturally relevant and appropriate books for Latina/o and bilingual students. Within our group was Martha Cotera, Modesta Treviño, Oralia Garza de Cortéz, Gonzalo Barrientos and other respected community elders and advocates whose Civil Rights work is associated with the Chican@ movement. Leading the charge were

renowned scholars Dr. Valenzuela and Dr. Zamora who are also highly respected community advocates not only locally, but also state and national levels.

My role in ¡Adelante! and later in Nuestro Grupo was to help organize and coordinate the work of the members, serve as a liaison between the partners, and oversee administrative tasks such as the contracts and accounting, among other things. This was a participatory action research project for which I also collected data for Proyecto Maestría and Nuestro Grupo. Given my history with Proyecto Maestría and ¡Adelante!, continuing the work in teacher preparation and curriculum development through Nuestro Grupo felt like a natural next step.

My personal interest in working with Academia Cuauhtli, particularly the teachers, stemmed from the countless informal conversations during professional development meetings through ¡Adelante! and other gatherings in which Latina/o bilingual educators expressed to me their desire to find more spaces where they could "heal." They were not simply attending these professional development gatherings to further a knowledge or skill, but rather to find reprieve among other like-minded individuals who constantly felt under attack for supporting language maintenance for their students. More than once, they admitted to feeling uncomfortable about speaking Spanish themselves around their peers and administrators. I was taken aback by how closely these conversations mirrored those I have had with students of color in other research settings where one of my primary findings was the lack of safe spaces for students to explore, develop, and claim their identities (Rubio, 2012).

I was interested not only on the teachers themselves but in capturing and maintaining the cultural, linguistic, and community knowledge that was being lost when we eliminate the people that bring this history with them and are able to center it in the classroom, rather than relegate it to the margins. Even if the knowledge is available such

as in the context of AISD's bilingual education program, it remains marginalized as reflected in the teachers' comments to me that were conveyed over the years, beginning with my work in ¡Adelante!. Thus, if we were to provide a space and means to help center that knowledge through the implementation of a place-based, culturally relevant, and methodologically sound, research-based bilingual education curriculum and pedagogy, I wondered about the extent to which that knowledge could actually be reclaimed by the Latina/o teachers and, subsequently, students, families, and community would reclaim the knowledge.

During the initial Nuestro Grupo monthly meetings, the group developed a list of goals that included developing teaching materials and establishing alternative learning spaces for students. The group was searching for a way to ground their work and after a few months of meetings and conversations, revisited the THCP. The initial three components developed by Nuestro Grupo consists of a curriculum writer's group, a summer program, and a year-round Saturday Academy—all of which are predicated on building capacity among cadres of bilingual education and dual language elementary school teachers to teach Mexican American and Tejano history and culture.

The group picked up momentum late March, 2014, following a successful, second ¡Adelante! conference. The educators involved in the multiple projects felt re-energized and ready to move forward with Nuestro Grupo. To meet our first goal, we hired three of the original curriculum writers from the THCP. There were some lesson plans written during by the THCP, 2010-2012, that were not completed or translated to Spanish. The three? returning curriculum writers revisited this existing curriculum and attempted to complete any missing elements in the existing lesson plans. They also assumed the responsibility of developing three new modules based on content material written by Dr. Zamora: immigration and migration, civil rights, and local Austin history.

It quickly became apparent that it would not be feasible for Nuestro Grupo to implement our own summer 2014 program at the ESB-MACC given the short timeframe. However, the local school district administrators that had been actively involved in Nuestro Grupo planning meetings suggested the use of the curriculum at five district elementary schools piloting a one-way, dual language summer program. The entire the summer program was to be offered in Spanish. Over the summer, the district also assigned a group of history and social studies teachers who constituted part of the Curriculum Writer's Cadre to align the Tejano and Mexican American Curriculum with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards and integrate them into the district road maps for the third, fourth, fifth, seventh, and eleventh grade levels.

The third component and the central focus of this study is the Saturday academy, Academia Cuauhtli, which was planned over the summer and fall semesters of 2014 with an inaugural ceremony on January 17, 2015. AISD and the City of Austin were Nuestro Grupo's primary partners in this endeavor, both offering in-kind support for the program. Over the summer of 2016, there was a staff of six AISD bilingual teachers who developed weekly lesson plans. Nuestro Grupo was purposeful about the community and student group we wanted served through Academia Cuauhtli. The program bussed students from four predominantly Latino elementary schools: Sanchez, Metz, Zavala, and Houston Elementary. All of them are Title I schools located on the East side of town.

Since its inception, we have benefitted from help by in-service teachers and graduate students embarked on teaching careers from surrounding universities alongside numerous volunteers that help carry out the work of the academy on Saturdays. We also have a parent academy led by a parent specialist with a background in community organizing, Assistant Professor Chris Milk from Texas State University. I turn now to my methodology.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

I began this chapter by discussing my personal connection that led to this study and shared the purpose and significance of this study. I also shared an overview of the methodology of the study and provided a description of key partners that make Academia Cuauhtli possible and the components that make up the program. The fortuitous combination of persons and initiatives explain the success of Cuauhtli. The day-to-day work by a variety of dedicated individuals, extending over six years, also suggested an intentional and well-planned enterprise.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter examines some of the systemic ways in which teachers of color were, and continue to be, marginalized. I begin by first offering a historical perspective that discusses the ideology and responses to desegregation mandates for the teacher population after the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Second, I then discuss the literature on teacher diversity, exploring in particular current demographic trends, research on racial matching, and the effects of current reform on teacher retention and recruitment. Third, I end by examining how power relations are conceptualized through alternative pedagogies and curriculum in order to gain perspective on how this can be applied to the education continuum. I conclude with a discussion of the implications of this for future research.

THE BURDEN OF HISTORY: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON TEACHER SEGREGATION

Often taken for granted are the connections and understanding of the past from which our current institutions arose from and whose ideals and values continue to shape how we construct knowledge (Furniss, 1999). Educational historians remind us that African American, Mexican American and other oppressed groups have fought a long struggle, spanning more than a century, to gain access to education—seen as the key to achieving not only emancipation and liberation, but also, the power that would allow for their socioeconomic advancement and lay the foundation for a true democracy (Menchaca & Valencia, 1990; Newby & Tyack, 1971; Valencia, 2005; Watkins, 2001). Yet, despite key contributions and important roles played by members of these groups, Watkins (2001) argued that it was ultimately the "white architects," white elite males who shaped educational policy from 1865 to 1954. They were politically and economically motivated, embracing privilege and racism while still seeking a political structure that did not entirely

pre-empt democratic participation based on wealth and race (Watkins, 2001). Numerous scholars across education fields dispute the continued contradiction between proclaiming equality, opportunity, and democracy while simultaneously creating and maintaining dehumanizing, oppressive, and subtractive schooling systems that dispossess communities of color of their knowledge, language, culture, and histories (e.g. Banks, 2004; Cummins, 2000, 2009, 2013; McNeil, 2002; Newby and Tyack, 1971; Sleeter, 2002; Watkins, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999).

Embodying this contradiction, no other civil rights milestone in the quest for education equity has been more praised or contested than the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954; Patterson & Freehling, 2001). In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that school segregation was unconstitutional. Ushered in with this ruling was the promise of a more integrated future for both students and our nation, as a whole. Education reform efforts that have come and gone post-*Brown* often espoused similar rhetoric around the desire to provide equitable and just educational opportunities for low-socioeconomic status (SES), minority students (McNeil, 2002). The promise of *Brown* has not come to fruition and, more than half a century later, research shows that public schools continue to be highly segregated, isolating minority students of low-SES and teachers of color alike (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, Wang, & Orfield, 2010; Parker, 2008, 2012). In the following sections, I discuss some of the ideology and responses to desegregation efforts post-*Brown* and I review two studies on that offer a broad perspective on the long-term effects of teacher segregation.

Desegregation: Ideology and Responses

According to Parker's (2008) historical analysis, post-*Brown*, the courts sought to transform education by erasing the school's racial identity. The logic followed that the

teacher demographics within a school established the schools racial identity by signaling to the community which students belonged in that school. If you integrate teachers, the school would no longer be viewed as “black” or “white,” it would simply be “a school,” thus, promoting an integrated student body (Parker, 2008). This notion was divorced from the reality of the inequality in resources and power that existed and the persistence of racist ideologies (Parker, 2008). Parker (2008) explained that a teacher holds an authoritative position in the classroom. For White parents, desegregating the teaching population meant yielding power to teachers of color whose competence they questioned. For Latino and Black parents, it meant relinquishing the little power they had established through education by entrusting White teachers to not only educate their children but also treat them fairly (Parker, 2008).

The Supreme Court ordered that teachers be desegregated along with the student population. However, these rulings lacked official language that addressed the retention of teachers of color: their jobs were not legally protected (Oakley, Stonewell, & Logan, 2009; Parker, 2008). After the court order to integrate, students of color were bused away from their schools, which were largely deemed inferior to White schools (Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Oakley, Stonewell, & Logan, 2009; Parker, 2008). These schools lost innumerable students of color and were more likely to close (Oakley, Stonewell, & Logan, 2009; Parker, 2008). School closures along with the lack of legal protection resulted in large numbers of teachers and principals of color being displaced (Hudson & Holmes, 1994; Irvine, 1990). Furthermore, the charge to desegregate teachers was, and continues to be, largely ignored (Parker, 2008).

In the south, a survey by Irvine (1990) found that nearly 40,000 African American teachers lost their teaching jobs between 1954 and 1972. Another study by Irvine & Irvine (1983) found that the number of African American principals in the south shrank from

2,000 to less than 200 between 1964 and 1973, a 90% loss of black principals. Hudson and Holmes (1994) corroborated these estimates, stating there were approximately 82,000 African American teachers pre-*Brown*, with more than 38,000 African American teachers and administrators losing their jobs in the decade that followed. In the Southwest, despite Mexican Americans being officially categorized as White by the United States government, they were socially racialized as “colored,” suffering from the similar Jim Crow violence and segregation as the African American population (Donato & Hanson, 2012; Zamora, 2009). Though school segregation patterns for Mexican Americans were widely observed to follow similar trends as the African American community, there are few records that quantify the effects of segregation on this particular community (Donato & Hanson, 2012). This is likely a result of the complicated and shifting racial classification systems for Mexicans in the Southwest (Zamora, 2009).

Research on Teacher Segregation

This inquiry partly began as a simple search to understand how the teacher population evolved following desegregation orders, not only in terms of the number of teachers of color in the workforce but also their distribution and student assignment patterns. I was purposeful in seeking research that directly addressed “teacher segregation,” as opposed to research on “school segregation” or “student segregation,” which tended to focus on students and discuss the impact on teachers as a secondary effect, but found only the two I discuss in this section: Parker’s (2008) study on teacher segregation patterns in districts with heterogeneous school districts and Oakley, Stowell, and Logan’s (2009) study on the long-term impact of desegregation on Black teachers. According to Oakley et al. (2009), research on the effects of mandated desegregation on the teacher population typically focused on specific districts or states, offered qualitative historical accounts, or

analyzed legal precedents and consequences of this legislation. Few study the broader impact of desegregation on the teacher population (Oakley, Stonewell, & Logan, 2009; Parker, 2008).

Desegregating Teachers. Parker (2008) conducted an empirical study focused on teacher segregation patterns across 115 school districts in North Carolina and 42 districts in six other states: California, Louisiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, and Texas. The study's data sources were not clearly defined in the article. Published in the *Washington University Law Review*, various state and national education reports from 2004-2006 were cited in the footnotes. Parker (2008) was a strong proponent of integration, arguing that diversity alone did not have the transformative potential of integration. Thus, these particular sites were chosen because of their heterogeneous demographic composition. These locations contained diverse student and teacher populations, meaning integration was possible to achieve (Parker, 2008). The study analyzed odd ratios to compare the probability of teacher-student racial matching within individual school buildings and within districts; it compared the probability of a White student having a teacher of a particular ethnicity with the probability of a student of color having that same teacher (Parker, 2008).

Parker (2008) found that teacher segregation patterns within districts aligned with patterns of student segregation—teachers of color were concentrated in schools with students of color. In the nine Texas districts included in the study, the odd ratios of African American student-teacher matching ranged from 1.54 in Galveston to 2.14 in Spring Branch. This meant that an African American student in Galveston had a 54% greater chance of being assigned to an African American teacher than a White student; it was 1.14 times more likely in Spring Branch. For Latinos in Texas, the odd ratios ranged from 1.61

in Galveston to 5.33 in Tyler. Parker also found that within schools, students of color were also more likely to be assigned to teachers of color.

Parker (2008) defined a district to be “fairly integrated” if the odd ratios fell between 0.51 and 1.49. Based on this definition, the study found that teacher integration in North Carolina was occurring within small districts where it was likely more easily achieved, but not occurring in the larger districts in the state that educate a larger portion of students. Similar findings were evident in school districts outside of North Carolina, where the 17 smaller districts demonstrated integration based on the study’s standards (Parker, 2008). The odds ratio in Galveston for African American student-teacher pairing was the only category that fell under this “fairly integrated” rating in Texas.

The Impact of Desegregation on Black Teachers. Oakley, Stowell, and Logan (2009) analyzed the long-term impact of desegregation on black teachers at the metropolitan level (Metropolitan Statistical Areas as defined by U.S. Census). They used public school, census, student enrollment, and teacher ethnicity data, as well as legal court case inventories from 358 desegregation court cases, such as dockets and bibliographies. Oakley et al. (2009) focused their analysis on elementary schools, since these were deemed to be “neighborhood level” schools, enabling analysis of desegregation. The authors examined the impact of desegregation on the teaching workforce overtime, estimating models from 1970 to 1990 and from 1990 to 2000, across the following three categories: all metros, southern metros, and non-southern metros.

Oakley et al. (2009) found a decrease in the white student and teacher population across all regions from 1970 to 1990. Contrary to their hypothesis, the move of White students and teachers from public to private schools had no impact on Black teacher retention; it did not lead to greater retention of black public school teachers. The authors found that the largest proportional decrease in the black teacher population occurred in the

south between 1970 and 1990, when the majority of desegregation mandates occurred, but tapered between 1990 and 2000. They found an increase of Black teachers between 1970 to 1990 in the non-southern regions, with the greatest increases occurring in areas with the highest levels of court coverage. Regardless of these converse trends, by 1990 the south had twice the representation of Black teachers than in non-southern states. The authors found varying outcomes for divergent regions but concluded that the larger bureaucracy negated the local and neighborhood factors. In other words, desegregation led to the institutional conditions for the underrepresentation of teachers of color in the broader teacher workforce (Oakley et al., 2009).

TEACHER DIVERSITY

Discussion on the composition of the teacher workforce post-*Brown* pointed to the ever-growing population of students of color and the conversely shrinking minority teacher population, arguing the need to increase teacher diversity. It has been shown that teachers have been shown to have the greatest mediating effect on student learning, beyond in-school factors such as class size and composition, as well as out-of-school factors such as student race and economic status (Ferguson, 1991; Sanders et al., 1997). Further, a growing body of research showed that having a teacher of color had positive effects on achievement for all students (Meiers, Wrinkle, & Polinard, 1999; Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015).

According to Ingersoll and May (2011), research that supports increasing teacher diversity makes three related arguments: to fill general teacher shortages, create demographic parity, and cultural synchronicity. The first argument around teacher shortage points to the fact that teachers of color are more likely to apply and remain in low-SES, minority serving schools, the same schools that are disproportionally understaffed (Ingersoll & May, 2011). The second argument, and the most cited reason, is demographic

parity, which follows the logic that minority students need minority role models and teachers of color can provide this (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Villegas & Davis, 2008). The third argument that bringing in more teachers of color will lead to cultural synchronicity, assumes they have “insider knowledge” due to having similar cultures and backgrounds as the students (Irvine, 1989, as cited in Ingersoll & May, 2011). I consider to the first two arguments in the following sections through research on demographic trends, research on parity, and the effects of reform on teacher retention and recruitment. The third argument on synchronicity is explored afterward within the context of alternative pedagogies and curriculum.

Teacher and Student Demographic Data

The number of teachers of color nationwide has grown; however, the rate is not commensurate to the rapidly increasing student population (Boser, 2011; Ingersoll & May, 2011). An equitable system would reflect ethnic parity between the number of students of color and teachers of color. The U.S. Department of Education began collecting demographic information in 1972 and showed that while students of color comprised 22% of the student population, teachers of color accounted for 12%, only a 10% difference in parity (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012). A decade later, the difference between the number of students and teachers of color was 17% (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012). Demographic information from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (2014a), listed in Table 1, showed that in 2001, when students of color comprised 39% of the population, teachers only made up 10%, a 30% difference in parity. Data from a decade later showed that students of color accounted for 49%, while teachers were 17%, a 31% difference in parity for 2011.

		White	Black	Hispanic	Other	Total Minority Population
2001-2002	Students	60	17	17	5	39
	Teachers	90	6	Unknown	4	10
2011-2012	Students	52	16	24	9	49
	Teachers	83	6	8	3	17
Projected 2023	Student	45	15	30	10	55

Table 1: Teacher and student ethnic composition in percentages for 2001-2002 and 2011-2012.

Another population of students that has a critical need for teachers who are certified and understand the need for cultural and linguistic maintenance are English language learner (ELL) students whose primary language is something other than English. The NCES (2014b) data showed that nationally, the ELL student population grew in representation from 8.7% in 2002-2003 to 9.2% in 2012-2013. The ELL student population has remained steady over the same time period in Texas, at around 15%, with the exception of 2007-2008, when ELL student representation dipped to 9.7%. Statistics on the number of teachers who are assigned to ELL classrooms, or who at least hold bilingual education certification, were difficult to find, and there is considerably less information that disaggregates the data along their demographic composition. Cortez (2003) cited NCES data from 2002, stating that of 1.3 million teachers, only 154,000 had eight hours or more of bilingual education preparation. A report by Aud, Hussar, Kena, Bianco, Frohlich, Kemp, & Tahan (2011) using NCES data showed that in 2007-2008, about 0.5% of 3.1 million public education teachers had a main teaching assignment in an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom; certification status and preparation were unreported.

All of these statistics pointed to the fact that while our teaching population has grown post-*Brown*, doubling between 1987 and 2007, it is still not growing at a rate

commensurate to student growth and keeps falling further behind in equitable representation (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012). Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas (2016) attributed the current shortage of teachers to a 35% drop nationally of enrollment in teacher preparation programs, despite a 20% increase in demand for teachers, and to low-attrition rates of teachers.

It is worth noting that, according to the demographic data, the combined number of "other" and Latino ethnic student populations are growing at a rapid rate. Each of these ethnic categories encompasses an abundance of bi- and trans-cultural and linguistic identities that point to a growing, critical need for teachers of every ethnicity to develop multicultural competencies. It is worth nothing that a report by National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force (NCDTF), published in 2004, stated the percentage of teachers of color was not expected to increase; this prediction was proven accurate according to the NCES data for 2011.

Research on Racial Matching/Parity and Representative Bureaucracy.

In the following section, I discuss the research literature on the second most cited reason for increasing teacher diversity: racial matching and parity between teachers and students. The most recent study on race-matching was conducted by Egalite, Kisida, and Winters (2015), who reasoned that if our nation is losing teachers of color, and research suggests that minority students benefit from these teachers, then this could contribute to the test score gaps among racial groups. The scholars obtained data from the Florida Department of Education to analyze student test scores spanning a seven-year period, from grades 3 through 10, in order to estimate student changes in achievement when they were placed in a classroom with a same-race teacher. When controlling for teacher and student characteristics, Egalite et al. (2015) found positive effects in reading scores of .004-.005 standard deviations (SD) for Black and White students, as well as .007-.041 SD gains in

math for Black, White and Asian/Pacific Islander students (Egalite et al., 2015). The authors found a negative effect for Hispanic students (-.011 SD reading and -.007 SD math) but stated that the significance of this finding was weak given the diversity of ethnic backgrounds and generational status encompassed by the Hispanic label, which made race-matching for this group questionable. This study was important as it showed that teachers of color had a positive impact when compared to White teachers who were ranked as being of the same quality.

The next study discussed explored the cost to White students of having teachers of color. Meiers, Wrinkle, and Polinard (1999) analyzed data from 350 multiracial Texas school districts to test representative bureaucracy theory: decisions that benefited the public were more likely to be made if the bureaucracy that made them was representative of the public. One supposition of policy outcomes is that the increase in representation of one group will redistribute the benefits in favor of that group, at a loss for another group. In other words, the authors wanted to test whether increases in the number of teachers of color resulted in academic gains for students of color at a cost for White students. The authors found that both minority and nonminority students benefited from this move toward more equitable teacher representation at no consequence to the White students, concluding that all students are better off (Meiers et al., 1999). In the next section, I explore the current educational reform context.

Effects of Current Reform on Teacher Recruitment and Retention

The aforementioned contradiction between claiming a desire to provide an equitable and just education, and establishing policies and practices with unintended consequences that inhibit this quest, continue to date. The education reform efforts that have emerged from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2001) have created significant barriers

for recruiting and retaining teachers of color (NCDTF, 2004; Ingersoll & May, 2011). Ravitch (2010) summarized the approach of NCLB as, "measure and punish," because the law inundated public schools with a slew of new accountability requirements and threatened non-performing schools with a reduction in funding and the possibility of restructuring or school closure. School funding across the nation became contingent upon a subjectively defined "adequate" tests scores and were required to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward 100% proficiency or risk closure (Valenzuela, 2005).

Unfortunately, in Texas and the United States, policy makers embarked on and continued along this path of testing and punitive accountability, while leaving the root issues, such as limited resources and inadequate teacher preparation and supports (Valenzuela, 2005). Scholars continued to speak out against this punitive system that was based on the assumption that a standardized test can be the sole and true measure of academic achievement and school success, through which teachers can be sorted and ranked, especially given that it does not take into account other measures of achievement as well as school factors (Darling-Hammond, 2012; La Vonne, Sleeter, & Kumashiro, 2014; Valenzuela, 2005).

The rhetoric of "high-quality" teachers was typically based on measures such as the type of certification, quality of the teacher education program attended, and years of teaching experience. However, components such as cultural competence and culturally responsive pedagogy were left out (NCDTF, 2004; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Villegas et al. 2012). According to a report by the NCDTF (2004), "although teacher quality has been accepted and internalized as a mantra for school reform, the imperative for diversity is often marginalized rather than accepted as central to the quality equation in teaching" (p. 3).

These small-scale qualitative studies focused on markers that were typically under utilized in rating school achievement, such as student attendance, discipline referrals, dropout rates, higher expectations, and cultural competence (NCDTF, 2004; Parker, 2008). These patterns of closing minority-serving schools and disproportionate firing of teachers of color was frighteningly reminiscent of school closures post-*Brown,* when these schools and their educators were deemed inferior to White schools (Parker, 2008).

Furthermore, the punitive nature of NCLB accountability did not take into consideration individual actors within a school, meaning that excellent teachers working in failing schools had to reapply for their jobs while failing teachers in excelling schools were kept (NCDTF, 2004; Villegas et al. 2012). These reform efforts continued to fail to implement policies to protect the positions held by teachers of color from disparaging effects. Ingersoll and May (2011) uncovered a 9.3% loss in the total number of teachers of color in 2003. The high attrition and turnover rates among teachers of color was partly attributed to the fact that they were more likely to work at schools that served predominantly minority, low-SES students. These schools were also most likely to experience restructuring and closure (Cannata, 2010; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Parker, 2008; Villegas et al. 2012). While proponents of NCLB accountability might argue these schools deserved to be closed, research has also shown that many minority-serving schools have been closed or restructured despite having a passing or acceptable academic status (Webber et al., 2014).

Moreover, teachers have been shown to prefer teaching in schools with students who match their economic and social backgrounds (Cannata, 2010). This means that teachers of color are most likely to work and stay in traditional schools with high-minority populations (Cannata, 2010; Ingersoll & May, 2011). Conversely, novice White teachers have been found to staff minority-serving schools, but are less likely to stay and more likely

to move on once they gain the experience necessary (Cannata, 2010; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2011; Jackson, 2009). Studies have shown this preference is not merely based on the economic or academic status of the student population but based on a racial preference by the teacher to work with students whose background matches theirs (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner, 2007).

One should be attentive when reviewing quantitative studies on teacher preferences, since they do have considerable limitations, which the researchers acknowledged impede measuring a true relationship, such as a lack of attention to sociocultural influences (Cannata, 2010; Hanushek et al., 2004). For example, Hanushek et al. (2004) conducted an empirical analysis in a Texas district to investigate the relationship between teacher mobility and district salary, as well as the relationship between teacher quality and pay using data from 1993-1996. They found that White and Hispanic teachers favored working with high achieving, nonminority students while Black teachers also favored high achievement but tended to sway toward working schools with higher black student populations (Hanushek et al., 2004). However, as argued throughout this paper, power relations exert a major influence on the dynamics between members of the dominant group and subordinate, racial minorities. Thus, these findings raised questions about how the authors used the term “preference,” and whether remaining in a certain school was truly a choice made by a teacher of color or one made for them. In other words, to what extent does workplace discrimination play a role in the recruitment, hiring, and firing practices of teachers of color in schools?

Sadly, the push to define, sort, and rank the characteristics and competencies of a quality teacher has gained increased support by policy-makers around the world (Becker, Kennedy, & Hundersmarck, 2003 as cited in Korthagen, 2004). As we continue to progress toward a globalized economy, and access to formal education is expanded, the question of

what makes a good teacher and good teaching has become a world-wide question (Day, Elliot, & Kington, 2005; Korthagen, 2004).

ALTERNATIVE CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGIES

As stated earlier, cultural synchronicity refers to the assumption that teachers of color have "insider knowledge" about students of color under the assumption they have similar cultures and backgrounds (Irvine, 1989, as cited in Ingersoll & May, 2011). Though this may not always be the case, nor does it mean that all teachers of color are critical, the growing body of research shows that having a teacher of color has positive effects on achievement for all students (Meiers, Wrinkle, & Polinard, 1999; Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015). The effects of multicultural and multilingual pedagogies on teachers of color have not been examined. Though these areas are conceptualized with students of color in mind, the underlying assumption here is that teachers of color would also benefit from schooling structures that integrate these essential tenets into the entirety of the educational pipeline.

Multicultural Education and Curricular Recognition

> This is not simply about trying to improve student learning, but more important, about reasserting who has a right to define what schools are for, whose knowledge has most legitimacy, and how the next generation should think about the social order and their place within it. (Sleeter & Stillman, 2005, p. 44).

The primary objective of multicultural education is to reform schooling policies and practices to achieve educational equality for students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social backgrounds (Banks, 2004). Multicultural education promotes an inclusive curriculum that examines institutionalized structures of power, privilege and oppression (Sleeter, 2002). In its earliest forms, multicultural education took the shape of ethnic studies during the schooling segregation era prior to the 1950s. It shifted during the Civil

Rights era toward intergroup education to address tensions between ethnic groups after desegregation, when the Black community and other marginalized groups sought to be included in the curriculum (Banks, 2004). Curriculum scholars agreed that implicated in the curriculum debates was the struggle to define the American national identity (Calderon, 2014; Sleeter & Stillman, 2005). Sleeter & Stillman (2005) cited scholars Kliebard (1995) and Bernstein & Soloman (1999) in arguing that in society, to control the curriculum is to control the consciousness of people.

Gary (2004) stated that multicultural education was more of a process than a product, requiring, "long-term investments of time and resources, and carefully planned and monitored actions" (p. 34). Nieto (2000) posited that multicultural education permeated schooling praxis, including the curriculum and instruction as well as interactions with students and parents. This served to further social justice democratic principles. However, Sleeter (2002) argued that as the standards-based reform movement has swept across the United States, so has the push to standardize the curriculum, further stifling attempts to create multicultural curriculum and pedagogies.

The literature on content integration is vast, containing exhaustive debates on what, how, and to what extent multicultural content should be included, though a historical perspective is viewed as an integral component (Banks, 2004). Villegas and Davis (2008) argued that even when teacher preparation programs built in a component to address student diversity, the program itself can still be focused on the preparation of White teachers, and "candidates of color are left to figure out on their own how best to use their cultural knowledge and life experiences in the classroom and schools" (p. 596). Value-oriented curriculum theories challenged hegemonic beliefs and assumptions underlining mainstream curriculum (Gary, 2004). According to Rodriguez (2012), "curricular

recognition considers the ways in which the knowledge and experiences of [sic] youth are affirmed, validated, and legitimized within the school context" (p. 8).

Bilingual and Multilingual Education

Discourse in bilingual education on linguistic and cultural diversity was often grounded on developing cross-cultural understanding and to a much lesser extent, on reclaiming language loss for a generational, non-indigenous students (May, 2008). Valenzuela (1999) stated that the view of generational, monolingual students as needing continuous socialization is a core irony of the subtractive schooling process. Building on Bratt Paulston (1994), Skutnabb (2009) stated, "When a language is 'dead', it needs revival; when it is 'dying', it needs reversal, and when it is 'neglected', it needs revitalization" (emphasis in original).

Language teaching is oftentimes viewed as a pedagogical practice meant to be offered in isolation within an ESL classroom, rather than viewed as an integral part of the school wide organizational identity, thus lacking in support within the wider policies and practices (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). Mohanty (2009) reminded that, "in a true multilingual system, all languages can have their legitimate place" (p. 6).

Policymakers, educators, and the broader mainstream community alike often contest the use of bilingual education in public schools in spite of fifty years of strong empirical research data from around the world that validates the use of this pedagogical model for both language majority and minority students (Cummins, 2013). Mohanty (2009) explained that around the world, the languages of marginalized people are discriminated against and weakened by, "gross social, educational, statutory, official and legal neglect" (p. 4). This neglect is further justified because these languages are perceived as being weak and inadequate. It is frequently argued that achieving fluency and literacy

in the socially dominant language is an imperative for minority students to achieve success, both academically and socially (Cummins, 2009). Unfortunately, well-intentioned parents who want to ensure their child's success will oftentimes support this argument without fully understanding the implications (Cummins, 2009).

While this opposition to the bilingual education of minority students is prevalent, the bilingual education of students who hold higher social status is framed as a necessity to ensure their success within our increasingly dependent globalized economy (Cummins, 2000, 2013; Valenzuela, 1999). This divergent ideology is reflective of existing power dynamics, and serves to maintain the domination of those who possess power and privilege while subordinating and denying ethnic minority students of their right to their language, culture, and identity (Cummins, 2000, 2013). Dual language models are beginning to gain wider acceptance and popularity because of their inclusion of language dominant student groups.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMING

This study draws from subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999) and additive schooling (Bartlett and Garcia, 2011) frameworks. Valenzuela (1999) and Bartlett and Garcia (2011) borrowed their terms from Cummins (1981, 1984, 1986), who developed theories on subtractive and additive bilingualism. In a subtractive bilingual program, the second language is developed at the expense of the first, while in an additive program, the second language is developed while still respecting and developing the first language. These schooling frameworks, however, draw attention to the unrelenting impact that structural forces exert on even an additive space.

Valenzuela's (1999) subtractive schooling framework emerged from a three-year ethnographic study that sought to examine the schooling orientations of Mexican

immigrant and generational Mexican American students. Specifically, the case study explored the impact of generational status on academic achievement and schooling orientation. Studies have shown that generational students, i.e. those born in the U.S. and are second- through fourth-generation, have lower academic outcomes and identify less with their school when compared to their immigrant peers (Matute-Bianchi, 1991; Ochoa, 2004, Ogbu, 1991; Olsen, 1997; Portes and Zhou, 2012; Suárez-Orozco, 1991; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2009).

Valenzuela conducted her study in a high school located in Houston, TX, that served an almost entirely Latina/o student population, the majority of Mexican origin. She also found this pattern of underachievement and schooling disengagement among regular-track Mexican American students when compared to Mexican immigrant students. Immigration status was a defining factor. Similar to the previous studies cited, Valenzuela found a sense of alienation and disempowerment among Mexican American students. Upon further analysis of schooling policies and practices, as well as student relationships with teachers and peers, Valenzuela uncovered that schools were systemically organized in ways that divested students of their cultural and linguistic wealth. The English as a second language program, in particular, served as a conduit for the dispossession of language and as a social marker for teachers and students. Spanish language fluency was used as a marker to form student groups and in deciding the courses students were tracked into, serving to reinforce perceived differences between students along generational status.

Bartlett and Garcia (2011) offered an alternative narrative through their four-year ethnographic study of a newcomer high school located in New York, NY, that served a predominately Dominican student population. They defined additive schooling as, "an approach that builds on and extends the social, cultural, and linguistic assets brought by multilingual, diverse student populations, and aims to prepare bicultural and bilingual

students to negotiate their complex worlds" (p. 21). Using a dynamic bilingual approach that rejected linear models of language acquisition, and that accounted for the students' language practices and context, the school offered a nurturing and rigorous education that employed a culturally relevant curriculum.

This school only served twenty students and the study had six focal students, offering detail-rich accounts of the impact of this approach that centered and honored its students' culture, language, family, and community while providing them with the academic support to develop bilingualism and biliteracy. Bartlett and Garcia (2011) suggested that part of the success of the school rested on the homogeneity of the student body and teacher population, which facilitated the creation of an affirming schooling context and that allowed for authentic relationships to develop. This study also chronicled the unrelenting pressure placed on the school by the overarching subtractive structural forces of our education system, i.e. a system that draws on discourse of accountability to drive oppressive standardized testing mandates.

Further, one of the greatest downsides to a newcomer structure, that is, a school that only serves recently arrived immigrant students, is that students are highly segregated. The authors found this diminished any opportunity for the students to interact with other student groups, reinforcing negative stereotypes students might harbor toward other ethnicities. Through my own research on a newcomer high school, I found that this segregation had a much more dire impact on the students who had few to no opportunities to expand their peer networks and social capital, leaving their deficit-minded teachers as the primary gatekeepers of the knowledge they needed to understand their new land (Rubio, 2012). Further, while the school Bartlett and Garcia studied boasted a high graduation rate, few of the students were able to pursue a secondary education given social and economic realities.

In establishing Academia Cuauhtli, we utilized an additive framework to build the components, drawing on our teachers' funds of knowledge (González, N., Neff, D., Amanti, C., & Moll, L., 2006) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). One of the aims of this study was to understand the extent to which Cuauhtli teachers were allowed to explore and utilize their own social, cultural, and linguistic assets as students and now teachers. Even when a teacher engages in critical pedagogy and subversive practices, they are still limited by structural forces, such as standardized testing and assessment requirements for bilingual students. Both of these frameworks were useful for understanding and discussing the impact of subtractive structural forces experienced by teachers in this study as bilingual students, as dual-language teachers, and now as Cuauhtli teachers. It also helped in understanding the impact of high-stakes standardized testing and mandated language and reading assessments for bilingual students.

Further, I utilized the critical work of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000) to offer more depth in discussing the pedagogical underpinnings driving the work of Cuauhtli teachers within the program and in their respective traditional schools. Freire argued that systems of oppression deny those who are oppressed their humanity, which can only be regained through the struggle for liberation. Systems of oppression are structured in ways that impact the consciousness of the oppressor and the oppressed; ignorance, including the lack of critical thinking skills, of the oppressed is key to maintaining the system of oppression. Therefore, those who are oppressed and seek liberation must develop critical consciousness, which entails critical reflection and action.

Freire's theories on education called for the creation of educational systems by the oppressed, for the oppressed to drive their own liberation. Among the educational concepts Freire introduced were the banking system and problem posing education. He explained, "in the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider

themselves knowledgeable upon those who they consider to know nothing." However, under problem-posing education, teachers are also students and students are also teachers; the aim is to develop critical thinkers.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

The key implication of this work is that teachers of color are in great need of support at every phase: recruitment, retention, and attrition. They have survived a subtractive schooling system from the time they are students to the time they re-enter as professionals and throughout the length of their careers. Even with the multiple, institutionalized ways in which teachers of color are pushed out, those who can, fight to stay. The experiences they bring with them into the classroom cannot be understood by compartmentalizing their schooling experience from primary school through teacher preparation programs, but rather, their experiences need to be viewed holistically. The eradication of knowledge by eliminating teachers is historically grounded and evident throughout the statistics on the number of teachers of color lost during reform eras that continues to date. This has led to students of color not having teachers that look like them, sound like them, that can relate to their experiences, or show them how to survive a world not built for them. Likewise, teachers of color had to survived these same experiences in higher education and teacher preparation.

Chapter 3: Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how veteran, Latina/o, dual-language teachers have understood and coped with their own subtractive schooling experiences as students and professionals, and to examine critical learnings that have result from their participation in an additive schooling space. The research questions guiding this study were: what are the personal and professional subtractive schooling experiences that led these teachers to this additive space, and what impact has this additive space had on their pedagogical practice? In the following chapter, I provide a description of the research methodology and design. The section on research design includes a detailed description of the participants, data collection instruments and procedures, and data analysis followed by the researcher positionality and conclusion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilized qualitative research methods. A qualitative design facilitated the study of issues in a manner that is in-depth and detailed, while allowing data collection to occur in a setting that is natural and comfortable for the participants (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). The setting, the people, the interactions, and the relationship with the researcher within the space of Academia Cuauhtli was critical to understanding the prior experiences teachers bring with them and the evolution of their understanding of these experiences.

Qualitative research is a "situated activity" where the observer "makes the world visible" through interpretive practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In qualitative research, the researcher is the measuring instrument that is used to provide in-depth, detailed information or descriptions of the research subject and allows for the findings to emerge naturally, without fixed expectations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002). Unlike

quantitative methods, "approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry" (Patton, 2002). Further, the researcher attempts to make sense of or interpret findings, "in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3).

The primary methods for gathering data were through the oral life histories of the teachers. These were gathered through in-depth interviews to allow the researcher to focus on the past and determine how things evolved to what they are today (Mertens, 2010). It also allowed the researcher to understand the meaning Cuauhtli teachers place on their lived experience in and out of Academia Cuauhtli.

Quality in Qualitative Research

In order to safeguard the quality of this qualitative research, the researcher observed the relevant criteria listed by Mertens (2010): credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and transformative. Credibility addresses internal validity through prolonged and persistent engagement, member checking and peer debriefing, progressive subjectivity and triangulation (Mertens, 2010). Prolonged and persistent engagement refers to the need for the researcher to be exposed to the phenomenon long enough to obtain a full and accurate picture; however, it is not necessary to stay at a site past the point where, "examples are repeating instead of extending" the themes (Mertens, 2010, p. 257). Member checking is the practice of seeking verification from participants about the evolving constructs that emerge from the data. Peer debriefing is the practice of discussing findings, conclusions, analysis, and hypothesis with a critical peer who can talk back to the research (Mertens, 2010). Discussing with a peer and listening to the questions and feedback they pose helps the researcher to confront the effects of their own values on the research process, as well as forces the researcher to address any conflicts or contradictions. My long-standing

professional ties with this community of bilingual and dual language educators facilitated my access to ensure prolonged engagement, member checking, and peer debriefing. Member checks and debriefing occurred on a one-on-one basis with individual participants in this study.

Given that the researcher is an instrument in the study, the researcher needs to be observant of their own progressive subjectivity and positionality (Mertens, 2010; Patton, 2002). That is, the researcher should document the way they change and develop constructs throughout the process of the study in order to challenge their own biases and to investigate how their understanding has progressed. I kept a personal journal to document my experiences throughout the research process.

Triangulation is the checking of information through different data sources or methods in order to ensure consistency of the findings (Mertens, 2010; Patton, 2002). I did not use the additional observations and document collection as fact checks. Rather, the purpose was to build a more detailed picture of how the participants were engaging and experiencing the additive schooling space, Academia Cuauhtli.

The next criterion, transferability, means that the researcher needs to provide the findings in a way that is sufficiently rich and detailed enough to enable the reader to make, "judgments based on similarities and differences when comparing the research situation to their own" (p. 259). It is the researcher's responsibility to provide extensive descriptions but, ultimately, it is up to the reader to decide the applicability of the research to their own context (Mertens, 2010).

The criterion on dependability refers to the act of auditing the inquiry process for quality and appropriateness (Mertens, 2010). As patterns emerge, it may be necessary to modify research strategies. Confirmability addresses the need to minimize the influence of the researcher's judgment by ensuring the logic used to interpret the data can be confirmed

by a peer (Mertens, 2010). The final transformative criterion is, "situated concerns for social justice and human rights" (Mertens, 2010, p. 260). This includes considerations on fairness, authenticity, and attention to voice (Mertens, 2010).

RESEARCH DESIGN

The primary source of data for this study were two in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interviews with each participant. I also conducted informal ethnographic and participant observations in the Academia Cuauhtli classroom and collected document archival data. In the following sections, I provide more detailed information about the design of the study.

Participants

The participants for this study were chosen through a purposeful group sampling method. Patton (2002) explained that purposeful group sampling allows for the selection of information-rich cases whose examination will best illuminate the study questions. This sampling technique was appropriate since the interest of this study was to examine the experience of teachers who sought out and participated in an additive schooling space, Academia Cuauhtli. The selection criteria for participants in the study was limited to Cuauhtli teachers who were otherwise full-time bilingual and dual language faculty, with at least three years of teaching experience in their own respective AISD elementary classrooms. Participation in this study was limited to those who have taught at least three Saturday classes since the inauguration of Academia Cuauhtli, January 2015. Year one ran from January through May 2015 and year two ran October 2015 through April 2016. This criterion was set to ensure that the participants had the opportunity to experience

implementing the culturally relevant curriculum, meaning that they had the opportunity to engage their pedagogical practice.

Since the inauguration, approximately 14 teachers have participated in varying degrees and capacities: 8 in year one and 6 in year two. For example, some teachers have attended training sessions, meetings, and field trips, but only taught one Saturday course. There were teachers who taught numerous classes in year one but were unable to teach in year two due to other commitments. However, they remained active in the program in other ways, such as offering feedback on the upcoming scope and sequence of the curriculum, by attending important events and field trips, by helping with curriculum development, or by leading the parent academy portion of the program.

Further, there were only three teaching slots available each Saturday, and the sign-up sheet was made available online for teachers to self-assign classes. The first year, there was a healthy distribution with many signing up to teach approximately 2 to 3 Saturdays each. The second year, a few of the new teachers filled up most of the slots early, further limiting others' opportunities to teach. The program's low capacity and the varying degrees of participation in the program limited the overall subject population from which to choose. However, the smaller pool also allowed for more in-depth inquiry (Patton, 2002).

It is important to state that the teachers who offered instruction in Academia Cuauhtli were selected through snowball sampling. They were recommended as valuable by different informants and well-situated people (Patton, 2002), such as their peers (other master teachers) or by administrators from the district's bilingual education department. These Cuauhtli teachers were recommended and invited to participate in the program on the basis of their known efficacy as bilingual or dual language elementary school teachers. Participation in the program was voluntary but paid for by the district. However, as I recall,

the teachers from the first year eagerly signed up to participate prior to the district offering to pay for their hours; they were willing to teach for free.

The Cuauhtli teachers came from diverse personal and professional experiences. There were teachers who had generational roots in the community, while others migrated from other cities in Texas or immigrated from another country. Of those who were from immigrant backgrounds, some arrived in the country as infants, while others came as adults. Some had taught for nearly two decades, while others had less than five years' experience. There were those who entered the teaching profession early on, and there were those for whom teaching was their second or third career. There were teachers who entered the teaching profession through a teacher certification program, while others went the traditional route. In Academia Cuauhtli, there was a high representation of teachers who were typically underrepresented in traditional schools, such as male teachers[2] and teachers with master's degrees. I t was this diversity in backgrounds and experiences that I found most appealing: that so many different paths led us to this shared journey. There is clearly something of great interest and value in Academia Cuauhtli that brought each person here and merits investigation.

Thirteen Cuauhtli teachers fit the participant requirements during the recruitment period of this study; four of these teachers were unavailable. Nine teachers participated in this study. Five of the participants were interviewed twice, while the other four were only interviewed once. The four participants who were only interviewed once were immersed in the conversation, and I did not want to stop them. Over the course of approximately an hour and a half, they discussed all of the questions that were included in the second

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[2] Latino male teachers represent less than 2% of the overall teacher population nationally (White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 2016). Yet, 6 out of the 14 Cuauhtli teachers are Latino males.

interview protocol. All of the participants were contacted in person, over the phone, or through email for follow-up and member checks.

Qualitative research is ambiguous and fluid in nature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Patton, 2002). While this allows for in-depth examination, it also limits the sample size and brings into question the generalizability of the findings. Patton (2002) stated that the sample size for a qualitative study should not be determined and judged in comparison to sample sizes ordinarily seen in quantitative probability sampling but, rather, by the purpose and rationale of the study. Since the purpose of this study was not to generalize from the sample of Cuauhtli teachers, but to gain a deeper understanding about the essence of teacher schooling experiences, the sample size of nine allowed for in-depth examination.

Data Collection Instruments & Procedures

Interview data collection began October 2016 and concluded February 2017. A total of 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted. I also conducted ethnographic observations in the Academia Cuauhtli classroom, and collected documents. These multiple types of data allowed for triangulation and validity checks. That is, they were meant to test the consistency across the findings. This study obtained approval by The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Austin Independent School District, department of research and evaluation.

Cuauhtli teachers were told through informal conversations and announcements at meetings about this study, and verbally agreed to participate. Formal requests for participation were made in person during events, meetings, or Cuauhtli class, at which time consent forms were shared, reviewed, and collected. They were also contacted and given a copy of the IRB approval and the consent form for their records through email (Appendix

D). I obtained a signed consent form from each participant and made individual arrangements to schedule the interviews.

The participants were interviewed during the Fall 2016 semester. The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended (Appendix E). The interview questions were formatted to address the research purpose and were informed by relevant literature. Participants were interviewed individually, outside of instructional hours, and at a time and place that was convenient and comfortable for them. They were given the option of conducting the interview in a private room at the ESB-MACC, in their regular AISD classroom, or any other location, with the only stipulation being that it was quiet enough for voice recording. Participants were asked for permission to digitally voice record their individual interviews, which lasted approximately one hour.

Ethnographic observations occurred during the Saturday program and during meetings pertaining to the work of the teachers and Nuestro Grupo. The observations were informal. Document collection included non-confidential materials and archival data that emerged from these classes and meetings (e.g. minutes, curriculum, workshop activities, etc.). The observation and document materials were meant to capture the ways in which the participants were engaging and implementing the program curriculum and materials.

Data Analysis

According to Mertens (2010), the first phase in qualitative data analysis is to organize and transcribe the data that has been gathered. By participating in the process of transcribing the interviews and focus group, the researcher gains the opportunity to actively engage and interact with the materials in a more intensive way than one would by simply reading a transcript (Hesse-Biber, & Leavy, 2006; Mertens, 2010). Transcribing also

allows the researcher to “take care of practical considerations” (p. 424) such as organizing and labeling the materials in a way that facilitates the data analysis (Mertens, 2010).

The next two phases, data exploration and data reduction, need to be considered simultaneously by the researcher (Mertens, 2010). In other words, as the researcher examines the data, they should also look for ways to reduce and condense the data into a format that is manageable and appropriate for reporting. Data reduction occurs through the process of coding, which essentially labels excerpts of data that are conceptually similar; they fall into similar categories or coding schemes (Mertens, 2010; Patton, 2002). The coding schemes should be analyzed for connections and relations to develop themes (Mertens, 2010; Patton, 2002). The themes are further organized and interpreted based on the study’s theoretical framework (Charmaz, 2006; Mertens, 2010). The theoretical framework that guides this study is additive schooling in subtractive contexts. The data were coded first by hand, then electronically using the qualitative analysis software MaxQDA.

Positionality

> Epistemological concerns in schools are inseparable from cultural hegemonic domination in educational research. The way educational research is conducted contributes significantly to what happens (or does not happen) in schools. (Delgado-Bernal, 1998, p. 556)

In order to remove restrictions placed by these hegemonic structures on my research and resist epistemological racism, I acknowledge my Chicana epistemology and the cultural intuition that guides my work. My lived and professional experiences as a Mexican, immigrant woman have shaped my understanding and vested interest in education research and, particularly, my focus on dual-language and bilingual Latina/o teachers and teacher education policy.

Chapter 4: Participant Biographical Sketches

Thirteen Cuauhtli teachers fit the participant requirements at the time of this study. I was unable to coordinate interviews with four of the teachers who were not as active in the program this year for various reasons. They are still active advocates and supporters of Academia Cuauhtli who continued to attend meetings and events as they were able. As such, their voices were still present and informed this study.

I conducted a total of 14 interviews with nine participants. Five of the participants were interviewed twice. Four participants were immersed in the conversation and wanted to continue the discussion; they were only interviewed once for approximately an hour and a half each and completed both sets of interview questions. All of the participants were contacted in person to ensure they did not have any lingering thoughts or follow up comments and for member checks.

Academia Cuauhtli hosts numerous events and meetings geared explicitly towards the teachers throughout the year, both for program planning and professional development. These are scheduled on the weekends: Friday evenings, Saturdays, and/or Sundays. Attending requires an immense time commitment from the teachers who also have families and work responsibilities related to their regular teaching jobs. Understandably, attendance is unpredictable and typically begins to wane throughout the academic year. This is especially true in the spring semester when the workload associated with standardized testing starts to overwhelm both teachers and students. Thus, a formal focus group as proposed was scheduled during the end-of-the-year teacher retreat in the spring, but was not conducted given that only three of the study participant teachers attended. Further, the teachers were engaged in an in-depth discussion with a guest lecturer; it did not make sense to derail this enriched learning opportunity. Instead, group discussions were collected

throughout the year at teacher meetings that commenced with *flor y canto* that included reflections on the program, that is, "what does Cuauhtli mean to you?"

While the primary focus of this study was Latina/o teachers, I found it difficult to exclude George, an Anglo male, who had been a part of Cuauhtli since the beginning. George was rooted in the Latino community and Spanish language the entirety of his life, forging authentic connections seeded in mutual trust and respect. He demonstrated a deep commitment to his students and parents, both from his traditional school and Academia Cuauhtli. He readily acknowledged his White male privilege and respectfully withheld his opinions, opting to allow others to speak first and interjecting only to offer his expert advice when asked. Like the rest of our Cuauhtli teachers, he was highly esteemed by the students, parents, peers, and Nuestro Grupo members.

For the sake of transparency, I must share that I conducted research at the newcomer high school that Valeria attended for my masters thesis, albeit, a few years after her time there, 2011-2012. The study was about immigrant student adaptation, focused on examining the impact of this school model from the perspective of the students. I conducted formal observations of this school and knew many of the educators she referenced. Thus, I had a nuanced understanding about much of what Valeria shared about her experiences at this school. This insider, expert knowledge of the student experiences allowed me to ask deeper probing questions about her experiences there. This was a conversation that has continued long past this interview. Valeria's own understanding, her own interpretation of these events has changed over time with the knowledge I have since shared with her.

Overview

The participants' years of teaching experience ranged from three to fifteen years. They taught various grade levels, from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade, dual-language. Two of the participants had transitioned from teaching into library science; they were librarians in their respective schools. Eight of the nine participants were Latina/o, and one was and Anglo teacher; seven participants were female and two were male. Two participants were unavailable for the second interview. Their journeys into teaching varied, as did their generational and immigration status. A number of the participants in this study were Proyecto Maestría graduates.

The opening interview question instructed participants to tell their stories, beginning where they saw most fit. Some responded by introducing their parents' or grandparents' stories, while others chose to start at the beginning of their schooling experience. Thus, the richness in descriptions varied by participant though the same general information was collected, such how many siblings they had, what was their parents' educational attainment, etc. Below are the participant biographies listed in alphabetical order by their pseudonyms. Table 2 contains a summary of biographical information for each Cuauhtli teacher.

Pseudonym	Ethnicity/ Self-Identify	Hometown	Generation Status	Teaching Experience
Bella	Mexican American	South Texas Border	3rd Gen.	9 years; Various careers then certification route; Proyecto Maestría Graduate
Dahlia	Mexican American	South Texas Border	2nd Gen.	4 years teaching; 6 years as a librarian
Damaris	Mexican	Central Texas	1st Gen.	4 years; certification route; master's degree
George	Anglo	Central Texas	Texan	14 years; Proyecto Maestría Graduate
Linda	Mexican American	West Texas Border	1st Gen.	10 years; GYO grad; working on a master's
Miguel	Mexican	Durango, MX	Migrated as an adult	10 years; taught in MX; Proyecto Maestría Graduate
Micaela	Salvadorian	Montreal, Canada	Refugee	6 years; Master's degree; taught in CAN
Sabrina	Mexican American	Mexico City, MX	1.5 Gen.; Migrated in 1983, 3rd grade	11 years teaching; 4 years as a librarian; Master's Degree
Valeria	Salvadorian	Cara Sucia, El Salvador	1.5 Generation; Migrated in 2004, 9th grade	3 years teaching

Table 2: Study participants biographical information.

BELLA

Bella is a third-generation, Mexican American, born and raised in a border town in South Texas. She attended public school in the 1970s when bilingual education was not offered in her school; English-only schooling. Her great-grandparents and grandparents were farmhands in a tiny agricultural community in Southern Texas. Her mother obtained a high school diploma and was able to secure work as a social worker while her father

dropped out of middle school and worked as a salesman. She is the middle child and has five brothers who obtained a mixed level of education. Bella often spoke about the impact her parents' and brothers' schooling experiences had on her own educational and professional journey. She readily wore her heart on her sleeve, so to speak, finding it important to be vulnerable and share her own family's experiences with her students and parents. She felt this helped her establish an authentic connection with the families while providing them with hope and encouragement that mobility out of poverty was possible.

Bella attended the University of Texas at Austin as an undergrad. She pursued a number of professional careers before entering the teaching profession including working for the first Latina Texas senator and a financial analyst in California. Bella wanted to travel abroad and improve her Spanish fluency so she sought out a teaching job in Spain for two years where her love of teaching was cemented through this experience. She frequently mentioned these professional experiences afforded her the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of colleagues and friends—she cherished this diversity. Upon her return to Laredo, Bella began teaching English as a Second Language to adult learners at the local university. She obtained her teaching certification and has been teaching science for the past nine years. Bella was a Proyecto Maestría graduate and was involved in the development of the Tejano History curriculum. She was recruited by a fellow graduate to participate in Academia Cuauhtli during the initial planning of the program.

DAHLIA

Dahlia was born and raised in a small border town in South Texas and is a second-generation Mexican American. Around the time she started attending elementary school, her parents divorced, leaving her mother to raise her and her younger sister and brother alone. Dahlia's mother worked multiple jobs to provide for her family and leaned on the

support of her family, community, and school, which was not always available. Dahlia shared that her mother often had to resort to dropping them off at school at 6:30 in the morning and would work until late, which made it impossible for her mom to be available to engage in her children's schooling activities. Regardless, her mother maintained high academic expectations of her children, which included attending college.

As Dahlia grew older, she began taking on more responsibility over watching her younger siblings and with helping them with their schooling. This was a lot of responsibility on Dahlia, who would fall asleep in class and miss out on submitting her homework. Still, she describes her elementary schooling experience as mostly positive and was able to name all of her teachers. She was enrolled in a bilingual classroom until third grade and tested into the gifted and talented program in sixth grade. This transition was difficult for Dahlia since she was no longer in a classroom with her friends. She reported not making friends until high school, where her cousins were enrolled and she was once again surrounded with the friends she had grown up with.

Dahlia shared that throughout the entirety of her public education, she obtained high grades, made the honor roll yearly, was enrolled in gifted and talented programs, obtained numerous academic awards, and ranked high in her class. Despite these labels, she stated that she did not have the academic skills necessary for college. She enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin, "I don't hate [my public school teachers] but I wasn't prepared… [my friend and I] were the smart ones." Dahlia was ranked number ten and her friend was ranked fourth in their graduating class. Dahlia struggled to reconcile her positive public schooling experience, which she solely described in terms of positive relationships with her teachers, with her lack of academic preparation for college.

Early in her college experience, she mostly sought friends who were also from her hometown and, later, was drawn to making friends from diverse backgrounds. She relied

on a scholarship and financial aid to fund her schooling and maintained good grades. Inspired by numerous relatives who were teachers, she decided to pursue a teaching degree. However, she did not have much to say about her experiences in the teacher preparation program. Her mother and step father helped when they could but she knew she needed to be able to sustain her expenses on her own. Her single mother would ask her children to help her balance her checkbook, thus, she had gained the financially literacy she needed at an early age.

Dahlia did not want to become a bilingual education teacher and struggled to find a job upon graduating with a degree in applied learning and development. She worked at a movie theater her first year out of college. That year, she was recommended for a teaching position by a coworker's mom. She began teaching that fall, nine weeks into the semester, while she also worked towards obtaining the required bilingual certification. Dahlia explained that she did not want to remain the classroom because of the bureaucratic hurdles associated with teaching in a bilingual classroom, namely, the extensive standardized and language proficiency testing. She was a first and second grade teacher for four years, while she worked towards obtaining her master's degree to become a librarian. She has been an elementary school librarian for six years.

DAMARIS

Damaris' parents migrated from Mexico in the 80s and met in Central Texas where they built a home and a life together. Damaris is the oldest of two daughters and currently teaches pre-kindergarten. She holds two bachelor degrees from the University of Texas at Austin in Latin American Studies and Spanish, minor in business. As an undergrad, she began assisting her favorite elementary teacher in order to accrue required volunteer hours. She greatly enjoyed this experience and decided to return to the university to obtain her

teaching certification. She never imagined she would end up teaching the youngest of students but has been completely committed to them for the past 6 years. Damaris has a master's degree from Concordia and is interested in obtaining a doctoral degree. Damaris was recruited to participate in Cuauhtli by George who had met her when he went to observe a student teacher assigned to her classroom.

GEORGE

George and his twin brother were born in an urban city in central Texas to young parents. George's father and grandfather were photographers, and his mother a stay-at-home wife who also assisted in her husband's business. When the brothers were four years old, their parents decided to move to a small, rural town, partly so the boys could attend a smaller school district. He explained that he grew up in a small town of farmers and ranchers, a segregated community where sports run deep. There was also an eclectic mix of professionals who commuted to the nearby urban city and retirees who sought peaceful living near the lake. The African American, Mexican American, and immigrant communities were located essentially, "on the other side of the tracks." He recalled that each group would stick together under social circumstances; however, he took notice that they were often grouped and isolated in the classroom, e.g. bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms.

George shared that his early elementary schooling experience was difficult and had an impact that remains to this day:

> I was in reading recovery in second grade…and it was a pretty negative experience that shaped a lot of my attitudes towards school, which were never very positive, I never had a very positive academic identity really, then even now, as a student, I don't feel like a natural student. I don't feel very comfortable in classrooms generally and I think a lot of that comes from my early experiences struggling as a student. (George, personal communication, February 27, 2017).

His third grade teacher, however, was more inspiring. He explained that he wouldn't necessarily describe her as nice nor the work easy, but he took note of the way she seemed authentically interested and invested in her students. Outside of school, George and his brother spent most of their time growing up playing sports. He described sports as, "the exception to the segregation," where interaction among the diverse groups was common. In soccer, he was surrounded by peers who spoke Spanish, to a degree prompting his desire to learn the language. George also shared they were financially well-off during the time he was in elementary school.

This changed when he entered middle school, following his parents divorced. His mother, who had dropped out of high school when she became pregnant with the boys, decided to obtain her General Educational Development (GED) degree and continue on to college for her teaching degree. She started teaching English and ESL at George's high school when he was in eleventh grade. George described this as an interesting experience, not only because he would often cross paths with his mom in school, but also because it afforded him an opportunity to interact with the Spanish-speaking students, those who were isolated and segregated into these classrooms. This was also a time of great financial struggle for his family since their father became absent in their lives and did not help to financially support the children.

In terms of race relations, George felt that the adults chose to have a colorblind approach, but the students were much more aware of the differences and separations. He would not necessarily describe it as an obvious tension among students but shared a few instances where there was bullying or fighting between the different student groups, "ropers (cowboy White kids) versus the Black kids." However, in the eyes of the adults, "race didn't really factor in, even if it did." He also stated there was never any constructive conversations around the topic. For example, he explained that when learning about the

Civil Rights Movement and Martin Luther King, Jr., it was presented through a post-racial narrative: "this is how we got over racism… [there] use to be all this racism and then the civil rights movements [happened] in the 60s and all that's over now" (George, personal communication, February 27, 2017).

In college, he majored in English literature and Spanish. Throughout his schooling he felt inspired to become a teacher by his mother, his third grade teacher, and personal schooling experiences: "I would always think in class when I was bored, 'what would I do if I was a teacher here? How would I make this class interesting?'" (George, personal communication, February 27, 2017). However, George did not seriously consider becoming a teacher until after completing his college degree. He explained that going through the alternative certification route was relatively easy and fast since all you needed was a, "pulse and a college degree." In hindsight, he felt it would have been better to attend a teacher preparation program. George became a bilingual education teacher for prekindergarten and kindergarten.

George had tentative plans to return to school and obtain a master's degree. His principal at the time received an email about Proyecto Maestría and suggested that he apply. He described the program as transformative; it was through this program that he finally acquired the language to articulate and develop his thoughts around topics such as race and ethnicity, culturally relevant pedagogy, deficit ideology, etc. George has been teaching for fourteen years. George was invited by Julia to participate in Academia Cuauhtli.

LINDA

Linda is a first-generation, Mexican American, born in a border town in West Texas along with her younger brother. Her father obtained a university degree in Mexico and

began working as a sales representative for a company that relocated him and his wife to the U.S. side of the border. Her mother completed high school and worked for an insurance company. She shared fond memories of regularly crossing the border to visit extended family and to spend time with her cousins and maternal grandmother, who was an elementary school teacher.

Linda pointed out that both literal and figurative border-crossing (Anzaldua, 2012) were a common occurrence. She, however, was not always aware of it: “I don’t know that I ever realized that I was speaking two languages” (Linda, personal communication, December 10, 2016). This was first brought to her attention after a friend’s father asked her a question in Spanish and corrected her for responding in English. This made her more cognizant of her language use.

Linda was enrolled in English-only classrooms but remembers the excitement she felt after seeing an English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom when she was in third grade:

> Just the fact that they were speaking Spanish [in an ESL class], I thought that that was so awesome! And it was so exciting, and I remember going to recess that day and telling my friends, “oh did you know that in that class they get to talk Spanish! Isn’t that so cool?” And they said, “Oh you don’t want to be in that class. That class is for the Mexicans.” [I thought], “oh, well, I am Mexican…” I was so proud and excited about it and then I felt like I had to hide [who I was]. (Linda, personal communication, December 10, 2016)

This was a moment that Linda admitted had a lasting impact on her identity. She internalized the idea that being Mexican and speaking Spanish was “bad” and increasingly focused on fitting in by assimilating. She shared another time when asked in an assignment who her favorite artists were and what her favorite food was. Instead of answering “Luis Miguel and *tamales*,” she responded with “Boyz II Men and pizza.”

She also felt contention when it came to her name. Linda shares her mother's first name so her family called her by her middle name to avoid confusion. Within school, however, she explained, "there was just something about the name that didn't fit me in that space because I would look around and I would see different [girls with my middle name] and they were blonde-haired, blue-eyed… I don't know, it felt different" (Linda, personal communication, December 10, 2016). On the first day of school in first grade, her teacher gave her the option during roll call, "what do you want to go by?" She describes this as a vivid moment of feeling empowered and proud. Unfortunately, despite attending schools that served a majority-minority student population, most of her teachers were White and commonly mispronounced her name.

Around the time that Linda was entering middle school, her father's job was relocated to California, at which point, her mother decided to return to college and obtained a teaching degree. She described middle school as a difficult time in her life, another instance where she felt overly concerned about fitting in. In school, she was placed in B-track, known by the students as the "Mexican track." She was also given by her math teacher the, "least likely to work in McDonald's award." It did not strike her, in that moment, as a micro-aggression, instead feeling excited that her teacher had thought of her. Today, she can't help but wonder what that teacher thought of the rest of the students.

She could not recall having a single Latina/o teacher throughout her public schooling experience:

> I think that was one of the reasons why [I felt] I need to be in the classroom. I need to work with these kids so that they can see themselves and I can give them, hopefully, some insights, some culture, some *orgullo* (pride), something to be proud of and to look forward to. (Linda, personal communication, December 10, 2016).

She also shared that, once in high school, most of her peers in her advanced placement courses were usually White. There weren't any particular moments in high school that stood out. For the most part, she described her teachers as nice, though she could not recall the names of any who played a crucial role in her development during this time.

Throughout most of her life, her father had stated that Linda would be attending the "best college" and become a doctor. This was the expectation that helped her push through to try and figure out the college and financial aid application process. Linda attended a state college in California a few hours away from her home, where she majored in pre-med. This was a difficult experience, partly because she felt home sick. Linda admitted, however, that not being accepted into an honors program at this college and having to work in the cafeteria also added to her feelings of isolation and lack of fit. She decided not to return for sophomore year, "plus I had spent pretty much all of my scholarship money and I thought, how am I going to pay for this? This is crazy, I can't do this."

Linda transferred to a junior college her sophomore year. She was struggling with her pre-med courses so she began considering alternatives. Inspired by a good teacher in high school, she decided to major in history. She ultimately transferred to Cal State Sacramento, where her future husband was also studying, and ultimately decided to obtain a teaching degree. It is important to note this teacher program is a part of the National Latino/a Education Research and Policy Project (NLERAP), a "grow your own" teacher initiative. She and her husband later decided to move to Austin, his hometown. She had become aware of Cuauhtli through the NLERAP network and sought out Randy to ask about participating.

MIGUEL

Miguel was born and raised in a small rural town outside of Durango, MX, where his parents were also born and raised. He is the oldest of six, three brothers and two sisters, leaving him with the responsibility of looking out for his younger siblings. Miguel shared that this responsibility made him a very cautious person who does not like risk taking, a quality that is quite evident in his pensive demeanor. His father was the only school teacher in their hometown for many years and, as such, a staple of the community; he taught grades first through sixth.

Upon completing sixth grade, Miguel had to move to the next closest town, which was two hours away, to attend middle school. He moved in with a family that offered room boarding to students like him. These were complete strangers to Miguel. He would hitch a ride with people who traveled to his hometown on the weekends to sell items to the local miners. Miguel described this year in middle school as a time in his life when he was most focused on survival and began acting out in the classroom: “I think it was my way to take revenge, to take control back because I had been kind of oppressed by society and I wanted to do something to rebel.” He then moved to the city of Durango, where he attended a Catholic seminary that offered inexpensive tuition and boarding. Here, he completed three years of high school and four years of college-level work studying philosophy. He began working as a teacher in his mid-twenties but never remained long in a single town.

In 1993, at the age of 30, he legally migrated to the U.S. and, shortly after, met his wife and had two daughters. Miguel acknowledged that his legal status was a privilege afforded to him because of his education and an opportunity not often extended to many members of his community. Unfortunately, his teaching certifications did not transfer and he found himself working at a local grocery store and as a custodian in the elementary school his daughter attended.

His oldest daughter's teacher often invited parents to visit the classroom to lead a "read-out-loud" with the students. The teacher was pleasantly surprised by Miguel's teaching skills and the ease with which he interacted with the students. This teacher encouraged Miguel to continue pursuing other avenues into the classroom and helped him apply to become a bilingual substitute teacher. Through the connections he made in the district, he learned about a teaching program at Texas State University that offered full-tuition scholarships. Before he could apply, he attended two years of courses at the university to learn English. After six years of commuting to the university, working nights, and fitting in sleep and family time where he could, Miguel obtained his bachelor's degree and went on to teach at the same school he had been a custodian. A few years later, a colleague encouraged him to apply to Proyecto Maestría. He was recruited by Randy to participate in Academia Cuauhtli during the initial planning of the program.

MICAELA

Micaela was born in Southern California where her family lived while her father completed his doctoral degree. When she was only three months old, her family returned to El Salvador, where her father became a university psychology professor and her mother, a practicing lawyer. During this time, social unrest had spurred the Salvadorian civil war (1980-1992) and her family found themselves in the middle of the revolution.

El Salvador has a long history of socioeconomic inequality and violent suppression of any oppositional social and political movements. For decades leading up to the civil war, working class and indigenous communities who demonstrated any resistance were terrorized by the military. During the civil war, the carnage was magnified by death squads who targeted not only known members of the resistance, but most any civilian who dared whisper any opposition of the government. Micaela explained that her father "understood

the struggle" but had been born into an affluent family who decided to "rest on their morals," they attempted to remain outside of the conflict. Her mother's side of the family, however, were part of the working class who "knew the struggle." Micaela's parents became active participants in the revolution and their home was a communication hub where information was transmitted from the city to *el campo* (the guerilla camp).

Their home and the home of their aunt and uncle was targeted and shot up when the government discovered their involvement. Fortunately, the family was able to get away: "I just knew that bad people were coming for us and we had to go" (Micaela, personal communication, December 9, 2016). At the time of their escape, they were caring for her cousin while her aunt visited their grandmother in another town. Four-year-old Micaela, her seven-year-old cousin who was now being passed off as her brother, and her parents sought asylum in Canada, where they began rebuilding their lives. Her aunt went into hiding in Costa Rica while her uncle, a doctor, disappeared during a mission: "the whole family just got pulled apart." After the peace treaty was signed in 1991, her aunt returned to El Salvador and her cousin went back after graduating from the university.

In Montreal, Canada, the family lived off government assistance for a year until Micaela's parents were able to secure employment. Despite these hardships, Micaela also recognized the privilege that accompanied her parents' high level of educational attainment. Once again, her father was working as a university professor and her mother as a citizenship lawyer in Canada. There was a clearly set expectation that she was to obtain a high level of education, though teaching in an elementary school is not what they had in mind for her. Her parents would tell her growing up, "I don't want you to be the nurse, I want you to be the doctor; I don't want you to be the secretary, I want you to be the lawyer" (Micaela, personal communication, December 9, 2016).

Some of her earliest and fondest memories as a child are of pretending to help her father grade midterm exams and papers. She credits her father for inspiring her love of teaching. Beyond that, Micaela could not recall any educators who had a particularly noticeable impact on her. She felt, for the most part, neutral about her teachers: "I remember my teachers fondly and I don't remember anyone saying anything super asinine, but nor really magical [either]."

Micaela attended a Catholic school despite being atheist, because the majority of the schools were Catholic. She would sit out Mass and other services along with a Protestant and a Jewish peer. There was a particular moment that stood out when reflecting on her schooling experience:

> I was nine years old, and we were in the playground and [a new boy in school] asked me "what's your favorite ice cream… do you like chocolate? Because you're chocolate… you're brown." And I had no idea what that meant but I put rocks in my t-shirt and I went up the slide and I just started chucking rocks at him… I didn't know I was brown, I didn't know brown was bad, I didn't know brown. (Micaela, personal communication, December 9, 2016)

Micaela was taken to the principal's office where she exclaimed, "Lenny Stenson said I was brown!" The principal and her parents alike were confused by her sudden realization. Her family's Spanish nickname for her translates to "the dark one," yet, it was her peer's words that landed on her.

She shared that the students in her school were all White, and she did not see another brown student until high school. Past this time period, however, the demographics in her community began to shift exponentially. There were increasingly sizable Burmese, Portuguese, and Somalian refugee communities. The more time she spent in her father's classroom, the stronger Micaela's desire to teach grew. She identifies as a refugee and felt drawn to serve this community: "for me it was the logical thing to do, I'll go back to the little people and I'll start empowering them" (Micaela, personal communication, December

9, 2016). Her shared experiences as a refugee allowed her to forge authentic connections with her students and their families:

> I had a lot of students who have parents who were refugees of Serbia, Kosovo, and Rwanda, and so a lot of my kids knew what I went through when I arrived in Canada. I was like "you are my people, you are not my color, you don't speak my language, but you know what I went through, or at least your parents know what I went through…" This is my job. (Micaela, personal communication, December 9, 2016)

Micaela taught in Canada for two years and a few more years at an Afghani refugee school in England before finding her way to Texas with her husband, where she has been teaching the last six years. Teaching in Texas has felt like an ongoing battle against the education system:

> Teaching in Canada is amazingly freeing, compared to the structures and bureaucracy that you have in Texas. Even teaching in England is very ridiculously freeing. Like, "here is the curriculum, here are the objectives, make your plan for the year, however you are going to teach all of this, do it, and do it in the soundest possible way for students." It's a lot of work, it's a lot of backwards planning.
>
> Here [in Texas] every day seems scripted for you. Every TEKS seems shoved down a throat. That seems unnatural. And on the other side of that, the product of the students is so meaningless… And that's why Cuauhtli was important for me… There seemed to be a sense of freedom in teaching that had meaning and purpose and value. (Micaela, personal communication, December 9, 2016)

Micaela was invited by Randy to participate in Academia Cuauhtli.

Sabrina

Sabrina and her sister were born in Mexico City; her mother was originally from Zacatecas and her father from Michoacán. Sabrina's mother was a stay-at-home wife and had a third grade formal education, while her father was an immigrant worker with a sixth grade education, working as a welder and carpenter. Despite economic difficulties, they

found a way to pay tuition so Sabrina could attend pre-kindergarten, providing her with an early educational opportunity they had lacked.

When she was nine years old, her family migrated to a suburb in central Texas, where they later welcomed a third daughter. This move was a major shift for Sabrina, who suddenly found herself in a new country and a new schooling context. She explained that her family was extremely isolated the first couple of years since they had few familial and community supports. They struggled to access basic necessities since nothing was within walking distance (e.g. market place or grocery store), and public transportation was lacking; they were also limited by their lack of English.

When her parents enrolled her in school in 1983, Sabrina was placed in third grade at the only elementary school in the district that provided bilingual education at that time. Bilingual, newcomer students were segregated on this campus located on the outskirts of the community: "I feel like they chose the schools that were in the margins of the city to house bilingual education" (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016). She also felt that the teachers in the bilingual school had a mean streak, often making her feel inferior: "I always remember my parents telling me, 'oh you're so smart, your teachers want to move you up a grade,' in Mexico. And then I come here and I'm dumb?" (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016). She also shared that bullying among students was common, as was corporal punishment from the teachers.

Following this traumatic year, her parents decided to transfer Sabrina to the elementary school in her neighborhood, into an English-only fourth grade classroom. The demographics at this school were predominately Anglo. Sabrina had acquired some English proficiency but still depended strongly on her Mexican American peers, who tried to assist her despite not speaking Spanish themselves. She explained this was the time period in her life when she started noticing and trying to make sense of race relations:

> I started to understand the difference in being brown in this country, because I remember that I became really good friends with the only Black girl in that school. I guess maybe I felt that it was safe to be her friend. Even though the other kids were not mean, they were not inclusive either. (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

Schools throughout the district integrated bilingual education the following year; bilingual students were returned to their neighborhood schools. Though Sabrina felt there was a stigma associated with being placed in a bilingual classroom, she was also excited about the opportunity to be surrounded by peers who shared a similar cultural and linguistic background as her, and in a classroom that offered a more culturally-aware curriculum. The student demographics changed markedly once in middle school: the student population was majority minority. Sabrina shared that school yard fights were a common occurrence, and she spent much of her time trying to navigate away from these problems. It was also during this time that she found mentorship and support from her teachers: "I think that's where I started to see my teachers differently too, that I could sense there were teachers that really cared about my learning and thought that I was intelligent" (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016).

Sabrina was then invited to attend a magnet high school because she scored high in a standardized test. At this high school campus, she once again found herself in a predominately Anglo institution, surrounded by teachers she described as being, "very much indifferent." The year prior, her eighth grade history teacher had suggested that her test scores and grades were high enough not only to attend this magnet school, but also to enroll in honors classes (advance placement). Excited by this possibility, she sought out the high school counselor to make the request. This is when she described experiencing blatant, institutional racism for the first time. The school counselor responded to her in a condescending manner and refused to transfer her without a letter from her parents making the request. When she informed him that her parents were not English speakers, the

counselor simply responded, “well that’s too bad” (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016). Sabrina’s parents suggested she write the letter herself and they would sign it and advocate for her.

Sabrina shared that her parents acknowledged the racial aggression that she experienced and were open to talking about it. They would respond by encouraging her to push forward with pursuing her education and without paying mind to the racism, “kind of the attitude, ‘we’re not going to give up’” (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016). She was embarrassed to admit that this advice spurred resentment towards her parents, thinking they simply did not understand, they were not the ones walking in her shoes, “you’re not the one at school, you’re not the one that has to deal with these teachers” (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016). She described her response back then as selfish:

> That’s me being a selfish teenager, not thinking about well how did [my parents] feel going to the doctor and having their kid translate for them? And going to the pharmacy? Or at work for my dad, you know? Me being self-centered [only] thinking about how it affected me. (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

The negative experiences with the educators in her school continued to have a detrimental impact on her schooling, sense of self, and relationship with her parents, with whom she progressively communicated less and less. She shared that she was viewed as a problematic student and a nuisance by her teachers and the counselor. Sabrina graduated with a low grade point average, partly because these experiences drove her to disengage with school but also because she was not receiving the information that she needed to be successful: “I didn’t know what a GPA was, I didn’t know what class ranking was” (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016). By the time she had begun to make sense of college requirements and school policies on her own, it was too late to

recover. The shame that she felt for being "dumb" drove her to hide her report card from her parents: "I was ashamed because I thought I was a good student and now I wasn't again. I was dumb."

Sabrina enrolled in community college upon graduating from high school in 1993. That year, her parents qualified to obtain their permanent residency. She, however, did not qualify until two years later when she completed community college. She was able to successfully navigate through community college greatly due to the helpful guidance of an advisor, and was able to transfer to the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin). She convinced a community college friend to transfer with her so they could help and support each other through the university experience. This transition was difficult on her parents, who she described as having traditional Mexican values. They kept a close, watchful eye over her and did not believe that she, or any decent woman for that matter, should move out of their parent's home until married, until they could be under the protection of a husband. She was able to convince them to support her move by securing room boarding at a *comadre's* (co-mother; a close female family friend) sister's home in Austin.

Her painful schooling experience motivated her to major in education: "I wanted to be able to be a teacher that provided a loving, welcoming environment for students, especially our immigrants" (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016). Sabrina reported that she greatly enjoyed the teacher preparation program, specifically because of the welcoming environment and genuine relationships built by the professors in the program. Sabrina spoke highly of Dr. George Blanco, who had built an extensive supportive network of bilingual teachers throughout the school district with whom he placed student teachers. He also encouraged the students to engage in critical classroom discussions.

Sabrina met her husband in middle school but did not start dating him until after high school. He was a product of the same subtractive, public schooling system, and had been tracked into shop classes despite having a natural ability for math and science. He enlisted in the Army after graduation but a few years later, inspired and encouraged by Sabrina, he requested a semester at the UT Austin as part of his reenlistment package. She persuaded him to take engineering courses:

> I remember telling him this is what you need to do and him saying "what's engineering?" [I responded] "I don't know but it is math and science and that's your thing so you need to apply to that." And he did, he got in, and he loved it … He went back knowing that once he finished the second contract with the Army, he was going to go back the UT and finish his engineering degree. (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

Unfortunately, his college experience was not as positive as hers had been. She explained that there were considerably greater funding opportunities and resources for students of color in engineering, such as free tutoring and computer labs. However, the relationships between the professors and students and among peers were detached; the networks of support were non-existent. He decided to enroll in community college before re-enrolling at UT Austin to build the academic skills he felt he was lacking and, thus, strengthen his chances of being successful. He did eventually transfer back and obtained his engineering degree from UT Austin.

Sabrina began her teaching career in 1998 at an east Austin elementary school. This school is one of the original three Title I schools served by Academia Cuauhtli. Historically, this school has served primarily the Mexican American and African American community, prior to the gentrification that has since led to the pushout of these communities. This school has a long history of being targeted for closure, and the community rallying to save it. During Sabrina's time there, however, she explained that

the school was pioneering a "strong school communities" initiative, which provided a full-time social worker and nurse through UT Austin's programs. Their charge was to provide social and health services and resources to the families of the students: "as a teacher, I felt a lot of support" (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016). She felt that though the administration was weak her first year there, the teachers at the school were "phenomenal," and they provided a lot of support and mentorship. The amazing librarian, in particular, caught Sabrina's attention. She had fond memories of spending countless hours at the public library growing up:

> We didn't have any AC in the house so in the summers we would go to the library. And my mom would let us check out 10 books and then come back and get another 10 books. In the library, you can select whatever you want. In the public library you don't have the teacher telling you 'pick this book and that book.' And so, my sister and I just read and read and read. (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

After six years teaching at this east Austin school, Sabrina and her husband decided to return to their hometown to be closer to family and for support in raising their two young children. She was a school teacher there for five years, but she did not enjoy living there. She was also starting to feel burnt out from teaching third and fourth grades, which have mandatory standardized testing requirements. Beyond this, she felt unprepared and insufficiently supported by her "mediocre administration" when it came to addressing her students' non-academic needs, such as problems at home. Sabrina repeatedly made it clear that one cannot be a good educator without investing in building authentic relationships with students. While she was committed to doing this, it also felt impossible to accomplish

when administrators kept piling on tasks, such as standardized testing, "without consideration, without support."

The workload was overwhelming and commonly overflowed into what should have been her family time. Today, after going through her own public schooling education in Texas and spending 18 years as a professional educator, after having "done them all" (Texas standardized tests: TAAS, TAKS, TEKS, STAAR), she can claim with authority that these testing mandates and requirements have steadily increased to a point that is unsustainable, even in schools where there is strong leadership and supportive administrators: "[teachers today] are at a breaking point … it's the testing, it's really overwhelming … And so I was done [with teaching]."

She decided to work part-time at the public library and thought to herself, "if I could just do this at school, I might have the perfect job." Inspired, Sabrina and her family left their hometown and returned to Austin with a new addition to the family, a third child, so that she could attend graduate school. She enrolled in the school of information and started working towards obtaining her Master of Science in Information Studies. Unfortunately, this program was not as critically aware as her undergraduate program had been:

> I was in school with a lot of people with technical degrees, undergrad, and experiences. That was hard because my goals, or my needs, were very different from theirs. You have core classes that everyone needs to take. It was interesting in some ways, but one thing that really annoyed me was the Eurocentric environment that school of information is. We talk about accessing information but we don't talk about what limits people from accessing information. What good is it if you have this awesome interface and you cannot reach the people that need it the most?

Rather than valuing her critical lens, she found that most of her professors were not critically aware, nor were they supportive of her interests. She shared numerous examples:

> I wanted my paper to be about growing up Latino, so I wanted to look at authors that wrote coming of age stories for Latinos. [My professor] told me "no, this is not an ethnic-centered classroom." … We kind of got into it, finally she was like "ok, you can write it."

> I wanted to write a book about multiracial children, picture books that present students in communities … books where kids are not White, basically, and she told me that I really needed to look at another theme because that was going to be very limiting. I said, "that's the point, that's why I really want to write that, because there's not enough books."

She graduated from the masters program in 2013 and started working as a librarian for the past four years. Sabrina was recruited to participate in Cuauhtli by George, who had met her when he went to observe a student teacher assigned to her classroom.

VALERIA, KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

Valeria was born and raised in a small, rural town in El Salvador, where both her parents were raised. She has a sister who is three years older and a little brother who is ten years younger. Her father was a migrant worker in the U.S. who did not receive a formal education, while her mother was a stay-at-home wife who would do occasional work as a seamstress. Valeria's mom had a third grade education but, when Valeria and her siblings were older, their mother participated in a six-month nursing certification program offered through night school. This training program was established in their rural community and aimed at offering medical services others from even more remote areas.

Valeria shared that she does not recall meeting her father in person until she was seven years old. He was illiterate, with a sharp mind for numbers, but would have his brothers pen letters for him to send home. These letters were often accompanied by pictures, and they also spoke over the phone frequently. When he returned to El Salvador, he bought a car and made a living by giving people from remote areas rides to work. He

later became the town's mayor's chauffeur for three years and, upon obtaining a worker's visa, he began migrating to the U.S. for seasonal work.

Around the time Valeria was 12, her parents divorced and their mother moved out. Their father continued migrating for part of the year but would return for a few months to be with his family. Valeria and her siblings were often left with a relative or neighbor. The responsibilities of housekeeping and child raising fell on the shoulders of her older sister. Eventually, her sister became weary from the stress of living under other peoples' roofs and the responsibility of caring for her siblings alone. Her sister abandoned her studies and, upon her father's return, she insisted he take them with him to the U.S. Valeria's father, also drained by the stress of leaving his children, agreed. He sold their home and all possessions to raise the money for his children's passage. Valeria and her siblings were not allowed to tell anyone about their plans, including their friends and the school. Heartbroken, she left handwritten goodbye notes for her friends to be distributed after she left.

Their family migrated in 2004 when she was 15 years old. She enrolled in ninth grade, in a newcomer school in east Austin. This newcomer high school only accepted recently-arrived immigrant and refugee students from across the school district at the ninth grade level and offered schooling up to tenth grade. Valeria explained this was a very difficult time in her life. One of the greatest differences she noticed immediately was that there was no sense of community; people didn't interact with their neighbors, no one was friendly, no one walked outdoors. The transition into the U.S. schooling system had the greatest impact on her. She explained that in El Salvador, teachers don't tend to tell their students:

> *'Oh, tú puedes hacer más que otro niño.' Todos lo niños son iguales en el punto de vista de un maestro allá.* ('Wow, you can do more than other students.' All

> students are equal from the point of view the of the teacher over there [in El Salvador]).” (Valeria, personal communication, October 24, 2016)

She did not understand the tendency or need to rank and file students. She also explained that you rarely see a multiple-choice test in El Salvador; instead, schooling is more focused on developing literacy, reading, and writing. She was failing her first year because she was not accustomed to schooling centered on worksheets and testing: “soy bien tonta, como es posible que allá sacaba 10 y aquí no. (I am very dumb, how is it possible that I got 10s over there and not here)” (Valeria, personal communication, October 24, 2016). Furthermore, the majority of the teachers at this newcomer high school did not speak Spanish, and she did not speak any English; she could not build a relationship with them, she could not turn to them when she needed help or support. She confessed to crying most days her first two years of schooling despite describing her teachers as very nice and very encouraging.

Valeria’s described her family was extremely supportive and encouraging as well. However, no one else in her home spoke English either. She felt immense pressure to learn the language, not only for her own schooling sake, but also to help her family. She explained that she was the only family member attending school besides her five-year-old little brother; thus, she was the only family member who was able to relay any critical information, for example at the doctor’s office. There was no one else to help. This is a problem she commonly sees among her current kindergarten students as well: their need to learn English to assist their families with navigating this new society. Valeria recalled having ruminating, racing thoughts she described as a symptom of “shock”:

> *Si yo hubiera nacido aquí, yo tuviera el inglés, yo no tuviera ese problema… ¿Por qué no nací aquí? ¿Por qué me está pasando esto a mí?* [If I had been born here, I would know English, I would not have this problem ... Why wasn’t I born here? Why is this happening to me?]. (Valeria, personal communication, October 24, 2016)

The students from the newcomer high school transferred back into their neighborhood schools for eleventh and twelfth grades. Instead of going to her assigned school, Valeria decided to enroll in the high school located on the same shared campus as the newcomer school. She chose this school because she recalled feeling out of place with the students from her neighborhood school, who she would see at the bus stop. Valeria felt they looked at her funny and made comments because they knew she attended the newcomer high school, they knew she was an immigrant and did not speak English.

She described her experiences her chosen school as extremely positive, even graduating in the top 10%, number six in her class. She attributed this to the strong relationships she established with many of her teachers, with whom she still communicates to this date. Her tennis coach, in particular, invested a lot of time and effort to help Valeria: "*nunca te dejo sentir que no eras capaz de hacer algo (*she never let you feel that you were not capable of doing something)" (Valeria, personal communication, October 24, 2016). Valeria admitted that not all her peers shared her experience. For the most part, she felt that many of her friends, generational students, were confrontation with their teachers and the teachers responded with the type of attitude, "if you don't care, why should I." At that time, she blamed her friends for the poor relationships between students and teachers. She simply did not understand why some of her peers, for example, hated to be asked how they were doing and felt the teachers were being nosy. As a teacher today, she explained:

> *Cuesta para que ellos mismos te dejen brincar esas barreras*. It is easy to make the assumption that a student or parent 'don't care' but once you learn what they've been through, it's easier to see their value as individual, regardless of appearances. You can react better as a teacher, teach students how to control their actions and how to express themselves, as humans, we all need time to learn to express ourselves. Some students have more walls, more barriers, for connecting, especially the longer you are a part of this school system. (Valeria, personal communication, October 24, 2016)

Valeria put a lot of effort into establishing a good relationship with her students and parents, and it helps her know more about her students.

Valeria's high school required that seniors apply to at least five universities. She applied to psychology programs at the University of Texas at Austin, University of Texas at San Antonio, Texas State University, Texas A&M, and University of North Texas at Dallas. She was accepted at all five. Her first acceptance letter came from A&M and included a full scholarship, so, she assumed she would just attend this university. She received the acceptance letter from the University of Texas at Austin last, which included a partial scholarship. Valeria's tennis coach had to explaine that, even with a scholarship, it would be costly to attend A&M if she needed to pay for room and board. The coach suggested that attending UT Austin might be better for Valeria since, besides saving on room and boarding, she would have the support of her family. Further, the coach explained the prestige of attending UT Austin and how difficult it is for most to be accepted, especially into their highly selective psychology program. Valeria admitted that, in this instance, her ignorance about college was a blessing since she might not have ventured to apply for these universities or attend UT Austin had she fully understood their distinction.

Valeria did not have a social security number to enroll at the university, but she still qualified for in-state tuition. She applied for the Texas Interdisciplinary Plan (TIP), a program offered by the college of natural sciences and the college of liberal arts, and described as an academic community that, "provide(s) the benefits of a small college atmosphere while challenging students to take advantage of the opportunities offered at a large research institution" (https://cns.utexas.edu/tip-scholars/future-scholars/about-tip-scholars). Valeria needed to select a minor and had always expressed a passion for journalism. Her TIP advisor conducted a credit audit and suggested that, instead of a minor in journalism, she invest the same amount of time into a second major in Spanish through

the linguistics department. It was during her time in linguistics that she met a representative from the UTeach program, a teacher accrediting program for non-education majors interested in teaching middle school and high school STEM. Through UTeach, she did an internship in a second grade classroom at an eastside Austin school. She also completed her required TIP volunteer hours through the Victory Tutoring program offered by Austin Public Libraries, tutoring a first grader and a third grader. Through these opportunities, she, "fell in love with the experience of sharing knowledge." She completed a second UTeach internship in a middle school, but she did not enjoy this experience.

In what should have been her last semester at the university, Valeria decided to pursue a career in teaching. However, UTeach did not offer teacher accreditation for individuals interested teaching at the elementary level. This meant that she would need to complete a third bachelor's degree, an additional two years of courses without scholarship funds. With the financial support of her family and financial aid, she pushed forward. That year, Valeria was granted the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2012, which meant she would be eligible to work upon graduation.

Valeria completed her second teacher in-service at another Title I school in the district, a school served today by Academia Cuauhtli. While on the campus, she happened to observe Sonia's kindergarten classroom when she was reading a book to the students:

> *Entré a su salón, ella estaba leyendo un libro, y estaba tan tranquila, te sentías bienvenida, acogedor. [Le dije] yo quiero aprender de usted.* (I entered her room, she was reading a book, and she was so calm, you felt welcome, welcoming. [I told her] I want to learn from you. (Valeria, personal communication, October 24, 2016)

Valeria was drawn to the way Sonia interacted with the students and how entranced they appeared to be with the lesson. Valeria insisted that Sonia be her supervising teacher even though Sonia was not officially registered with UT Austin to be one. That summer,

Valeria learned from Sonia how to set up a classroom and prepare for a new year. Once the year began, Sonia allowed Valeria the freedom to develop her own lesson plans and teaching style, encouraging her to experiment:

> "*Se quedaba horas y horas y horas ayudándome a preparar. A otras les tocaba que no les dejaba experimentar. Sonia me daba el respeto de ser maestra, éramos dos maestras [colaborando] en la clase, [yo] no era una ayudante que solo hacia copias.* [She stayed hours and hours and hours helping me prepare. Other [in-service teachers] were not allowed to experiment. Sonia showed me the respect of being a teacher, we were two teachers [collaborating] in the classroom, [I wasn't] an assistant who only made copies. (Valeria, personal communication, October 24, 2016)

Their professional relationship blossomed in to a great friendship that remains to this day. It was Sonia who invited her to participate in Academia Cuauhtli. Valeria graduated with her three degrees in 2014 and began teaching kindergarten in Spanish at a dual-language school in southeast Austin.

Valeria shared that she works in a school under the leadership of an ideal administration. They allow her the liberty of exercising her profession without questioning her pedagogy and without being forced to follow a scripted curriculum roadmap. And yet, she admitted to being tired of being a teacher under a system where she feels overwhelmed by the paperwork and the testing requirements. She is required to administer nearly a dozen formative and summative assessments throughout the year to her twenty-two kindergarteners; she does not have a teacher assistant. A typical work day begins at 7 a.m. and usually ends around 5:30 p.m., after which she spends another two hours grading. She plans to continue teaching until she no longer feels joy or passionate about it because, otherwise, she believes it is the students that pay the price. In the long-term, she is interested in pursuing her masters degree, most likely in educational psychology.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I offered the life stories of the Cuauhtli teachers, focused on providing an overview of key moments in their schooling experiences they report as having the greatest impact on their perceptions. Though the richness of their descriptions varied, there were still strong overlaps on the topics they chose to emphasize and interpretations they derived from these experiences. This is further discussed in Chapter Five, where I offer a cross-case analysis of these experiences and the critical learnings gained through their participation in Academia Cuauhtli.

Chapter 5: Cross-Case Analysis

I begin this chapter by presenting a cross-case analysis on the personal and professional schooling experiences of Cuauhtli teachers. I then move on to present the critical learnings that have emerged from their participation in Academia Cuauhtli.

Personal and Professional Schooling Experiences

The teachers in this study described similar subtractive schooling experiences as both students and professionals. They shared aligned perspectives on their role and purpose as educator. However, their ability to articulate the issues they found problematic within their schools and their ability the make sense of these experiences varied based on whether they received teacher preparation that was critical grounded and years of experience.

ON FAMILY, COMMUNITY, LANGUAGE, AND CULTURE: *SER EDUCADO*

Most of the Cuauhtli teachers in this study came from parents who were hard-working laborers from modest means. Across the board, all described their parents as offering an abundance of love, support, and encouragement, readily willing to sacrifice to provide greater opportunity to their children. Cuauhtli teachers made it a point to reiterate numerous times that it was important for their parents that they, their children, become educated. However, as Miguel explained, obtaining an education had meaning far beyond learning facts and figures; it was about gaining knowledge, building character and becoming a respected member of your community:

> You go to school not only to receive content, but you go to school to receive values and [the community] respects you more because you are, you're part of the school you are part of something other than content. (Miguel, personal communication, December 12, 2016)

Furthermore, Valeria echoed a common sentiment shared by Miguel and Sabrina about their schools being a central hub and teachers being integral and respected members in their Mexican communities:

> *Yo pienso que allá te enseñan [los maestros] con respeto, y por eso tú los tratas con respeto. Pero no solo con respeto, sino que es con autoridad que lleva respeto*. [I think that [the teachers] teach you with respect and that's why you treat them with respect. But not only with respect, but with authority that bears respect]. (Valeria, personal communication, October 24, 2016)

Sabrina and Valeria, who grew up outside of the U.S., explained that there was a great amount of social interaction within their communities. People spent much of their time outside, simply walking around their *colonia* (town), interacting with neighbors and others:

> Within your own borough there is a really a strong sense of community. And so, like in the *colonias*, there's a market, there is a *panaderia* (bakery), and then of course a school, the parish, so you tend to see the same people over and over every day. (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

Those who grew up in a border town, like Linda and Bella, also spoke fondly about these experiences when visiting the other side of the border. The school served as another central hub for gathering and the teachers were integral members of the community. The participants explained that these types of social interactions, the act of *convivir* (co-living), did not occur in their communities in Central Texas adding to their sense of isolation and alienation, especially felt by those who had grown up outside of the U.S. Sabrina's family, who migrated to a rural town, was further limited from getting to know their community and accessing communal spaces by the lack of public transportation.

Many of the participants who were born and grew up in the U.S. identified as Mexican and Mexican-American, an identity they began questioning as they grew older:

> I grew up feeling very Mexican… But then, when I was in my early 20s, I started traveling to Mexico with friends and then I started realizing, well, I guess I'm not

> really a Mexican because I don't have family here. (Bella, personal communication, December 17, 2016).

In regard to language use, most participants shared that while their first language is Spanish, they gradually became primarily English speakers. They mostly attributed this to attending English-only courses in school. Some, like Bella and Damaris, were purposeful about seeking out opportunities to reclaim their first-language. Miguel and Valeria, who migrated at older ages, were the only primary Spanish-speakers while the rest code-switched between English and Spanish to varying degrees.

Those with younger siblings, like Dahlia, Bella, and Valeria, shared that their younger siblings have lost the language and rootedness to their culture:

> I grew up perfectly bilingual because in school [and at home] it was English and Spanish… but the same is not true for my younger siblings. My sister and I are like 16 months apart and her Spanish is terrible, terrible… and then the last two *no pueden* (they can't speak Spanish) and if you're going to talk to them in Spanish you do it very, very slowly (Damaris, personal communication, January 5, 2016)

This was a particularly contentious topic for Valeria who, as middle child, felt she did not share her sister's Salvadorian community rootedness, and also felt tension when it came to her younger brother's language use and cultural norms. She explained that her older sister was raised in El Salvador, did not attend school in the U.S., is married to a Spanish-speaker, and works in a Salvadorian restaurant where Spanish is the main language spoken; the vast majority of people in her sister's social and professional circle share her cultural and linguistic background. Thus, her Spanish fluency and accent are stronger, has greater access to the local Salvadorian community, and does not regularly inhabit White-dominated spaces. Valeria seemed keenly aware and saddened by her lack of access to a similar base. Their brother is ten-years younger and, besides kindergarten, has attended public schooling in the U.S. the entirety of his life. Valeria felt more entitled, given the fact

she attended high school in the U.S., to be upset and offended by his lack of Spanish fluency and the lack of respect she felt he demonstrated toward his teachers. However, she came to realize that, unlike her brother, her formative years were spent in El Salvador where she had the opportunity to develop without the racial, cultural, and linguistic subjugation she has come to know in the U.S.

The Cuauhtli teacher participants who have children, Sabrina and Miguel, also spoke about how difficult it has been to raise their children to be Spanish-speakers despite being bilingual educators themselves. Sabrina explained that she gave all of her children indigenous names:

> We want our children to be proud of their culture. We knew, living here, it was going be on us to do that. We're struggling a lot with maintaining Spanish. The oldest is probably the best Spanish speaker. It goes down, the level of Spanish has decreased [with each child]. (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

She has been purposeful about having open discussions with her children about issues of race, power, and identity. Her children, however, have a vastly different experience from hers and have at times bemoaned about their names and these discussions. They are American-born citizens, born to formally educated parents, and attending public schools that serve affluent communities. Her older son, in particular, has often pushed back on the idea that there are dominant groups that are oppressive and discriminatory, that is, until the latest presidential election:

> [My son said to me] 'this is scary. I always want to ignore what you say, about racism, but I'm seeing it played out right now, in front of me, knowing the election. Never in my wildest dreams, did I think that he could get elected.' (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

This year, she explained, he did not complain about his name. If anything, now that they have visited relatives in Mexico, some of her kids have begun to begrudge over their lack of Spanish-fluency.

Miguel's older daughter was transitioned out of dual-language in the second grade, while his younger daughter was transitioned out in fourth grade. He did not possess the critical learnings that he obtained through Proyecto Maestría at the time that he and his wife chose to transition their eldest out. Miguel expressed deep regret over his lack of knowledge in his first few years as a teacher in the U.S., both because he wonders what he could have done better for his students and what he could have done for his eldest daughter:

> *Si me afecto, me afecto muchísimo. Y ahora me arrepiento, y le ha afectado a mi familia… te vas envolviendo en eso, es tanta la supremacía del inglés sobre el español que al rato tú te quieres americanizar. Y inconscientemente lo vas hacienda.*
>
> *Le afecto a mis hijas porque mis hijas no tuvieron una educción como la que yo hubiera querido que tuvieron, ellas recibieron esa misma educación [asimilacionista].*
>
> [I was affected, I was very affected. And now I regret it, and it has affected my family ... you get wrapped up in that, the supremacy of English over Spanish is so great that you want to become Americanized after a while. And, unconsciously, you do it.
>
> It affected my daughters because my daughters did not have an education like the one I would have liked, they received that same assimilationist education]. (Miguel, personal communication, December 12, 2016)

He felt his older daughter was impacted more, as she had less of an opportunity to develop a bilingual-bicultural-biliterate identity, than his youngest daughter, who was transitioned at a later age. The critical learnings that Miguel referred to is discussed in the section, "On Being a Teacher."

ON BECOMING A TEACHER

> I want to teach somewhere where I can be a motivation and inspiration. It comes from my heart and I want to be able to help people in my community. This is where I was born. This is my base. I need to serve. I want to serve. It's my obligation. I'm a product of AISD, public education. (Damaris, personal communication, December 3, 2016)

In the following section, I describe the reasons these Cuauhtli teachers chose to pursue a career in education and their experiences throughout their teacher preparation. About half of the participants in this study are rooted in Austin, TX; they live there with their extended and immediate families. The other half has lived in this city for an extended amount of time. With the exception of Micaela and Miguel, the rest began their teaching careers in Austin.

At a time when there is a dearth of certified bilingual educators, I was slightly surprised to find that many of the Cuauhtli teachers who participated in this study have obtained a high level of formal education. While a formal degree does not assure success as a teacher, it is a valuable tool for building social capital and accessing opportunities. Nuestro Grupo members have discussed a number of times if, and to what degree, we should acknowledge and leverage these standardized measures of success since it does, after all, appear to contradict to our practice of centering ancestral, historical, cultural, and linguistic funds of knowledge.

Out of nine Cuauhtli teacher participants, six majored in education and three obtained alternative teacher certification. Five teachers held a masters degree in the field of education: three of these were from Proyecto Maestría, and two librarians held a masters degree in information sciences. Of the remaining two, one teacher was currently enrolled in a masters program in education, while the ninth teacher had tentative plans to pursue her masters degree. Two of the teachers were currently enrolled in doctoral programs. At least

eight of the nine participants have attended the University of Texas at Austin for a bachelors or masters degree in education; they had continued ties to the local university.

Motivations: *Sentido de Deber* & Community Rootedness

The motivations of the participants in this study for becoming a teacher varied. Sabrina and George were inspired by their own negative schooling experiences and sought to provide a more positive experience for their students:

> I think—not I think—I know that the reason I wanted to be a teacher, it was driven very much by my experience of arriving here and having such a horrible time and adjustment to school. I wanted to be able to be a teacher that provided a loving, welcoming environment for students. Especially our immigrants. (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

Micaela, Linda, and Miguel grew up in homes with educators, specifically, educators who were not a part of the U.S. school system. Each had described the respect and admiration with which their loved ones were treated by their students, parents, and communities. Micaela and Linda's parents had other careers in mind for them. For Micaela's parents, it was about finding a career with high status and education. Regardless, Micaela was unwavering in her desire to empower the youngest members from marginalized communities:

> That idea of empowerment of others, that was because of my dad… I have always kind of been drawn to people who are displaced or people whose homes are no longer their homes or people who like this is their home, but they are not always valued or cared for. So when I came to Austin, I taught in a title one school and it was the same thing, you know? How can I help you find value in you? Because you are contributing to our community and you value, so let me remind you of that. (Micaela, personal communication, December 9, 2016)

Despite the fond memories of spending time in her grandmother's classroom, Linda's father encouraged her to find a career with higher status and greater earning potential, such as a doctor. She explored other undergraduate majors before ultimately

finding her calling in teaching. Similarly, once Damaris, Valeria, and Bella entered a classroom, an experience they accidentally stumbled upon through volunteer and internship opportunities, they found it impossible to leave.

Bella shared the fears of some of her peers and other parents about the lack of earning potential being a teacher:

> I never wanted to be a teacher, I really didn't. I wanted money, I wanted to make it… I saw my grandparents living very poorly, very frugal. I saw my mom struggling raising 6 children… I ended up finding a job [teaching] in Spain. I went because I wanted adventure… Then I fell in love with teaching and that was it, that was it. The rest is history. (Bella, personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Interesting enough, none of the participants credited one of their own teachers with inspiring them to pursue teaching as a career.

As was shared earlier, Miguel was unable to transfer his teaching credentials from Mexico to the U.S. and worked as a custodian at a dual-language elementary school campus. He was initially inspired by his father and his own negative schooling experiences to become a teacher in Mexico. Once in the U.S., he shared that he felt spurred to action by the deficit ideology he heard expressed by some teachers on the campus:

> There is nothing wrong with being a custodian… but you have no influence and I want to influence. I saw and I heard the complaints from the teachers… there is no bilingual education [occurring and] you are not able to do anything, then they complain about everything, "[bilingual students] don't pass the tests, they don't want to do it…"
>
> "Wait a minute, that's not true!" But how can you influence when you are working as a custodian? They don't listen to you. They don't [even] expect that you paid attention to those things and I heard those complaints when I was a custodian. I heard those complaints over and over and over and over by the teachers and I said "no, that is wrong, that does not represent the students. If the students don't pass the test, it's not because of them, it is because of you."
>
> But you are very limited in the influence, that's why I said *quería hacer algo, sobre todo por ellos [los estudiantes]. [También] por mí, para que me pagan*

> *más, es para que me escuchen, pero sobre todo por la comunidad* (I wanted to do something for them [students]. Also, for me, to get paid more, so they would listen to me, but above all for the community). So, I think that was the main motivation for me to do something, I need to do something this can't be, this is not true. They are talking about my people. (Miguel, personal communication, December 12, 2016)

This feeling of lacking a voice and influence over what was occurring in the schools they attended was also shared by other Cuauhtli teachers. Miguel thought this would be resolved once he obtained a teaching degree and position. However, as we will see in the next section where I discuss their experiences as teachers, he, along with other Cuauhtli teachers continued to struggle to find the space and voice to engage their peers and administrators when they felt there were problems occurring in their schools.

Teacher Preparation

Out of the six teachers who attended a teacher preparation program, four teachers mainly glossed over their experiences, describing it as a mostly neutral process; something that simply needed to be done to get into the classroom. Miguel, who had already been a teacher in Mexico, explained the lack of impact the teacher preparation had on his teaching:

> [I was just] going through the motions to get a degree and to [learn about] the American system… but I don't think that, in my personal life, [as far as] my passion to teach, it was not a big deal. It was like check, check, check. I wanted to be a teacher and I will always try to be a good teacher, but I don't think [my teacher preparation program] provided me with motivation or all the tools [I needed] to become the teacher that I am now. (Miguel, personal communication, December 12, 2016)

Similar to the descriptions shared by many participants before, Miguel talked about how nice and approachable the professors were. However, he did not feel any meaningful connection to any of them.

The two other teachers, Linda and Sabrina, attended teacher preparation programs that had critical grounding and spoke to great lengths about their experiences. The equity

coordinator at the third college campus Linda attended was the first educator she spoke of with great excitement and admiration. Linda explained that in addition to making her feel welcomed, the coordinator introduced her to the bilingual-multicultural education department, provided the resources and supports she needed to complete the application requirements, guided her through the enrollment process, helped her secure both financial assistance and job placement, and provided ongoing mentorship throughout the entirety of her teacher preparation, "I just remember really clinging onto her that first year there." She was also pleasantly surprised by the student demographics in the program, "I loved it. People of color everywhere, 'oh my gosh this is beautiful, my people!'" (Linda, personal communication, December 10, 2016). Furthermore, Linda declared that she was relieved that she did not need to take any of the basic teacher preparation courses. These where courses in which the student demographic was primarily White, a space the other students of color had described as marginalizing and from which Linda felt sheltered from.

Sabrina proclaimed that she loved the courses and loved her professors, in particular Dr. George Blanco, when she attended the College of Education at the University of Texas at Austin in the late-90s. She explained that her professors were highly invested in the students, and they built authentic relationships and provided networks of supports that students needed to succeed. In her classes, she felt comfortable asking questions and engaged in critical conversations and discussions. Beyond feeling that she was developing professionally, she stated that Dr. Blanco was accessible and interested in "making sure [students] were okay on a personal level." He also went above and beyond to help students find jobs. As proof of the authentic relational investment, she shared that her professors remembered her and wrote her letters of recommendation for graduate school ten years later. The students were grouped into smaller cohorts once they reached the upper division

courses, which offered an additional system of support. Since she was in bilingual education, the majority of her peers in the cohort were other students of color.

Sabrina's professors had also built a strong professional network of master teachers in the district who were working in the same Title I, dual-language schools served today by Academia Cuauhtli (Metz, Sanchez, and Zavala), with whom they would assign student teaching. These were teachers that had been vetted by Dr. Blanco, teachers he knew should be modeling for those in the preparation program. Sabrina was assigned to Sanchez Elementary where she was supervised by a knowledgeable teacher who grew up in the area and had taught in that school for 20 years. The students in her program were also encouraged to visit other bilingual education classrooms in schools throughout the district. This was an opportunity Sabrina took full advantage of, visiting every classroom that was part of her professors' network and others that were not. This allowed her to see the problems that existed in the district's bilingual education program, primarily, the lack of consistency in the way the program was implemented and the lack of fluency of some bilingual teachers in the classroom:

> I remember thinking, 'why are they bilingual teachers if they can't even speak Spanish correctly.' They were teaching second- or first grade, [grades in] which it is very important to have a strong, fluent [bilingual teacher]. (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

It is worth noting that Sabrina completed the required lower-division courses at the community college where the classes were smaller, which meant obtaining help from the professors was easier and allowed her to strengthen her academic study skills. She pointed out that students like her are usually lost in these courses on main campus since they typically have an enrollment of a few hundred students. This also meant that, like Linda, Sabrina was not in courses dominated by a predominately White student population.

For Damaris and Valeria, the supervising teachers they were placed with during their volunteer and student teaching opportunities had a great impact on their teaching. Like those described by Sabrina and Linda, these supervising teachers were elected because of the authentic connection they established with students and parents.

On Being a Teacher

There were two major topics of conversation that kept coming up when they described working within the same subtractive schooling environments they attended as children: deficit thinking among their peers and standardized testing. Their internalized feelings of inferiority often led to them remaining silent rather than speaking up when they encountered problematic situations in their schools. This led to feelings of isolation and inadequacy for many who described themselves as having an intuitive sense of these issues but lacking the formal knowledge and language to confront their peers and administrators in an effort to either dismantle these issues and offer an alternative.

Deficit Thinking Among Peer Educators

When participants discussed their experiences as first-time teachers in the U.S., the topic of deficit ideology shared by their peers, teachers and administrators, commonly arose. Deficit thinking is the assumption that "the student who fails in school does so because of his/her internal deficits or deficiencies… proponents have postulated genetics, culture and class, and familial socialization as sources of alleged deficits" (Valencia, 2010). As described earlier, Cuauhtli teachers experienced this as students and now found themselves in a professional role seeing the same ideology driving the pedagogical decisions of their peers and the administrative decisions being made.

At his first teaching job, George began noticing that many of his peers leaned on their deficit views to justify excluding Latino students and families from community engagement programs. He explained that not only were these families not included, they were often not even thought about:

> I saw that early on as a teacher, decisions were made and there was maybe some lip service given to including families that were not at the core part of the school… That was something that continued my whole career. (George, personal communication, February 27, 2017)

Miguel, Sabrina, Valeria, and others brought up the fact that bilingual students are living in two worlds. Many of their peer educators did not understand or connect with the students because of these differences in experiences and perspectives. They found it even more frustrating that many of their peers responded to students of diverse backgrounds by trying to force linguistic and cultural assimilation:

> *Sobre todo, yo escuchaba que las maestras hablaban mucho ingles con los niños, el español era para comunicarse básicamente. Todo eso lo iba viendo como los niños viven en dos mundos. Uno es el de la escuela, otro es de la casa, entonces no hay una conexión entre los dos, no hay. Los maestros no nos tomamos la molestia de preocuparnos de la cultura de los niños, de conocer su cultura para integrarla en el salón. Al contrario, queremos imponerles una cultura, es la cultura… la lengua que queremos imponer.*
>
> [Above all, I heard that the teachers spoke a lot of English with the children, Spanish was basically to communicate. All that I was seeing as children live in two worlds. One is the school, another is the house, then there is no connection between the two, there is not. Teachers do not take the trouble to worry about the culture of children, to know their culture to integrate it into the classroom. On the contrary, we want to impose a culture on them, it is culture ... the language we want to impose.] (Miguel, personal communication, December 12, 2016).

Cuauhtli teachers, particularly those who were born outside of the U.S., also brought up that many of the bilingual teachers they worked with were not fluent-Spanish speakers and/or did not understand the experiences of immigrant and first generational students.

They found this problematic and felt it added an additional barrier to building authentic connections with the students:

> *Porque yo en sentido que para algunos de mis colegas, español no es su idioma fuerte, no es que crecieron hablando español, sino que lo aprendieron cuando estaban grandes…Algo que lo admiro, porque aprendieron un segundo idioma, es muy difícil, pero pienso que a veces a ellos se les olvida que su experiencia no es igual ala que están pasando los estudiantes.*
>
> [I feel that for some of my colleagues, Spanish is not their strong language, they did not grow up speaking Spanish, but they learned it when they were older ... Something that I admire, because they learned a second language, it's very difficult, but I think sometimes they forget that their experience is not the same as what students are going through.] (Valeria, personal communication, October 24, 2016)

Furthermore, these Cuauhtli teachers expressed frustration that these deficit views often resulted in low expectations being set for bilingual students. Their lack of Spanish fluency was an issue the participants who grew up in the U.S. acknowledged and expressed regret about; they talked to great lengths about the concerted effort they put forth in order to strengthen their Spanish fluency. As shared earlier, the teachers who migrated at a later age, have experienced first-hand the impact of subtractive schooling, which has prevented their own children from maintaining their language and culture.

In another example on the lack of cultural understanding, Valeria recounted seeing a teacher becoming increasingly agitated with a student. She explained that, culturally, for many Latinos, it is disrespectful to look at your elders in the eye when they are reprimanding you. However, teachers in the U.S. view the lack of eye contact as a sign of disrespect, prompting a more aggressive response from the teacher. Valeria summed this up:

> *Hay maestros bilingües que no tienen la cultura. [Maestros] tienen el idioma, pero no están envueltos en saber más de la cultura de mi clase, en saber más, lo que para esos niños significa.*

> [There are bilingual teachers who do not have culture. Teachers have the language, but they are not involved in knowing more about the culture of my class, in knowing more, what it means to those children.] (Valeria, personal communication, October 24, 2016)

Cuauhtli teachers expressed knowing these negative attitudes and deficit views about the students and families were wrong. However, their willingness to challenge their peers and administration on these deficit notions seemed to be most strongly linked to their knowledge and experience. The teachers with the least experience, like Valeria, reported being more likely to be hold back from challenging these views:

> *Siendo sincera, no es solo que [tus estudiantes] te quieran y tú los quieras, sino que te duele verlos con quién están y cómo te los tratan. Tiene a veces que moderte la lengua para no ir y decirles, "no les hables así."*
>
> [Being sincere, it is not only that [your students] love you and you love them, but it hurts to see who they are with and how they treat them. Sometimes I have to bite my tongue not to go and tell them, "do not talk to them like that."] (Valeria, personal communication, October 24, 2016)

The silence was common among seasoned educators who also admitted to not speaking up early in their career:

> I remember early on in my career being really surprised on the results of those test (reading inventories and phonics tests) and how those test results were used to categorize the kids and label the kids… I know this isn't a reflection of these kids. [Peers would say,] "oh well you know they're the bilingual students they're confused with language" and all these other stereotypes about language… all the deficit thinking that I heard. (George, personal communication, February 27, 2017)

There were instances where they describe remaining silent because they worked in a school campus where the administration was unsupportive and repressed their voices. They talked about the feeling disempowered by this but also felt their inability to speak up was rooted in their own marginalizing schooling experiences as students.

In retrospect, George, Miguel, and other seasoned educators linked their silent complicity to a lack of formal knowledge and language to challenge these views:

> To some extent, when I was a very young teacher, I was very uncomfortable [challenging my peers' deficit views] and I understood that something was messed up about the whole situation, but I wasn't extremely critical or able to articulate anything other than that the kids were really smart, they talked, they had words [they were fluent]. [Students] had this non-English, non-Spanish label it was empirically not what I was experiencing [working with them] every day. (George, personal communication, February 27, 2017)

Still, it is a regret they still carry and often reflect upon.

Standardized Testing and Language Proficiency Assessment

Cuauhtli teacher participants brought up multiple times the pressure standardized testing placed on their classroom instruction and overall school culture. Palmer and Snodgrass-Rangel (2011) found that teachers in the bilingual classroom would privilege test preparation in lieu of implementing a bilingual program with fidelity. Ladson-Billings (2006) argued that the focus on the "achievement gap" was misplaced; the underperformance of minority and immigrant students in standardized test scores was not due to a deficiency in the students but, rather, was the result of an "educational debt" that had accumulated.

Participants who grew up in the U.S. were able to speak about their own experiences with testing as students, the increased use of standardized testing over time, and the current strain the current system is placing on all teachers but was especially difficult on bilingual and dual-language teachers. The participants who grew up outside of the U.S. frequently brought up the fact that standardized teaching and standardized testing was not used in their heritage country:

> Cuando llegas aquí y empiezas a darte cuenta de que todo lo hacen consistir en esos [exámenes], entonces te desconciertas por completo. También me empecé a dar cuenta que los alumnos bilingües no hacían muy bien en esos exámenes, entonces te empiezas a preguntar porque, que es lo que está pasando? Porque si los ves [a los estudiantes] que son muy capaces y los papás muy dedicados… Los

> papás no saben de esos exámenes, o a veces sí les dan información es nomas para asustarlos.
>
> [When you get here, and you start to realize that everything is done [around the test], it's completely bewildering. I also started to realize that bilingual students did not do very well in those exams, so you start asking why, what is happening? Because if you see the [students], they are very capable, and the parents are very dedicated ... Parents do not know about these exams, or sometimes they are given information to just scare them.] (Miguel, personal communication, December 12, 2016)

Miguel has often had to provide information to the parents of his students, both in his traditional classroom and in Academia Cuauhtli. He partnered with Chris to host a formal discussion for the parents on understanding the test. He has often tried to explain that these standardized tests are not true measures of academic ability and literacy. However, it is difficult for parents and students to understand or accept this when many of the other teachers in their traditional schools continually emphasize the importance of these tests.

Miguel and other teachers who attended teacher preparation programs that offered a critical perspective on bilingual education now have the formal knowledge to push back against this type of testing. However, there was a time, early in their careers, when even though they sensed that something was not right about these tests and that the low-test scores were not indicative of their students' abilities, they did not or could not push back: In retrospect, George labeled some of the actions of his peers as abusive:

> There was so much pressure to just throw out any best practices, pedagogy was not important. How you taught was irrelevant to getting the kids ready for the test. There were teachers in my grade level that literally, all they did pretty much the whole year, was give the kids practice test or different instructional activities that were geared just towards multiple choice questions… It was just abusive to do that with the kids no matter who they are. (George, personal communication, February 27, 2017)

The absurd amount of testing and the pressure being placed on the students had a negative and lasting impact on the way students viewed themselves as learners:

> It really breaks my heart, when you see smart students at the beginning of the year, they come to your classroom, "I'm not going to pass the test, I'm stupid." I mean, it really breaks your heart because that is the concept they have about themselves. They see themselves as being stupid because of a test and they are really smart and really capable of doing everything. I'm totally against the test. (Miguel, personal communication, December 12, 2016)

Furthermore, it appeared evident to some of the participants that students would begin to push back and resist against the test. In one example, George explained that his peer teachers labeled the fifth graders unmotivated because of their low test scores. These teachers responded by eliminating recess, which created tensions and resulted in the students acting out. This further reinforced the deficit views of his peer teachers and administrators who began implementing policies and practices that resulted in tracking:

> "[We'll put the] high-scoring kids over here and the low-scoring kids over here. There were all kinds of practices were supposedly going to increase the test score, which I saw no evidence that it did that. The kids were basically just caught up in this whole crisis of the staff worrying about test scores and there was really very little appropriate instruction. (George, personal communication, February 27, 2017)

I shared earlier that many of the teachers in this study had high-levels of educational attainment. The teachers in this study admitted that the immense strain caused by the standardized testing had driven or is currently driving their decision to pursue higher levels of education; it was seen as a way to secure a position that is still allows them to continue serving students and families but located outside of the classroom. This was a contributing factor for Sabrina and Dahlia's decision to move into their roles as librarians.

The Cuauhtli teacher with the least number of years teaching and the only participant without a higher education degree, Valeria, stated that she fully intends to pursue her master's degree once she feels she is no longer able to serve with the same level of commitment in her role as teacher. She made it clear that it is not the task of working with 30 kindergarteners without an assistant that is driving her exhaustion. Rather, it is the

amount of testing, the excessive amount of reporting and documentation involved, and the strain it places when it is the main topic driving the work of peers and interactions with administrators.

Why Cuauhtli?

The purpose of the third question in this study was to investigate the critical learnings that have resulted from the participation of the teachers in Academia Cuauhtli. One of the primary intentions of Cuauhtli was to be a laboratory school where we, as a community of educators, could develop the culturally relevant materials our students were yearning for, where teachers could find reprieve from the daily aggressions they faced as linguistic and cultural minorities and as educators working in a system that suppresses their voice and funds of knowledge, and where we could imagine and build alternatives to the numerous flaws we knew existed in the current educational system, flaw that not only keep us and our students from accessing opportunities, but that were also slowly killing us.

In the following section, I present the findings that emerged from their discussion of Cuauhtli, namely their feelings of empowerment and the lasting impact of Proyecto Maestría. Cuauhtli emerged as a space where their praxis could and was developed, free of the restrictions typically found in the system, and Proyecto Maestría as a site for preparation and professional networking that still serves them.

EMPOWERING SELF AND EMPOWERING OTHERS

> *Para mi Academia Cuauhtli representa el unico lugar donde realmente se puede hablar de la cultura, de la identidad, no solamente se trata de que los niños aprendan un lenguaje por aprenderlo. Si no, se trata de ir al más allá, realmente al centro de lo que es la vida de los estudiantes, en el contexto cultural en el que se puede aprender ese lenguaje y en el que se puede endear lo que es esa cultura.*
>
> *Lo que pasa en la mayoría de los casos es que se vive una realidad en la escuela y se vive otra realidad en la casa, entonces el niño no sabe cómo navegar entre*

esos dos. A nosotros nos pasa como adultos, como navegar entre esos dos mundos, donde el mundo de la cultura que domina es el que nos trata de imponer las cosas y nos trata de decir que nuestra cultura es un déficit, que nuestra cultura tiene que ser arreglada porque no está funcionando bien. Entonces creo que Cuauhtli es el único lugar donde se puede hablar, se puede enfrentar esas cosas. Creo que las familias vienen por eso.

> [For me, Academy Cuauhtli represents the only place where you can really talk about culture, about identity, that it's not about children learning a language for the sake of learning it. It's about going beyond, really, to the center of the life of the students, situate within the cultural context in which that language can be taught and learned.
>
> What happens in most cases is that you live one reality in school and live another reality at home, then the child does not know how to navigate between those two. It happens to us as adults, navigating between those two worlds, where the world of culture that dominates is the one that tries to impose things on us and tries to tell us that our culture is at a deficit, that our culture has to be fixed because it is not working well. I think Cuauhtli is the only place where you can talk, you can confront those things. I think families come because of that.] (Miguel, personal communication, December 12, 2016)

Among the numerous terms used by teachers to describe Academia Cuauhtli were: freedom, collaboration, creativity, fluid, respect, relatable, validating. However, the most used term was "empowerment" to describe the impact on both the students and the teachers. The teachers were asked how Cuauhtli was described to them when they were first invited to participate and what was it about this description that was appealing to them. The general response shared was that Cuauhtli was described as Saturday school where they would be teaching about culture and language. Micaela shared:

> They sold it to me as something not school-related, that you can teach curriculum that's empowering to students, to students who need empowering. That right there is what I wish I could do every day in the classroom. (Micaela, personal communication, December 9, 2016)

Cuauhtli teachers were drawn to an educational space where they would have greater freedom to engage with the students and develop their own lessons. Other teachers also

brought up the fact that beyond the curriculum being presented, Cuauhtli was an alternative space where they could engage in critical discourse:

> Our [student] population [in my school campus] is mainly Latino, if not Mexican, 92-94%, and yet, [our traditional schools] don't have those conversations of identity, of heritage, of language, even though we're dual-language. And so, it was nice to find amazing people who come together to have these conversations and try to empower ourselves as teachers and hopefully we can take it to our schools and begin those conversations that I think are so crucial. That's what Cuauhtli means to me. (Damaris, personal communication, December 3, 2016).

When asked why they had chosen to participate in Cuauhtli, the teachers talked about Cuauhtli offering them an opportunity to nourish their own sense of self and increasing their feelings of empowerment as well as that of their students:

> For this opportunity to appreciate who I am and to see other people that even though they're coming from different histories and different backgrounds—there's still something that ties us together. And it just is exciting to be around my people… And I think instilling that within our students as well, I think that's what's most exciting for me, I want them to feel empowered. (Sabrina, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

Linda echoed this sentiment:

> [I did not] feel like I fit in and felt like I was an outsider [in school]. I needed to hide who I was. [Cuauhtli offered me an] opportunity to appreciate who I am and to see other people, that even though they're coming from different histories and different cultural traditions—there's still something that ties us together. And it just is exciting to be around my people… and [having the opportunity to] instill that within our students as well. I think that's what's most exciting for me, I want them to feel empowered. (Linda, personal communication, December 10, 2016)

Cuauhtli was a space that appeared to be especially sought out by teachers like Linda and others who described not having a professional network of critical and supportive teachers within their traditional schools.

The teachers who participated early in the program described the excitement they felt over participating in something new, an educational opportunity they could contribute

to the development of its components. Through their participation in the program and beyond curriculum development opportunities, they talked about learning different aspects about their own history. For example, Bella talked about how deeply she reflected on the lesson by our danza Mexica instructor on the meaning and importance of the circle:

> We always teach the children about the conquistadores, the explorers, what they did, and all those things, but [the danza leader] introduced us to an aspect of history that I wasn't aware of. [She talked about] how these foreigners came in and tried to change the [indigenous peoples'] way of life, which we all know of. But one of the things [I learned was] how powerful the circle was [for indigenous communities] because, in the circle, everyone is equal, you can see everybody. As soon as the [conquistadores] came, it's like, "Oh no. You have to be in a line [because it's easier to control people]. Everything's in order." It really opened my mind to thinking about the effect the colonization had on the way [indigenous people] were living. (Bella, personal communication, February 27, 2016)

Bella further explained that she also learned about the importance and role that drumming served in indigenous communities. Drumming was a way to communicate and used for ceremony, for example, in preparation for battle. The conquistadores took away the drums of those they conquered, thus, suppressing community and cultural knowledge. She continued:

> I really love that because, as a classroom teacher, that's what you always want [to be aware of]. You don't want to be this authority figure [that suppresses knowledge] and you're the only one with knowledge. You want to have a community [of learners] in your classroom. When I think of the circle, it just fits in with the classroom. (Bella, personal communication, February 27, 2016)

For Bella and others, these lessons served not only to learn about the history missing in the textbooks but also to reflect on their praxis as teachers. Cuauhtli teachers were not interested in the banking method of teaching. Instead, they claimed to subscribe to problem-posing education where teachers are also students and students are also teachers (Freire, 2000). The goal of problem-posing education is to develop as critical thinkers through this exchange of knowledge (Freire, 2000).

The teachers described Cuauhtli as a space where they could extend their own networks of support while at the same time expanding the network of support they could offer their students, parents, and the community:

> This is how can we further make networks into our communities so that we can empower more than just these 30 students walking into the ESB-MACC. (Micaela, personal communication, December 19, 2016)

These connections spurred a desire to grow Cuauhtli and offer more. Some expressed their desire to open a Cuauhtli school, to place a Cuauhtli afterschool program in their traditional schools, and to open other satellite campuses to serve the extended community that is located further away.

Micaela also shared that through Cuauhtli and the network it provided, she had started to connect with other Salvadorian teachers with whom she engaged in critical conversations about the specific needs of the other communities of which they were a part of. They discussed additional programs they could build with the particular focus of empowering women and to serve unaccompanied minors, specifically those from Central American countries who are less likely to have an extended network of support once they arrive in the U.S. She wanted to write a book to tell the story of her people, the *Salvadoreño* people.

The teachers talked about enjoying the flexibility and freedom offered in Cuauhtli that is lacking in a traditional schooling space. They also spoke about feeling respected as professionals in Cuauhtli:

> I still don't feel [empowered] in the [traditional] classroom because there is so many outside factors… it gets a little frustrating and a little bit daunting and I feel like through Cuauhtli it's completely different. It's like, just even hearing you call me a master teacher makes me feel amazing. There is just so much more [value] behind that and I don't get that on a daily. It's really—it's a hard job being a teacher and it's exhausting… When I heard about Cuauhtli, it's like, "that's what I'm looking for." And I need that little spark to just keep me going and [think

> about] how to bring that back into my classroom, Monday through Friday. (Linda, personal communication, December 10, 2016)

The teachers reported using the Cuauhtli curriculum in their classrooms.

Cuauhtli teachers described engaging in subversive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009), that is, they actively challenge the system in their classrooms. They would perform that standard curriculum in front of their peers and administrators when they felt it was necessary. However, they would switch to critical bilingual pedagogy behind closed doors. While they stated implementing Cuauhtli curriculum in their traditional classrooms, those who work at campuses where they describe being the only individuals that have a critical perspective on bilingual education and culturally relevant teaching, appeared to subscribe to a greater degree to subversive teaching.

Lasting Impact of Proyecto Maestría

Cuauhtli provides some professional development opportunities for our teachers and across the district. However, Cuauhtli is not nor is it meant to be a teacher preparation program. Rather, it is a space for teachers to develop their praxis. As discussed earlier, about half of our teachers have not participated in a preparation program that is grounded in critical race or critical bilingual theory. With the end of Proyecto Maestría, teachers have turned to Cuauhtli to find those supports and networks, albeit, to a lesser amount due to the limited amount of time.

Those who have taken the lead in providing this knowledge to other teachers in Academia Cuauhtli are Proyecto Maestría graduates. Three of the participants in this study and many of our other Cuauhtli teachers graduated from this master's program. The rest of the our Cuauhtli teachers were recruited by Proyecto graduates. It is a small but tightly knit community of bilingual, dual-language teachers with critical perspectives.

Miguel brought up a number of times that Proyecto Maestría helped him to not only strengthen is pedagogy but also changed his life:

> En cada persona que eh tenido la oportunidad les eh dicho como Proyecto me cambio la vida, la forma de ver las cosas y la forma de ensenar también… ahora tengo otro concepto de los México-Americanos que están aquí, que ha vivido aquí por muchos años o que ha vivido en los estados unidos. Yo recuerdo que cuando llegue yo aquí, tenía un concepto de la gente de México 'porque no hablan español, porque no les gusta hablar bien su idioma.' Y no te das cuenta de que ha sido toda una historia de discriminación desde antes que llegara uno aquí, ha sido toda una historia de discriminación y eso ha contribuido a que la gente no tenga una buena actitud hacia el español y a veces quieres tenerla, pero no encuentras todos los elementos necesarios para poderte sentir orgulloso de tu lenguaje. ¿Porque en la escuela que te hacen sentir? Que tu lengua, que tu cultura no es una cultura de la que te tienes que sentir orgulloso sino tienes que sentir avergonzado. Entonces eso yo no lo sabía porque cuando fui a Texas State para el bachelor's degree, todo eso no te lo dicen. Te dan una preparación así muy básica, entonces tuve que ir a Proyecto Maestría para darme cuenta de todo esto y si no voy a proyecto, no me doy cuenta. Y muchas maestras, eso mismo les pasa.
>
> [In each person that I have had the opportunity, I told them how Project changed my life, the way I see things and the way I teach ... Now I have another concept of the Mexican-Americans who are here, who have lived here for many years or who has lived in the United States. I remember when I came here, I had a concept of the people of Mexico 'because they do not speak Spanish, because they do not like to speak their language well.' And you do not realize that it has been a whole history of discrimination since before it arrived. One here has been a history of discrimination and that has contributed to people not having a good attitude towards Spanish and sometimes you want to have it, but you do not find all the necessary elements to be able to feel proud of your language. Because at school they make you feel? That your language, that your culture is not a culture that you have to feel proud of, but you have to feel ashamed. So, I did not know that because when I went to Texas State for the bachelor's degree, they do not tell you that. They give you a very basic preparation, so I had to go to Project Master to realize all this and if I do not go to project, I do not realize. And many teachers, the same thing happens to them.] (Miguel, personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Miguel admitted that he had struggled greatly trying to make sense of race relations in the U.S., a struggle he continues to grapple with. He used to feel decentered around generational Mexican Americans because he did not always understand why they had

"chosen" to let their Spanish language and Mexican culture go. After attending Proyecto Maestría he had an increased awareness and understanding of the domination of the English language and the oppressive systems that forced assimilation on those from different backgrounds.

When discussing Proyecto, George focused more on the impact the program had in helping him build a healthier sense of self and spurring a sense of action:

> I guess it gave me a lot of more confidence and I learned so much first of all from Dr. Deborah Palmer. The course work was just a lot of it was so new and ways of making sense of things that I hadn't really considered before and on the other hand there was so much of it. It was like "ahh, finally this is making sense," right? Like I see this, and I sense this frustration and now its articulated or I hear from other teachers that are having the same experiences and reactions… There was so many connections that helped me make sense of what's really going on here. What is it that's really happening in schools and what am I a part of, explicitly and implicitly? What role as a bilingual teacher with these students am I playing and am I comfortable with it or am I trying to change it? I think that was one of the powerful things about Proyecto. (George, personal communication, February 27, 2017)

George was spoke to great lengths about Proyecto offering him the necessary language to describe and talk back to the problems he was seeing in the schools he worked.

Bella was repeatedly spoke to the internal oppression she carried her entire life:

> I learned through Proyecto Maestría that identity really affects you, you know, it really, as I have told you my story, it does affect who you are, and I think about that all the time as teacher, who you are and what you identify with can affect you so much.. Proyecto Maestría gave me a network, you know, it gave me pride, it gave me inspiration, it empowered me… I'm going to start crying because through that, I'm here, you know, through that I am spreading the word of what we are doing, through that I became and advocate, you know through that, I met [critical professors, educators, and advocates]. It changed my life, it really did. I think I was lost, trying to find my path, and the minute I did Proyecto it was like (slap). (Bella, personal communication, December 17, 2016)

Other participants share similar feelings of inferiority that Bella often expressed.

George took this a step further, acknowledging the trauma that stemmed from schooling experiences as both student and teacher:

> That's a hard thing to admit now as an adult how tough a lot of [my schooling experience] was…I don't think I was unique in that way but I'm recognizing more and more now that is was traumatic. There was some really messed up things, that is really what led me to become a teacher, to protect kids, to shield kids from abusive schooling practices…

He also spoke about these practices being accepted and normalized:

> I do think there is a lot of things that happen, "best practices" or common ways of dealing with or even talking with children that are, in my mind, abusive and oppressive [but] are [accepted] as normal and even good. I do see myself as [disrupting] all of that. I make a concerted effort to not do with children. (George, personal communication, February 27, 2017)

Miguel, Bella, and George practiced subversive pedagogy, they would perform the standardized curriculum when their administrators conducted classroom observations but would practice culturally relevant teaching the rest of the time, behind closed doors. These were not the only teachers who engaged in subversive pedagogy; they all shared an example. However, those who attended Proyecto and other critically grounded teacher preparation programs, appeared more likely to stop performing, instead opting to confront their peers and administrators. Through teacher meetings in Cuauhtli, these conversations have continued.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

The original purpose of Cuauhtli, was to build a safe space where critical conversations and critical learnings could take place; a space where our focus could continue to be on meeting the needs of our students but conducted within a safe space that also offered us, as critical Latina/o, bilingual educators, access to the network, supports, and resources we needed to reenergize and meet our own needs. When you fly, the

attendants remind you that, in the case of an emergency, you should put on your oxygen mask on before assisting others—Cuauhtli was partly my way of ensuring the educators who were best positioned to help our Latina/o and bilingual students and continue advocating for our families and communities were putting their masks on first.

The teachers reported that many of these things were occurring, though the depth and frequency seemed correlated not only with their participation in Cuauhtli but also with their experiences in preparation programs grounded in critical theory, like Proyecto. In some ways, Cuauhtli fills a gap that was left by Proyecto. However, it is limited by the fact that teacher preparation is not the main purpose, nor would it be possible with only three hours of programming and bi-weekly teacher planning meetings.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine through oral narratives the schooling experiences of nine bilingual, dual-language teachers and the critical learnings they took away from their participation in Academia Cuauhtli. These teachers were part of an existing and growing network of teachers who already demonstrated critical perspectives in bilingual education and culturally relevant pedagogy. To frame this study, I drew from additive (Bartlett and Garcia, 2011) and subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999), along with the critical writings of Paulo Freire (2000) about education for liberation to seek out answers for the following questions:

1. What are the personal schooling experiences that lead veteran dual language teachers to participate as teachers in an additive schooling space?
2. What are the professional schooling experiences that lead veteran dual language teachers to participate as teachers in an additive schooling space?
3. What impact has this additive Saturday academy had on the veteran, dual language teachers personally and professionally?

These questions arose from a need to study the lived experiences of Latina/o dual-language teachers who continued to work in subtractive contexts but participate in a program that is additive by design.

Discussion of Findings

I began the chapter on findings from this study by introducing the life histories of each of the nine Cuauhtli teachers individually. I then conducted a cross-case analysis to explore differences and similarities not only in their experiences, but also in the way they came to make sense and meaning of these experiences. Finally, using the cross-case

analysis method again, I explored the critical learnings that arose from their participation in Academia Cuauhtli.

Personal Schooling Experiences

The bilingual-dual language educators in this study shared that as students, there were numerous instances where they encountered forced assimilation throughout their subtractive schooling experiences, including their teacher preparation. They internalized to varying degrees deficit ideology about their own culture, language, and community. For example, many were forbidden from speaking Spanish as students and were made to feel inferior because of their cultural and linguistic identity.

Most Cuauhtli teachers shared a detailed story about a time when their “otherness” was brought to their attention. These moments were centered on language, culture, skin color, or questions over their academic ability. For example, Linda was told “you don’t want to be Mexican” by her friends in third grade; Micaela was asked if her favorite ice cream flavor was chocolate since she’s brown; and Sabrina was placed in a school located in the margins and later denied the opportunity to enroll in advanced placement due to her background as Mexican immigrant. George, the Anglo participant in this study, developed a critical awareness that was primarily grounded in his schooling experience as a student placed in reading recovery and growing up surrounded by Latina/o peers in school and through sports.

There were a number of participants who talked about being enrolled in advanced placement courses. Their responses to their experiences varied, with some acknowledging this was an essential and problematic program that led to student tracking, while others seemed to relish this label. This further pointed to the fact that participants had varying levels of knowledge and critical grounding.

Those who migrated seemed to have a greater focus on trying to make sense of the way U.S. race relations are structured, the impact it has on minorities living in this country, and the inability or unwillingness of generational Latina/os to recover their lost cultural and linguistic heritage. These concerns appeared to be partially driven by their desire to understand and support younger family members who were growing up in the U.S. Those who were born and grew up in the U.S. expressed regret over losing their Spanish language and some actively sought out opportunities to reclaim it. They acknowledged feeling that their identity was fragmented and incomplete e.g. "not really American, not really Mexican." They did not have the opportunity to build a healthy cultural and linguistic identity at school. Each participant was in a different place in their journey when it came to making sense and dismantling these experiences for the sake of reclaiming a healthier sense of self.

Professional Schooling Experiences

As young professionals, some of the Cuauhtli teachers found themselves hiding from their school administrators and peers the cultural and linguistic resources that stood to make them successful bilingual educators. While they reported intuitively sensing a need for greater cultural relevance in their classroom, their lack of knowledge about their own history and culture limited their ability to develop their own lesson plans. When they did develop these lessons, they oftentimes conducted them in secrecy from their administration since they found themselves unable to defend their use. In other words, Cuauhtli teachers appeared to be engaging in subversive pedagogy, where they performed a standard way in front of their administrators and peers but were more focused on culturally relevant pedagogy behind closed doors. Furthermore, they reported working with peers who

subscribed to deficit thinking and others who dismissed classroom teaching entirely in order to engage in “drill and kill” test preparation.

Those who had the opportunity to attend a teacher preparation or a master’s program that was critically grounded became increasingly subversive, implementing additive pedagogy, and seemed to be more willing to challenge their peers and administrators. The extent to which this occurred, and the evolution of these practices was unclear but the commitment to the practice was evident.

As far as their teacher preparation, these are experiences that were mainly glossed over by the Cuauhtli teachers. This might due to the fact that the level and depth of interactions with college professors and peers are a more limited than in a K-12 classroom setting; they simply may not have had moments that stand out as being particularly impactful. I am, however, left with a sense that there is much more to say about these experiences given that many transferred to education or obtained alternative certification. Did any of the participants struggle with sense of belonging in the careers they chose first?

There appeared to be some tension around the topic of Spanish fluency for bilingual educators. Cuauhtli teachers mentioned working with bilingual education peers whose Spanish fluency was greatly lacking. The participants did not specify in conversation the ethnicity or background of the teachers they were referring to. Some of the participants in this study, themselves, are not perfectly fluent, raising the question whether there is any difference in the way they view peers of similar or different backgrounds who are not fluent in Spanish. This is particularly interesting when considering the positive impact that professional networks have had on teachers who did not attend a critically grounded teacher preparation program. We have often discussed as a group the need to reach out to and mentor novice dual-language teachers. There have been many rich discussions about who would benefit from Cuauhtli. The examples shared through conversations around the lack

of Spanish fluency, however, were often tied to examples of deficit thinking, which means those teachers described likely lack the disposition to be a part of the program.

The other major topic of conversation was around the overwhelming amount of standardized testing, including language and reading proficiency testing for bilingual students. Even in grade-levels that are not standardized testing grades, like kindergarten, the teachers had numerous tests they needed to administer and the associated paperwork to write. They shared experiences where the classroom practices of their peers where entirely centered on test preparation. Eight out of the nine Cuauhtli teacher participants have obtained a graduate degree; five of them are now continuing to work in education but, outside of the classroom. It is great that they are still invested in serving their community and are growing into positions with greater power to influence the system and prepare the next generation of teachers. However, it also points to the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to remain in the classroom regardless of teacher preparation, motivation, and disposition; master teachers are being driven out by the standardized testing. The four that remain in the classroom, Linda, Valeria, Damaris, and Bella, also expressed their interest in leaving the classroom eventually, once they no longer felt capable of remaining as energetic as they have been when teaching.

Impact of Cuauhtli

The teachers described Cuauhtli as a space where they were treated as trusted and respected professionals, where they had the freedom to collaboratively build the program and the components, and gain critical knowledge that not only helped them grown their praxis but that also taught them about their own history, helping them nourish their own sense of self. Through their involvement in Academia Cuauhtli, they reported developing a healthier sense of self and belonging; some reported learning about their own culture and

history for the first time. Participants reported turning to Cuauhtli when they felt worn out and ready to quit, when they needed to renew their energy and strengthen their resolve to continue advocating for their students and communities. The academy offered them a professional learning community where they could develop and share resources to offer their students an engaging, culturally relevant classroom experience. Academia Cuauhtli was described by the teachers as a place where they could obtain the knowledge that empowered their students and families as well as empower themselves.

Further, the community-university-district-city partnership extended this support network beyond the teachers and offered them the opportunity to enact greater policy changes, such as integrating these lesson plans into the district's curriculum roadmaps. Within their traditional schooling spaces, Cuauhtli teachers mobilized to share these practices with their peers and sought opportunities to expand the use of the curriculum throughout the grade levels.

We viewed our Cuauhtli teachers as professionals, and it was important that they knew we viewed them that way. We wanted them to feel ownership over the program and to feel empowered to drive the direction of the program components, not only the curriculum or classroom instruction. Through their interviews, they reported that this was occurring to a degree. Though less evident through their recorded interviews, in informal conversations, they more readily admitted to struggling with viewing themselves as having the right to question any of the components outside of the classroom instruction and to suggest new directions for Cuauhtli. More often than not, one of the greatest impediments appeared to be the lack of capacity and resources, such as the necessary time and resources needed to establish a Cuauhtli afterschool program at their traditional school campuses. This, again, appeared to correlate to the number of years they have taught and the amount

of support they reported having within their traditional school. Cuauhtli served as a platform that enabled them to conceptualize alternative forms of teaching and learning.

The knowledge they gained had a reported impact on their praxis and sense of self, the effects of which appeared to be ongoing and circular. The critical learnings gained offered them knowledge they could apply to make sense of their own subtractive schooling experiences and reclaim a more positive sense of self within schooling spaces. At the same time, it offered them an opportunity to reflect on the ways in which they might be perpetuating, supporting, confronting, or dismantling these practices in their classroom and with their peers and administrators. This was more readily advocated for and accomplished to varying degrees within schools where more than one Cuauhtli teacher worked. Unfortunately, those who worked in schools where they were the only Cuauhtli teacher continued to struggle with feeling isolated and disempowered while working within these traditional campuses. It was unfortunate that, because the program is only offered for three days per week on Saturdays, the time they could spend in this safe space and engaging in these critical reflections as a collaborative was limited. Nevertheless, they felt empowered enough to seek other spaces and means to continue advocating for their students and community, such as enrolling in a graduate program. It was also inspiring to know that despite these limitations, Cuauhtli still served to spur their desire to continue the dialogue and conceptualize additional programing outside of Cuauhtli.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The breadth and depth of the Cuauhtli teachers' preparation experiences varied. Those who attended a program that was critically grounded, appeared better positioned and willing to advocate for students, families, and community in more direct ways, with confidence in their knowledge. Though Academia Cuauhtli was primarily aimed at serving

the needs of Latina/o students and families, the focus on cultural and linguistic reclaiming through the development of culturally relevant programming, curriculum, and pedagogy, also appeared to greatly benefit Cuauhtli teachers who are themselves products of a subtractive schooling system.

Beyond the knowledge needed for the teachers to engage in the act of cultural and linguistic reclaiming, Cuauhtli also provided a space and network where Latina/o teachers who work in hostile school environments could find emotional and psychological support. The findings from this study pointed to the need to establish more preparation programs like Proyecto Maestría in order to meet the particular needs of Latina/o bilingual teachers. At the very least, teacher preparation programs should integrate ethnic studies requirements into their degree plans.

Growing critically conscious, community-rooted educators requires short- and long-term strategy. Academia Cuauhtli was conceptualized, planned, and implemented in a rather short span of time: the public conversation that served as the catalyst for Cuauhtli was hosted September 2013, and the academy was inaugurated January 2015. However, the relationships and networks that were leveraged were decades in the making. While some teachers reported learning about their own history for the first time, the knowledge they gained also helped them reflect on and develop their praxis, such as the importance of the circle for indigenous people and the use of lines by conquistadores as a means for control. The sense of empowerment they gained further catalyzed their immediate civic engagement and desires to pursue systemic level changes that require a sustained long-term investment.

Recommendations for Future Research

Our Cuauhtli and Nuestro Grupo members have an expressed desire to expand Cuauhtli programming. Members of other communities who wish to develop their own community-based, alternative educational spaces have also reached out to the group. However, Cuauhtli cannot be replicated. Rather, Cuauhtli can serve as model that can be used as a guide for others who seek to empower their local educators, students, and families. Cuauhtli members can offer the general guidance and information about the process, successes, and challenges that we have faced. When Academia Cuauhtli was initially conceptualized and established, I focused on leveraging the existing resources and professional networks of which I was a part and that had been built over decades prior to my arrival in Austin. Rooting our work in the community and cultivating the existing community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) is what ultimately makes Cuauhtli's impact meaningful and the work sustainable long-term. The lived experiences and perspectives of the Cuauhtli teachers presented in this study were only a single component of the various aspects of this work that needs to be formally investigated, analyzed, and shared. Examples include the work under the parent component and the policy and advocacy efforts being driven forward by Nuestro Grupo members, including the fight to establish ethnic studies in AISD and Mexican American Studies curriculum for the State of Texas.

Further, the Cuauhtli teachers in this study all work in dual-language, Title I elementary schools. The original three schools are located in a historically segregated Mexican American neighborhood experiencing rapid gentrification, while the other two are schools that serve predominantly minority communities who are also being pushed out of their neighborhoods. The teachers in this study have all lived in the city of Austin for many years and have roots in the community. Some of the participants in this study brought up the effect this had in shifting the student demographics within their schools. They

alluded to the difficulties they experienced when it came to serving Spanish learning, affluent White students. They had to find ways to reposition themselves as educators to serve these students. They were critically aware that these changes in demographics had a tendency to shift power dynamics within a school and classroom, and can result in more attention being paid to meeting the needs of White students at the expense of meeting the needs of Latina/o English language learners (Palmer & Snodgrass-Rangel, 2011). More data are needed to understand how the pushout of their Latina/o students, families, community members, and their peers impact critical bilingual educators, in particular, how the changing demographics affect their overall sense of belonging within a subtractive context and their ability to implement a culturally relevant curriculum.

The teachers in this study described engaging in subversive and disruptive teaching, patterns which have evolved over time. These are practices that also fell outside of the scope of this study. More research is needed to understand to what extent these practices occur and the extent and ways in which programs like Academia Cuauhtli impact pedagogical practices.

Finally, the interview data for this study were collected between October 2016 and February 2017, during the last presidential election. There have been seismic policy shifts ushered in under the new presidency that have undoubtedly had an immense impact on Cuauhtli teachers, students, families, and community that has not been captured for this study. Many of the Cuauhtli teachers have already begun discussions on the impact this has had on the students, families, communities, and teachers themselves. I intend to conduct additional interviews in the near future to capture the experiences of Cuauhtli teachers, some of whom have or had protections under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals that is currently under threat. All Cuauhtli and Nuestro Grupo members, including

our families and communities, have been deeply impacted by the racist political attacks of the current administration.

Appendix A: Academia Cuauhtli Accomplishments & Lessons Learned 2014-2017

Introduction: The following report presents key accomplishments and lessons learned from Year 1 and Year 2 of Academia Cuauhtli, as well as highlights for Year 3. These findings were obtained through group and individual discussions at Nuestro Grupo (NG) and Academia Cuauhtli meetings and events. The report begins with a section on the Timeline of Major Events and is then broken down into major sections based on the NG committees: Partnership, Curriculum, Fundraising, Student Recruitment & Participation, and Parental Support. NG further adheres to the idea of growing its own community-based educators, resulting in a final section titled, "Growing Our Own Educators and the Evolution of Nuestro Grupo." Lastly, it includes a list of Awards, Presentations, Publications, and a list of media links for Academia Cuauhtli that convey a sense of our impact, reputation, and notoriety.

Timeline of Major Events

Planning

- September 20, 2013 – Texas Center for Education Policy (TCEP) public conversation on the lack of Latina/o children's literature; stakeholders decided to come together to address this critical issue.
- October 9, 2013 – First strategic planning meeting.
- November 5, 2013–officially named ourselves as "Academia Cuauhtli," a Spanish-Nahuatl name that translates as either "Cuauhtli Academy" or "Eagle Academy."
- March 2014 – Partnership between, Austin Independent School District (AISD), and Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Culture Center (ESB-MACC) made official through a three-year, interlocal contract.
- May 20, 2014 – First official Tejano History Curriculum Workshop for AISD teachers
- June 2014 – AISD Summer Pilot Program & Curriculum Writer's Cadre.
- November 20, 2014—Academia Cuauhtli Vision Statement was developed.

Year 1–Spring 2015

- January 17, 2015–Academia Cuauhtli Inauguration
- May 1-2, 2015–Academia Cuauhtli Book Event and Graduation

Year 2–Fall 2015-Spring 2016

- Oct 10, 2015 - April 2, 2016 – Second Academia Cuauhtli cohort; Cuauhtli students from the first cohort, now fifth graders, were invited back to participate again.
- There was a total of 19 classes held, including 5 field trips. We cancelled classes 2 days due to inclement weather, however, an additional class was added to the schedule in March to make up for one of the canceled days.
- We had 39 students enrolled/registered. Average student attendance was16. Gentrification, as well as student test practice, were factors that resulted in lower numbers of students participating in Academia Cuauhtli across several Saturdays, particularly during the spring semester.
- April 2, 2016 – Academia Cuauhtli Book Event and Graduation
- April 16, 2016 – With co-sponsorship from the Center for Mexican American Studies and Nuestro Grupo, we held our first annual Academia Cuauhtli teacher's retreat. It was attended by 6 teachers, all of whom are NEA and AAABE members.

Year 3- Fall 2016-Spring 2017

- September 24, 2016-April 8 2017 – Third Academia Cuauhtli cohort
- There was a total of 20 classes held, including 5 field trips.
- Average student attendance on Saturday class sessions was 16 and for field trips 20
- Gentrification, as well as student test practice, were factors that resulted in lower numbers of students participating in Academia Cuauhtli across several Saturdays, particularly during the spring semester. Most students who attended were from Houston and Sánchez Elementary Schools.
- January 28-29, 2017. National Education Association, Education Austin, and National Latino Education Research and Policy Project Community Conversation to discuss the viability of a pathway into the teacher profession. It was sponsored by the National Education Association and was attended by 20 National Education Association (NEA) AISD teachers, as well as by members of NLERAP.
- October 1, 2017 – Dr. Angela Valenzuela and Paul Saldaña co-facilitate the National Education Association's Board of Directors' Hispanic Observance Convening for National Hispanic Heritage Month.
- April 7, 2017 – Academia Cuauhtli Guest Speaker and Community Conversation
- April 8, 2017 – Academia Cuauhtli Graduation
- April 9, 2017 – With co-sponsorship from Education Austin, Nuestro Grupo, and AAABE, we held our second annual Academia Cuauhtli teacher's retreat. It was attended by 10 teachers, 9 of whom are AAABE and NEA members.

Organizational Structure

- Nuestro Grupo meets regularly at the ESB-MACC on Wednesday evenings to organize the activities throughout the "Cuauhtli School Year" based on a calendar negotiated and agreed upon with our partners.

- Every NG meeting begins with *Flor y Canto* ("Flower and Song") where one of our members shares something personal that provokes thought and that encourages or inspires. *Flor y Canto* is an indigenous poetic and spiritual tradition that calls upon us to celebrate and honor life, family, and community with intention and a sense of gratitude.
- The program has rapidly evolved. Programmatic decisions are made during meetings where participation is welcome, and all input is considered.
- During Year 2, we had 13 teachers working at Academia Cuauhtli. Teachers attended a training and in-service day and participated in planning time for both teaching courses and the program. They also assisted with curriculum development for both the student and parent components, hosting the parent academy, assisted with field trips, and rode the bus.
- We also had 15 volunteers (not including the teachers) supporting the work of the program. These included community members, university students from Texas State, UT Austin, Southwestern, Austin Community College, Houston-Tillotson, and St. Edwards, East Austin Artist and Advocates, and professors. Attendance fluctuated with an average of 8 NG members attending meetings and the average number of 4 NG volunteers every Saturday. Their work included weekly calls to the parents, contact with school administrators and teachers, making materials (flyers, posters, etc.), making arrangements to help with food pick up, visiting participating schools, sewing the *danza* regalia, making house visits when necessary, assisting with bus pick up, and supporting the logistics for Academia events.

- **Nuestro Grupo and AISD Coordinators**
    - Beginning with the planning year, fall 2013, through Year 1 of Academia Cuauhtli, Spring 2015, Brenda Rubio served as the Nuestro Grupo Cuauhtli Coordinator to establish contracts, oversee the development of program components, and create the standard policies and procedures. Community members Modesta Treviño, Chris Milk, and Brenda served as community liaisons between NG and the ESB-MACC, parents, and other stakeholders the first year of the academy. In Year 2, Anthony Martinez served (and continues to serve) as the Nuestro Grupo Cuauhtli Coordinator and community liaison along with the volunteers. The community liaison role is to work with the AISD Cuauhtli Coordinator to maintain the budget, as well as to be the point of contact with the participating schools, register students, organize field trips with parents, field questions from parents, and maintain open communication across partners in order to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations germane to both AISD and City of Austin Parks and Recreation policies.
    - The AISD Academia Cuauhtli Coordinator in Year 1 was Julia Hernandez. In Year 2, Randy Bell, served (and continues to serve) as the liaison for coordinating the support of AISD. Julia's and Randy's roles were crucial

with respect to making purchases, scheduling teacher attendance, developing a scope and sequence for instruction, conducting initial training and professional development and organizing the bus service with the AISD transportation office. Coordinators also work closely with the community liaisons to address Academia Cuauhtli needs, including book purchases and other items.
  - Both coordinators support the continued evolution of the program. They guide the work of the numerous staff, volunteers, and committees, as well as the planning, development, and implementation of program activities. They also oversee the management of the budget, reports, and related records. They coordinate arrangements for guest speakers and presenters and compile the necessary program data and documents for archival records.

Partnerships

Accomplishments:

- Signed an official three-year, three-way partnership between NG, AISD, and the ESB-MACC, securing approval from both the ESB-MACC Board and the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department approval.

- **Original goals:**
  1. Sought to develop, name, and brand a Saturday Academy for emergent, fourth grade bilinguals at the ESB-MACC for approximately 100 students attending Sanchez, Metz, and Zavala Elementary Schools.
  2. Sought to cultivate informal partnerships with the arts community of Austin.
  3. Sought to cultivate an informal partnership with Education Austin in order to get books to our participating students, as well as to other AISD students via the Education Austin book drive.
  4. Sought to establish and sustain an annual, two-day curriculum development workshop with approximately 50 AISD teachers to review existing curriculum on Mexican American and Tejano history and culture and to develop educational materials on the subject; and
  5. Sought to inform the district's two-week, two-way dual language summer camp to teach Mexican American and Tejano history and culture to approximately 100 AISD students in 2015.
  6. Sought to officially launch Academia Cuauhtli on January 17, 2015 with a high-profile, well-attended inauguration covered by various media outlets, including AISD's Office of Communications

Lessons Learned:

- Limited space at the ESB-MACC meant that we needed to lower our Academia Cuauhtli enrollment to 32. However, we met our 100-student goal through the AISD Summer dual language program that served an additional 5 elementary schools.
- Student recruitment requires significant collaboration by participating schools and teachers. We learned the importance of relying on our elder former "maestras"/teachers—specifically, Modesta Treviño, a former teacher from Sanchez Elementary. The respect that our schools hold toward elders like her facilitate connections to parent support specialists, principals, and classrooms where announcements can be made.
- Planning needs to start earlier than early fall in order to facilitate information access and entrée.
- Through our informal partnership with Education Austin, we became better informed of resources that come available through union-led activities. This is coupled with our awareness of the majority of our own teachers belonging not just to the Austin Area Association for Bilingual Education (AAABE), but also to Education Austin.
- Must sustain membership of NG in order to coordinate schedules across partners, as well as to plan and implement all activities successfully in a timely manner. Despite busy schedules, NG members faithfully attended most meetings, citing the positive experience of building family not solely within the group, but with members of the partnership, as well (teachers, administrators, and staff at the ESB-MACC).
- Our two liaisons are essential to the smooth functioning of Academia Cuauhtli.
- During Year 1, we did not implement a summer program in the months after establishing NG due to a lack of planning time and resources. However, AISD was initiating a pilot one-way, dual-language summer program, which allowed us to partner through teacher training and the use of the curriculum. The instructors and administrators at these campuses reported that they were generally very pleased with the curriculum and shared anecdotal stories of the students speaking more Spanish in their dual language classrooms, showing greater interest in school, with most of them mentioning how much fun they had with Academia Cuauhtli's field trips. The trip to the Alamo in San Antonio is the most well-attended one and includes a good portion of the parents and grandparents, too.
- Formed a partnership with MindPop so that approximately 40 students and parents were able to attend Swan Lake and The Barber of Seville.

Curriculum

Accomplishments:

- Develop curriculum in Mexican American Studies that involved a close working relationship between content and curriculum specialists. Content experts developed a research-based curriculum monograph. The curriculum specialists then turned this narrative into lesson plans that support AISD's bilingual program, Gomez and Gomez DL model.
  - **Year 1:**
    - *The Tejano Monument*, *Immigration* and *Latino Civil Rights*
    - Some of these lesson plans were already embedded in the district's online social studies curriculum roadmaps.
  - **Year 2:**
    - Three new content narratives were written by Drs. Angela Valenzuela and Emilio Zamora: *Mexican American Cultural Arts in Texas; The Art of Fidencio Durán* and *Danza Azteca Indigenous Heritage, Women and Gender Studies, and Cultural Arts.*
    - Three new units of lesson plans were written based on these narratives.
    - Up to approximately 45% of the curriculum is available in English and Spanish in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 11 district-wide.
    - Work with the AISD Dual Language component of the Curriculum Writer's Cadre in Year 1 to ensure that these lesson plans are aligned with state and district standards.
    - Provide professional development for approximately 50 teachers to teach our curriculum.
    - Piloted the curriculum successfully in both Academia Cuauhtli and the district's June 2015 dual language summer school program.
    - Anecdotally, we have heard that our curriculum is getting taught in some dual language classrooms in AISD during the regular school year.

Lessons Learned:

- We have a specific skill set and capacity in curriculum writing and development and that our process is efficient and effective. An important reason for this is relationships with AISD curriculum writers that track back to an earlier effort surrounding the development of the Tejano Monument Curriculum Initiative that corresponded with the unveiling of the Tejano Monument on March 29, 2012.
- Securing help with the development of the curriculum has been ongoing: editing, translating, and integrating technology.

- The failed relationship with local artist underscored difficulties in securing permission from artists who are concerned with proprietary rights.
- We learned that *danza* is not "dance" but ceremony such that establishing it necessarily involves the danza community that emanates from Austin and San Antonio named Grupo Xochipilli that also has a nonprofit that our partnership worked with to fund as part of our curriculum.
- We also learned that —as well as our participating students, teachers, and parents— likes the balance in our curriculum that dedicates a half morning (10:30 am -12:00 pm) to *danza*. Besides educational, it enhances our program by also representing an arts and exercise component of our instruction.
- We have not been fully successful in getting our curriculum on the district's website in part due to transitions in staff from Year 1 to Year 2.
- Curricula that is available to teachers is also hard for them to find through the district roadmaps is hard for teachers to find because of how they are customarily embedded as freestanding exemplar lessons within the online social studies curriculum guide, rather than as complete lesson plans in their original form.
- NG and Academia Cuauhtli need a dedicated website where the curriculum itself can be shared with a broader public that is interested in our curriculum.

Fundraising

Accomplishments:

- Developed a close to $50,000.00 budget with AISD to cover supplies, bus transportation, and pay for participating teachers out of Title I, Title III, and district monies;
- Applied for several grants, securing a $3,000.00 grant from Humanities Texas to develop curriculum.
- AAABE decided to offer us with regular $1,000.00 support annually because of the constructive work that we do with AISD dual language teachers and culturally relevant, curriculum development in English and Spanish. AAABE is thus emerging as a solid partner with NG and Academia Cuauhtli.
- We have also secured annual $500.00 in support from a local benefactor.
- Secured funding support from UT institutions the Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies (LLILAS) and the Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) for events including one opening and two graduation ceremonies and two professional workshops.

Lessons Learned:

- Submitted unsuccessful proposals to TEGAC and the Spencer Foundation.
- Positive working relationship with the National Latino Education Research and Policy Project (NLERAP), our fiscal agent.
- Our small budget is important for covering incidentals and unexpected costs that are usually associated with field trip activities.

Student Recruitment & Participation

Accomplishments:

- Recruited students and parents from Sanchez, Metz, and Zavala dual language elementary schools.
- Coordinated teacher and volunteer schedules to call parents on a weekly basis to ensure student attendance and provide information about upcoming events.
- Coordinate bus transportation with participating schools to ensure pick-up and drop-off locations that were safe and accessible.
- Prepared teachers and volunteers for use of the ESB-MACC space according to official standards of care and other policies.
- There were three official types of contacts made on behalf of Academia Cuauhtli as part of the recruitment efforts: school officials, classroom teachers, and parents. These involved multiple in-person visits followed up with phone conversations.
- Many families joined us for fieldtrips. We had more families the second year than the first.
- Partnership luncheon for partnering school principals made them aware of Academia Cuauhtli and parents' positive experiences in the program and opened up the possibility for expansion in year 3. NB. In year 3, we added Houston Elementary as our fourth participating school largely as a result of principal, district, and teacher input.

Lessons Learned:

- Create an attendance sheet for each campus to provide information about student attendance and dropout.
- Need to anticipate rather high rates of student withdrawals. In Year 2, we allowed fifth graders to also participate so that we could fill Academia Cuauhtli to our expected number of 32 children.
- Based on conversations with several parents, we speculate that most students withdraw due to economic considerations in their gentrifying neighborhoods, as well as because of the lure of charter schools.
- Our principals in two schools speak of regular, and frequently, daily crises that have to do with students suddenly having to vacate apartments and homes where they reside in East Austin.
- Have a teacher in charge of each campus in order to communicate with parents in the event that their child has not been attending classes.

Parental Support

Accomplishments:

- Hosted 10 sessions both years on topics of interest chosen by the parents:
    - Year 1–immigrant rights, DAPA, community building, and *danza*
    - Year 2–charter schools, college-readiness, applying to middle schools, and how to communicate with your child's school
- Average attendance both years was 7 parents and/or grandparents

Lessons Learned:

- Our families want to talk and share their stories. We need to give them more opportunities to do so.
- Our parents are concerned about transitions of the children into middle school.
- We need weekly meetings to create community around a family-centered topic and someone to lead them.
- Often, grandparents instead of parents participate in Academia Cuauhtli because parents work on Saturdays.
- Parents appreciate *danza* Mexica with a number of them in Year 2 participating in it.
- Parents that accompany their children in the classroom express an appreciation for the history lessons that their children are also learning because they, too, are not knowledgeable of their history.
- After spring break, it is challenging to convene parents. We must focus on reaching all parents by phone so that their children can continue to participate in our program.
- We need to develop curriculum for parents.
- We also need to cultivate parents to help us recruit students from the schools.

Growing Our Own Educators and the Evolution of Nuestro Grupo

We envision growing our own educators in two senses. First, this involves creating a pathway into higher education that we are in the process of co-constructing so that our Academia Cuauhtli students can return to their communities (currently Districts 2 and 6 in AISD) to be the teachers of children in our communities from which they themselves originate. The second sense involves growing in educators a community-anchored, culturally relevant, action-oriented, social justice ethic and practice (see Valenzuela, A. [2016], *Growing Critically Conscious Teachers: A Social Justice Curriculum for Educators of Latino/a Youth* for a framework that provides the research base and rationale for this approach). Our accomplishments and lessons learned further convey a positive and inspiring evolution of Nuestro Grupo itself.

Accomplishments:

From the work of Nuestro Grupo, two students are now enrolled in the Education Policy and Planning Ph.D. program, as well as in the Bilingual Education Program, respectively. An additional two are now enrolled in the Education Policy and Planning M.Ed. program in the Department of Educational Administration at UT. A fifth person is currently considering enrolling in the Bilingual Education Ph.D. Program in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at UT. Of the five, three of them work or have worked as teachers or office staff in AISD. A fourth works as a teacher at KIPP Academy in Austin. The fifth is a student who has been intensely involved in the immigrant rights movement locally who is graduating soon with his master's degree and is returning to his hometown of El Paso so that he can start an Academia Cuauhtli Saturday Academy in Austin, Texas.

Over the past 2 years, undergraduate, graduate students, and university faculty from several universities have been involved either in Nuestro Grupo planning meetings or as Saturday volunteers with Academia Cuauhtli. Although mostly from UT, they also emanate from other area universities like Southwestern University, Huston-Tillotson, St. Edwards University, and Texas State University.

Lessons Learned:

1. Growing our own educators is simultaneously a short- and long-term strategy. Little did we know at the beginning that this would result in immediate impacts with prospective undergraduate and masters-level students deciding to embark on advanced degrees precisely to be able to continue contributing to this work whether in Austin or elsewhere.
2. The very act of university faculty like ourselves (Dr. Angela Valenzuela, Dr. Emilio Zamora, Dr. Christopher Milk, Dr. Jesse Gainer) holding meetings in the community to plan and carry out the multiple tasks associated with Academia Cuauhtli is a powerful draw for undergraduate students and practitioners considering higher education opportunities, particularly in the fields of education policy, curriculum and instruction, and bilingual education to date.
3. We promote a deep sense of civic engagement by modeling the intersections of research, policy, and practice, as well as through our approach that we call *convivencia* which translates roughly as building community together. Our
4. As a group, we have come to understand the importance of fostering trusting relationships as integral to promoting a deep sense of civic engagement. Trust is accomplished in various ways, including through our regular *Flor y Canto* sharing with which we open up each NG meeting; by modeling the intersections of research, policy, and practice; social events; and an explicit ethic of caring and mutuality.
5. A group of NG participants from Southwestern University from Georgetown, Texas, regularly attend NG meetings over the past two years—but not Academia Cuauhtli Saturdays due to time conflicts—is one way that we know and appreciate

the very value that we add just by the very act of convening Nuestro Grupo. They have told us in the past that attending our meetings not only inspire them to do the work that they do in Georgetown, but also gives them a sense of "how it's done."

6. There are a few people within our group that *only* attend NG meetings and are unable to volunteer on Saturdays due to time conflicts, but who are happy to be part of this initiative because it is both fulfilling to them, personally and positive for our community.
7. Nuestro Grupo is evolving into a broader community space that welcomes many visitors that want to learn about our efforts, or that seek to share with us a local opportunity.
8. Except for two paid staff positions, NG consists largely of volunteers that give generously of their time and resources, and work collaboratively despite busy schedules to make sure that all of the work for the Academy gets done as seamlessly as possible.

Media

- Bold, New Program Delivers Love and Affirmation for Austin's Latinx Students, Education Votes, National Education Association, http://www.EdVotes.org, April 4, 2017.
- KLRU/PBS Story: http://texasedequity.blogspot.com/2015/05/thanks-to-videographer-blair-waltman.html
- Austin American-Statesman: http://somos.blog.statesman.com/2015/01/15/ahora-si-featured-story-new-hispanic-enrichment-program-to-teach-students-about-their-roots/
- Austin American-Statesman: http://www.statesman.com/news/news/academia-cuauhtli-ensenara-historia-tejana-a-ninos/njpNt/

Academia Cuauhtli Important Links

- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/AcademiaCuauhtli
- Austin Independent School District (AISD short film at the bottom): http://www.austinisd.org/academics/cuauhtli
- Tejano History Curriculum Project: http://ows.edb.utexas.edu/site/tejano-history-curriculum-project
- Inauguration of Academia Cuauhtli
  - Press Conference Video, Posted March 4: http://aisdtv.blogspot.com/2015/03/press-conference-inauguration-of.html
  - http://texasedequity.blogspot.com/2015/01/academia-cuauhtli-cuauhtli-academy.html
- Academia Cuauhtli Graduation Ceremony: http://texasedequity.blogspot.com/2015/05/academia-cuauhtli-graduation.html

Appendix B: Thematic Units and Lesson Plans

- The Tejano Monument
    - The Idea of a Monument
    - Introducing The Tejano History Plaques
    - The Tejano Monument
- Mobility: Migration and Immigration
    - Understanding Human Migrations
    - Push and Pull Factors of Migration
    - Crossing Borders
- Latino Civil Rights
    - Rethinking Civil Rights
    - Mendez v. Westminster
    - Taking Action Today
- Indigenous Heritage
    - Contact
    - The Bering Strait Hypothesis
    - Stories and Myths
    - White Shaman
    - Texas Diversity
- Mestizaje
    - The Spanish Conquest
    - Food, Language, and Traditions
- Danza Azteca
    - Aztec Connections
    - The Danza Circle
    - Danza Instruments

Appendix C: Academia Cuauhtli Scope and Sequence, 2016-2017

Date	Instructional Time	Topic and Lesson
10/8/16	9:30-12:00	Civil Rights (Dia de los muertos??)
10/15/16	9:30-12:00	Civil Rights iPad Photo/Video Journal
10/22/16	9:30-12:00	Dia de los Muertos
11/5/16	9:30-12:00	Indigenous Heritage (Field Trip to PowWow)
11/12/16	9:30-12:00	Indigenous Heritage
11/19/16	9:30-12:00	Indigenous Heritage
12/3/16	9:30-12:00	Mestizaje
12/10/16	9:30-12:00	Mestizaje (Parent Meeting)
12/17/16	9:30-12:00	FIELD TRIP CANCELED
1/7/17	9:30-10:30	Teacher Planning
1/14/17	9:30-10:30	Field Trip to Mexic-arte Museum
1/21/17	Danza: 9:00-11:00 Instruction: 11:00-12:00	Danza Lesson (Sabados en Familia)
1/28/17	Mexic-arte Field Trip	
2/4/17 Chinese New Year Activity/Presentation	*(No Danza)* Instruction: 9:30-12:00	Tejano Monument
2/11/17	Sonajas 9:15-10:00 Danza: 10:00-11:00	Tejano Monument

	Instruction: 11:00-12:00	
2/18/17		Field Trip to Alamo
2/25/17	Danza: 9:00-11:00 Instruction: 11:00-12:00	Tejano Monument
3/4/17	Danza: 9:00-11:00 Instruction: 11:00-12:00	Civil Rights
3/11/17	Field Trip to Capitol/Tejano Monument	
3/25/17	Field Trip to Alma de Mujer	
4/1/16	Danza: 9:00-11:00 Instruction: 11:00-12:00	Final Class Finish Civil Rights
4/7/16	afternoon/night (5:00-10:00)	Book Event
4/8/16	9:00-12:00 or later	Graduation

Appendix D: Recruitment Email

The email below was sent to Cuauhtli teachers to inform them about the proposed study. The consent form was attached and collected during the first interview:

Dear Teacher,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to let you know I am commencing data collection for my dissertation research on the academy teachers titled "A Study Additive Teachers in Subtractive Context." I want to know what drives and motivates you to be a part of the academy!

Detailed information about this study can be found in the attached consent form and participation is voluntary. Briefly stated, participation in this study requires that to join in on one focus group discussion, agree to at least two individual interviews about an hour long each, and by commenting on a private online journal set up for this study. I'll also be collecting document data and taking ethnographic notes of the program. I'm available by email or phone to discuss and answer any questions you may have.

If you agree to participate, please sign and submit the attached consent form.

Thank you for your help and support! I am very excited and looking forward to continue learning from each of you.

Thank you,

Brenda Rubio

Appendix E: Teacher Interview Protocol

Name: Date:

Years of teaching experience:

Teacher Education Program/Certification:

Research Question: What are the personal and professional schooling experiences that led you to *Academia Aguila* and what impact has this program had on their pedagogical practice?

1. Personal and Professional Educational History Where did your parents grow up (birthplace, general education, occupations)? Where did you grow up and go to school?
    a. When you think back to your past personal schooling experiences, how would you describe them? Tell me a story that stands out.
    b. When you think back to your professional schooling experiences, how would you describe it? Tell me a story that stands out.
2. Linguistic and Cultural Understanding
    a. Describe your language use with: parents, siblings, friends, and teachers. Has this changed over time?
    b. Describe your understanding of your culture and its role in your life as well as how it has or has not changed over time.
3. Perceptions of *Academia Aguila*
    c. What prompted you to become a teacher at *Academia Aguila*?
    d. In your experience what have been the most meaningful aspects?
    e. Reflect on the scope, sequence and alignment of the instructional materials. What went well? What could have been better or different?
    f. How has the curriculum impacted you, personally and professionally, as a teacher?
    g. In reflecting on your involvement in *Academia Aguila* to date, what impact (or impacts) has it had on you personally and professionally?

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