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**Colorín colorado este cuento no se ha acabado: Modernized Folklore
Latino Style**

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Dedication

To my mother, proof that with a mother's love anything is possible. To my sons, that my love is just as dedicated and unconditional.

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Abstract

Colorín colorado este cuento no se ha acabado: Modernized Folklore Latino Style

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

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This is a children's literature review of recent Latino folklore. Three theoretical perspectives create the framework of this analysis: Funds of Knowledge (Moll, 1990), Reader Response theories (Rosenblatt, 1982), and Culturally Relevant Teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1992). This work is set within the context of bilingual education that promotes biliteracy. Four themes are identified: Latino Counter Stories of European Folklore, European Cumulative Rhymes Acculturated, New Adaptations of old Latino Folklore, and Folklore Characters in New Adventures. The first two categories include stories with Western European origins that have been adapted to a Latino perspective. In the second category all the stories are cumulative tales. The third category consists of stories of Latino origin that are retold, but modified from the traditional storyline. The last category is a mixture of both European and Latino folklore characters in completely new storylines. Students can expand their literacy while educators create an inclusive

classroom by integrating Latino literature and student's Funds of Knowledge into culturally relevant teaching.

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Introduction

I try to reflect back to my reactions to the traditional European folklore that was present in our basal readers and dominated our library in elementary school. The storylines were so familiar from various versions but they were not the folklore my grandmother told me and that I treasured. Any search for *my* stories in the library was in vain; even if they existed, I did not have access or exposure to them at the time. Misconstrued assumptions about their absences from the school library and my teachers' lips came all too easily to me. Our stories were not for writing, reading, or sharing outside of the home and community. So I tucked them away hoping that I would remember them someday for my children.

Folklore is a direct reflection of culture, tradition, and language. While the European folktales were entertaining there was little connection to my life or culture. It was not that I did not like them, but that I longed for my own, the ones I knew by heart before I learned to tie my shoes, the ones I associated with my grandparents. Olson (2010) defined folklore as "the tales, games, superstitions, *dichos* (proverbs), riddles, and songs of a culture. They are tools of instruction, collections of wisdom, and examples of core values that are passed down from generation to generation" (p. 273). Latino Folklore was hard to find in our school, libraries, and media.

Three classics in Children's Literature, *The Stinky Cheese Man* (Scieska, 1992), *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (Scieska, 1996), and *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China* (Young, 1996), changed how I thought about our folklore.

Reading them as a teacher to my students made a powerful impression on me. It was refreshing to read a well known story from the perspective of another character such as the antagonist instead of the protagonist or in a completely new setting and culture. The students were particularly excited by this out of box thinking and were inspired. I searched for variations from other cultures to the “Western Classics” like *Cinderella*, *the Three Little Pigs*, and *Jack and the Bean Stalk*. I finally found in my searches children’s books about Latino folklore, the stories I grew up with, and I connected instantly. Latino Folklore consists of stories originating in and collected from Latin America and Spain including many indigenous peoples. Along with the Latino folklore books I found some books that were by Latinos but, retold European folklore.

My students were energized by these new stories even if they were not exact fits with their versions, which led to deep and extensive class discussions with high participation. Not only was our folklore being written, read, and shared, but we were also appropriating the European folklore as our own. What inspired me to study the benefits of folklore were the reactions students had after I did a unit on Latino Folklore Literature. Their own stories started coming out: they were having discussion at home about variations in folklore. Some wrote stories I had never even heard of. This was the awakening that occurred with culturally relevant teaching.

By branching out our library literature to include students’ language, culture, and folklore teachers can open a door for students to connect to what they read. Carlson (1972) suggests grouping similar folktales from different countries or cultures for comparison. Such activities teach students about universal themes and cultural diversity.

This expands the child's imagination to carry the same story line through various backgrounds and setting. As they play and interact with one another and the text, they create new experiences that might be out of reach otherwise. Variations build further understanding, but when they can connect culturally and linguistically, bringing the story very close to their own, then the students creates meaning making experiences.

Connecting our students' lives with what they read, write, and learn in school is critical. Moll et al. (1990) defines *the funds of knowledge* concept as "the essential bodies of knowledge and information that households use to survive, to get ahead, or to thrive" (p.20). This "knowledge" is passed on to children from family and friends through social sharing and interaction. This must be tied in with the curriculum we teach for students to make lifelong learning connections and feel empowered through their education; not isolated because of it.

In this paper, I review a group of stories for children described as Latino literature, recently published, focusing on the genre of folklore and propose that this literature can be used as a tool to engage, inspire, and motivate bilingual students in discussions of texts and on counter storytelling. To aid teachers in this process I propose four categories of modern Latino Folklore and discuss their potential for classroom use. I frame the analysis of the literature within three theoretical perspectives: Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1990), Reader Response theories (Rosenblatt, 1982), and Culturally Relevant Teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1992). I argue that the integration of Latino folklore in classroom instruction is one way of inviting and integrating Latino students' Funds of Knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992) into the literacy

curriculum, especially into the bilingual curriculum. To begin with, I will provide some background about the educational context of Latino students to further understanding of why a greater effort must be made to include students' Funds of Knowledge into Latino children's education.

Education

There is an estimated rise in dropout rates among Latino students in high school, with nearly 40% of all Latino children not graduating from high school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). Statistics about Latino student body's graduation rates are dismal, yet little has changed about the curriculum used to teach those students. The issue can no longer be ignored as Latinos have become the largest ethnic minority in the United States as of 2002, with over 38 million residents identifying as Latino (U.S. Census, 2005). According to Naidoo (2010), "In addition to being the largest and fastest-growing ethnic minority in the United States, Latinos are also the youngest" (p. 21). This gives a red warning signal to challenge educational institutions to provide the constitutionally protected right to an education that best meets the students' needs. Ladson-Billings (1998) points out that we can no longer use students as scapegoats for their academic failure: "Thus, instruction is conceived as a generic set of teaching skills that should work for all students. When these strategies or skills fail to achieve desired results, the students, not the techniques, are found to be lacking" (pg 19). Latino students' needs cannot be met by a standard issued, sterile curriculum devoid of a reflection on their home/original culture, and language. It is the educators' duty to find the best available tools to reach bilingual/ bicultural students and inspire them with a love of learning and reading.

Many additive bilingual models are proving successful by developing biliteracy through culturally relevant instruction, inclusion of familiar funds of knowledge, and authentic Latino Literature in Spanish. Less knowledgeable programs might purchase

and use books simply translated to Spanish; and while a percentage of these may be relevant and useful, the majority of the currently used books are not engaging Latino students in profound, meaningful discussions. Unfortunately, inauthentic translated books can easily overwhelm a small bilingual classroom library and make up the majority of books available to students.

According to the statistics provided by the Cooperative Children's Book Center, Latino authored books comprise less than 50 out of 5,000 published children's books in the U.S in 2008 (Naidoo, 2010). While the Latino population booms, they do not appear to be keeping up in terms of publishing books, leaving a gap in their bilingual, bicultural literacy development. Historically books about Latinos have been riddled with stereotypes, omissions, misunderstanding, and devoid of their cultural richness. With so few new Latino books coming into the libraries, bookstores and schools teachers must make a conscious and deliberate effort to select authentic Latino children's books.

English Language Learners

The cultural capital and multilingualism with which students outside of a White middle-class setting come to school is continuously ignored to the detriment of all students. The education culture is based on the white middle-class; anything or anyone that varies is marginalized. Arajo (2009) explained, "These discrepancies result in ELL students' placement in remedial and special education settings or tracks because of teachers' tendencies to view these students from a deficit perspective" (p. 119). She found this negative impact on minority students could be reversed by implementing

culturally relevant teaching, incorporating funds of knowledge into the school curriculum, supporting open communication with the community, and providing additional assistance to families in need.

Jimenez (2000) researched literacy practices that would engage Latino students and further their academic success. He argued that literacy development is of greatest importance to students who are marginalized because of their race, culture, or language in our education system. Jimenez (2000) proposes using a student's home language in literacy development and the daily interaction. He urges educators to focus on development of students' identities and unique voices to enhance learning.

All literacy, curriculum, and instruction have the ability to negate or affirm a student's identity. When Latino students begin to develop their biliteracy they are better able to negotiate the duality of their identity as bicultural students without denying either side. Nieto and Frau-Ramos (1991) conducted a study of Puerto Rican high schools students and their experiences in school. They suggest that having bilingual programs and culturally relevant curriculum may in fact transform their experiences and support academic success. Thomas and Collier (2002) found that two-way developmental bilingual programs were the only programs that allowed high achievement and had the fewest dropouts.

On the other hand, Nieto and Frau-Ramos's (1991) study shows that while language is key for these programs, it is not the sole factor for the success rate. The ideologies of the faculty and staff towards Latino students are also important. One case study highlighted in their study, Jose, expressed feeling of loneliness, being an outsider,

and eventually dropped out. The authors concluded that “Because of his feelings of isolation, Jose is neither able to benefit from his educational and social experience in Holyoke nor to build on his culture and language to help him succeed” (p. 31). This one example reflected a common feeling of the many Puerto Rican students they interviewed; both graduates and dropouts. Nieto and Frau-Ramos (1991) reviewed the high school’s curriculum and found no courses on Puerto Rican history and only limited references to the Latino experience in other classes. Nieto and Frau-Ramos (1991) hence suggest, “Bilingual education, then, is an important way for schools to mediate students’ experiences in school, helping them to acculturate to the educational environment while using the language and culture with which they are most familiar” (p.36).

When biliteracy within schools is not an option students are pushed to choose a side of their identity, which may have detrimental consequences. The excessive dropout rates of Latinos students may be a testimony to this form of abuse by our educational system upon minority students. We cannot deny part of our students’ identities and expect full participation and academic success.

Within any given culture there are multiple languages and literacies that exist. Students who live on transnational borderlands such as the Mexico/U.S. border often navigate their lives and identities through multiple literacies that utilize both English and Spanish. Medina (2010) researched the translocality of these students as a resource for their literacy development. She defined translocality as more than multiple locations, and how those places were interconnected and constantly fluid. Our school system should

take advantage of these advanced literacies instead of compartmentalizing student's identities.

Translocality must be acknowledged as an integral part of bicultural and bilingual identity. The distinction between institutionalized literacies and funds of knowledge in the home of Latino students is further impacted by the intricacies between local and global. While we have been increasingly experiencing the globalization of economic markets, media, and literature, it has been ignored within our primary education institutions. Gutierrez, Asato, Santos, and Gotanda (2002) brought attention to “backlash pedagogies” in which educators are limited to strict curriculum with little range of literature. Such limitations affect the depth and gauge of discussion and therefore impact literacy development. School systems have stuck to a rigid definition of what literacy is and how it is used. This reduced definition of literacy has thrust English acquisition as the primary goal of instruction (Gutierrez, et al., 2002). This stance has limited both educators and students alike in their development of literacy and exploration of literature. How and what we accept as literature and student responses in the learning of literacy should be questioned. Globalizing our educational institutions means accepting and including different literacies especially those of students.

Medina (2010) argues, “Specifically with regards to literature response practices the use of a translocal framework has the potential to expand current research on students' engagement with texts and identity formation, particularly in relation to multicultural and multilingual contexts” (p. 42). Learning English and studying mainstream literature while excluding and marginalizing the language and literacy practices students bring

from their homes and communities can foster avoidance behaviors and marginalize English language learners further.

Subtractive bilingualism and English-only initiatives feed real fears of language loss and culture disregarded. When California passed proposition 227, the sudden change to English-only, left students with a fear of failure both at assimilating and academics (Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, Asato, 2001). Through biliteracy we can avoid imposing fear and failure on Latino students and develop English and Spanish literacy in an effective and positive manner. As Naidoo (2010) asserts, “the U.S. educational system can take immediate action toward correcting this problem by providing Latino students with positive reflections of Latino Cultures from the moment they enter school” (p.23). Curriculum that is culturally relevant and engaging will be much more effective at promoting advanced literacy skills and high order thinking in both languages.

Theoretical Perspectives

In this paper I draw from three theoretical frameworks: Reader Response theories (Rosenblatt, 1982), Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1990), and Culturally Relevant Teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1992) to support the idea that culturally relevant literature, Latino folklore in this instance can support biliteracy and biculturalism.

Rosenblatt's Reader Response Theory

Rosenblatt (1982) presented a strong argument for aesthetic reading that links past experiences with a new text to find meaning. When we identify with characters, their problems, and emotions we are able to internalize the story. Through this experience a child is able to interact with the text and creates strong responses to it. Rosenblatt (1982) presents two ways of reading: efferent (from Latin "to carry away"), reading to gain knowledge and instruction, and aesthetic (from Greek "to perceive or sense"), for the experience and emotion (p.269). Rosenblatt (1982) recognizes that both efferent and aesthetic reading should be taught, but point out that aesthetic reading is frequently overlooked by our schools.

Rosenblatt (1982) encourages teachers to appreciate the student's personal experiences with a text even if doing so initially overlooks the author's intended focus because the child is finding meaning and connection with the story. Too often teachers are quick to correct students' perspectives of the given text and align it with a mainstream point of view. She explains, "It is more important that we reinforce the child's discovery that texts can make possible such intense personal experience" (Rosenblatt, 1982, p. 272).

Otherwise, teachers risk discouraging students' interest in literature and reading by downplaying or ignoring students' discoveries with the text. This ultimately will cause limited engagement in discussion where the author's intentions can be questioned and affirmed.

Teachers and schools greatly limit students' reading potential by dismissing their transactions with untraditional texts in their culture and home environment. By separating home and school into worlds that never meet we are asking children to choose and devalue aspects of their identity to participate in one or the other. Rosenblatt (1982) states that a large part of the solution is to recognize and present texts with which students can relate and find links to their own experiences and lives, which in turn creates new opportunities in language and reading.

Rosenblatt (1982) believes that through reflection on one's own aesthetic interaction with texts one can benefit from learning from others and their experiences. "For years I have extolled the potentialities of literature for aiding us to understand ourselves and others, for widening our horizons to include temperaments and cultures different from our own, for helping us to clarify our conflicts in values, for illuminating our world" (Rosenblatt, 1982, p. 276).

In their study of third graders' engagement in culturally relevant Latino literature, Lohfink and Loya (2010) found that students did make oral and written connections to the books presented and that there was positive feedback from parents as well. They found that students' personal experiences had a great influence in their reading. They showed that students discussed and wrote about the familiar themes and folklore in the

books presented. An excerpt from Lohfink and Loya (2010) reflects the advancement of the students' thought process:

In other words, Antonio's response reflects how his cultural background knowledge influences what he selectively attended to in listening to the picture book, as his stances demonstrate descriptive information retained about *chupacabras*, as well as a personal plan, just in case he actually encounters a *chupacabras* in the backyard. (p. 347)

Antonio's personal experience helped him retain details from the story as well as think ahead if ever a chance encounter might occur between him and the chupacabras. Lohfink & Loya (2010) found this kind of meta-cognitive response to be a positive reflection of his engagement with a text and a testament to the use of culturally relevant literature. Lohfink & Loya (2010) discussed Rosenblatt's (1978) work on reader response in literature; they noted that, "a reader's meaning-making comes about through the rich transactions between him/her and literary texts" (p.349).

From their results emerged two themes of importance for teachers in how Mexican American students responded to or engaged with culturally relevant texts. They reported the students as having responded with both efferent and aesthetic connections at high levels in their verbal and written responses to the text. The foci within their responses reflected cultural dimensions from the story as well as personal stories influenced by the texts (Lohfink & Loya, 2010). To see Latino students actively engaged in biliteracy practices, making connections between home and literature, themselves and others is the very reason we must promote culturally relevant books such as folklore.

Culturally Relevant Teaching

Ladson –Billings (1992) describes the gap between students of color and White students on literacy measures as a serious matter that affects their overall academic success. She notes that while research on cultural differences with the materials used for teaching minority students is popular, her research concerns the interaction between the students and teachers. Ladson-Billings studies how teachers of the same and different race from students are both able to apply culturally relevant pedagogy within their classroom.

She defines culturally relevant teaching as teaching that goes beyond combining school and home culture, but uses student culture as the springboard to reflect and inquire about themselves, others, curriculum, and accepted knowledge with society. The teachers that Ladson-Billings studied allowed culturally relevant teaching to umbrella the techniques of whole language or traditional approaches to literacy. They make students' culture the frame of reference for all literacy celebrating and exploring students' backgrounds. Culturally relevant teaching meant that students' home vernaculars were accepted and understood, the physical space was shared with teachers like kin, and the classroom atmosphere was that of a cooperative learning environment. These teachers were successfully teaching literacy to students of color in part because of the classroom atmosphere they created. One highly visible strategy they incorporated was using various forms and styles of print, from textbooks to pamphlets. They created a “community of learners” with a comfortable home-like environment and group setting.

The teachers in this study of culturally relevant teaching did not follow a scripted curriculum; instead they made their own decisions about how and what to teach their students; frequently exceeding state and district standards. They were not preoccupied by the standardized tests; their focus was on learning. They made a concentrated effort to use students' culture as the basis for curriculum. Students were led by the teachers to compare and contrast their own experiences with those in the texts and the content they learned. Above all they taught students that literacy is a tool for them to explore their world. By bringing in Latino folklore teachers can begin to create such a classroom and develop culturally relevant curriculum around such literature.

Funds of Knowledge

Fránquiz and Salazar (2004) discuss the perspective to education called “humanizing pedagogy” coined by Paulo Freire (1970) as a means of promoting student academic development by recognizing children as valuable human beings who come to school with their own experiences, values, and knowledge. In their research they found that high school Latino students responded best to a school setting that provided respect and trust, peer advice and teaching, and had exemplars to follow as role models. Although the manner in which respect and trust is established varies from culture to culture, both of these values are required for any student to feel safe and achieve to their fullest potential in an academic setting.

When we accept students through a humanizing pedagogy we cannot deny any part of their identity; we must embrace and celebrate it within our curriculum: “In

schools that attempt to construct an academic identity that reflects a positive disposition toward heritage language and culture, students have the opportunity to become bilingual, bicultural and biliterate” (Fránquiz & Salazar, 2004, p. 51). When we are speaking of students achieving their fullest potential we cannot limit them to one language or one way of knowing. When we recognize and develop multiple ways of knowing the entire class, staff, school, and community benefits.

Moll et al. (1990) demonstrated how detrimental some teachers’ assumptions could be about language minority students. Students vary in their ability to speak and read their native language and/or English adding to the complexity of a language minority classroom. Their cultural backgrounds and history also differ greatly. When schools apply a deficit model towards language minority students, Moll argues, they may in fact be hindering their English language development.

Creating a safe space within the curriculum for students to express their language, culture, and identity without prejudice is key for academic success. Moll et al. (1990) suggested that one way of accomplishing this kind of freedom and achievement in the classroom is by bringing family and community into the curriculum.

Moll’s et al. (1990) findings suggest that culturally relevant instruction helped students to have greater self-esteem and confidence in their knowledge and ability, greater ease in the attainment and retention of new content and skills, and more frequent exposure to other cultures and ways of knowing which they were more likely to apply at home.

Often, teachers take students' English oral skills as evidence of their academic or content knowledge (or lack thereof). This presumption leads to weak curriculum and unchallenged minds. Moll et al. (1990) states, "What the readers should keep in mind is that these reductions of the curriculum are systemic; they are not the exception but the rule; in fact, they are part of the political connections or relationships between society and schools" (p.19). We cannot disrupt this pattern without altering the status quo curriculum that features exclusively mainstream students' culture, language, and ways of knowing. Teachers need to recognize and accept that all students enter the classroom with the social and cognitive resources most valued in their households. For most teachers their "funds of knowledge" are very different than their students. This kind of diversity is a great benefit in a classroom setting and should be celebrated and explored.

Moll et al. (1990) questions how we socialize our language minority students into literacy and whether students are actively engaged in literacy practices that are meaningful to them. In his research he describes the sad truth of very prescribed literacy curriculum and limited opportunity for engagement of students' "funds of knowledge". He suggests several ways for teachers to bring students' "funds of knowledge" into the classroom for more authentic and active literacy learning. While the occasional parent visit into the classroom is a great contribution, Moll focuses on daily and systematic ways of creating culturally relevant literacy. This requires more interactive lessons in reading and writing that engage students in sharing their literacies with one another in order to create meaning making experiences and connections to new knowledge.

Moll et al. (1990) explains how bilingualism is a tool for literacy, “It forms an integral part of the classroom community and a means for children to expand their literate and social experiences” (p. 40). Teachers should strive to include all aspects of a child’s identity within the classroom; because a bilingual child’s his native language is deeply intertwined into his/her being. By using materials, literature, and lessons in both languages we expand the possibilities for the acquisition and retention of new knowledge. When teachers include both languages they allow interesting and complex literacy to guide students’ language learning.

De La Piedra (2010) also researched how using students’ funds of knowledge to inform curriculum practices could be beneficial to their academic success. She researched students from the Texas /Mexico border region and noted that while it is common knowledge that the inclusion of student’s language and cultural practices is important to their academic achievement in the school setting, overcoming the institutionalized curriculum still proves to be a major obstacle. Specifically her work entails the use of students’ vernacular literacy practices from home as beneficial in a traditional school setting. Non-standard vernacular is beginning to make a presence in Latino Children’s literature.

De La Piedra (2010) defines funds of knowledge as, “cultural and material resources that families and communities distribute among their members to solve problems they encounter in their everyday lives, such as literacies” (p. 576). She also states that various literacies are acquired from peers within the community and even among siblings within a family. Translation between two languages or more is one of the

literacies very present in schools, yet completely ignored within the curriculum. These various components to a family's funds of knowledge are internalized from an early age and utilized when given the opportunity. I propose in this paper that through the use of folklore literature we can create those opportunities for Latino/a students' Funds of Knowledge to be used.

De La Piedra reported students often brought the ways of knowing learned in school home to share with other family members. This level of interaction and looking out for one another should be welcomed in a collaborative learning environment. Folklore has such a long history because of people's daily interaction and storytelling. Parents and extended family can use folklore to help make the connection to reading through this interaction. For grandparents and parents to see their cultural folklore in books can be just as powerful as it is for their children; especially when it is in a bilingual book, because having their native language as well as the English translation means that it is accessible to all. We can use this sense of community and togetherness in the classroom to further the understanding of culturally relevant literature which the entire family might enjoy.

Thus broadening the definition of literacy we further develop students' English and native language skills. "By focusing on what students contribute instead of what they lack, teachers can help students develop self-images as strong writers" (De la Piedra, 2010, p. 582). This holistic view of literacy benefits everyone by allowing students to develop an academic identity that includes their family's funds of knowledge and the ability to share it with others. Students are aware of their parents' literacy level whether

advanced or limited, but to see the school system recognize other literacies in which the family has strength, such as folklore, extends the level of respect and community that should be achieved between school and home.

One way educators can demonstrate acceptance and motivate children to read and write is by collecting family stories. Buchoff (1995) described family stories as a rich field from which to plant and harvest seeds of literacy. “Family stories handed down from generation to generation become a family’s folklore. They help to define who we are and enable us to perceive past generations” (Buchoff, 1995, p. 232). As students retell their history and begin to publish personal stories they take on the role of author and reader.

This act is invaluable for validating a student and the funds of knowledge with which they come to school. Their families actively engage in this process and provide additional support to their student’s literacy development.

For example, a fairy tale project required students to ask their parents to tell them a folk story, myth, or fairy tale from their native country. The student wrote the English version of the story, and the parent wrote the version in their native language. The family worked together creating paper dolls representing the cast of characters in the story. The student then shared the story and dolls with the class, and the parent visited the class and presented the story. The class had the opportunity to listen to all the students’ stories and to meet all the parents who visited the class. (Arajo, 2009, p. 119)

Arajo (2009) found that each step of this process - listening to an elder tell a story, rewriting it, sharing it in class, and publishing can be cognitively beneficial. Classroom projects such as this demonstrate cultural diversity of a student body in a positive manner which generates inclusiveness and acceptance. Culturally relevant teaching encompasses

native language instruction, cultural and ethnic diversity, and is open to different ways of knowing.

Folklore

In this section I explain why folklore is of importance and how it can be utilized to benefit all students. “Folktales reflect people past and present. They answer the who, what, where, when, why, and how of a people’s cultural origins, traits, composition, belief systems, and so forth” (Olson, 2010, p. 273). Folklore can break into many genres, themes, and literary forms which are unique to each culture and language. Olson (2010) broke down Latino Folklore into two categories: Cuentos and Mitos. The books presented in this paper fall under Cuentos which include religious, magic, romantic, trickster, cumulative, and scary tales. This extensive diversity has been passed on from generation to generation in the traditions of both storytelling and written form.

Despite the antiquity of this art form it remains actively present in children’s literature the world over. Bader (2010) found in the Storytellers Sourcebook that, “Of the 555 folklore picture books published in the nineties (out of a total of 675 folklore books overall) between a third and a half came from entities other than established trade publishers, and from locations other than New York or Boston” (p. 27). What this means for teachers is that folklore is a genre from minority populations that can break into the mainstream. The question now is how teachers can use this influential tool to develop and advance student’s biliteracy and biculturalism.

Koehnecke (1995) did research on folklore and multiple intelligences. She experienced a lack of both through her own literacy education and thought techniques for multiple intelligences could help a diverse body of future teachers to develop engaging literacy lessons. In her classroom she promoted the work of Gardner's (1989) seven intelligences: linguistic, logical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal. According to Gardner's theory, everyone differs in the specific profile of the seven intelligences. Folklore lends itself very well to the development of these areas because of the storylines, rhymes, characters, and personal nature.

Because folklore is a literacy commonly found in the home either in books or through oral history, it can be used to implement lessons using multiple intelligences. Koehnecke (1995) proposed that listening and telling a story develops linguistic abilities, as well as problem-solving, which is common within the storyline. Asking students to illustrate stories can further their spatial reasoning, and plays or acting out the story takes kinesthetic energy. Additionally, the interpersonal growth comes from the high interaction level in oral storytelling, and as children connect the moral of the story to their own set of values, they achieve the intrapersonal aspect. She further elaborates on the benefits of each of the categories within her research. Her work is just one example of how folklore lends itself to multiple lessons.

In comparing folklore to multiculturalism, Hamer (2000) stated, "The projects of each field seem similar and highly compatible: both strive to bring the voices and experiences of institutionally marginalized individuals and groups into educational institutions" (p. 45). While having a voice and telling your story has always been a part of

folklore, educators now have the books to share these stories in classrooms no matter their composition. When an informal and personal art such as folklore is recognized in educational institutions we are encouraging other funds of knowledge to enter the classroom.

Hamer (2000) noted five themes within folklore education materials, “(1) valuing nonprofessional, everyday artistic expressions; (2) instilling local and family pride; (3) challenging the authority of elite and popular culture; (4) recognizing "indigenous teachers" as authoritative; and (5) promoting collaborative action” (p. 47). The “indigenous teachers,” being our family members and friends that provide us with funds of knowledge, should have power within our educational institutions. Materials with these themes would benefit all students, but would be of special interest to students of color who have been historically marginalized in our educational institutions. While providing all students with experiences of new and different cultures’ folklore promotes appreciation of those different from the mainstream and normalizes variation from the White middle class standard.

It is important to recognize that folklore literature is not sufficient for raising and discussing greater issues of inequality and discrimination present in our society today, but it is a small step toward accepting diversity and instilling pride in students of color. Hamer (2000) notes that folklore has the power to bring out the diversity in a group which may appear homogenous. An excellent example would be Latino folklore which varies greatly from country to country and region to region despite a shared language and cultural aspects. The same could be said about European nations which might share a

very small geographical space and common physical characteristics, but are very distinct in their cultures, languages, and folklore. She points out that family folklore should be used to help students of the majority culture find their roots.

Hamer (2000) provides further insight into the benefits of folklore literature, emphasizing that it is simple enough that all participants can be producers and yet complex enough that each person creates something unique no matter their age or ability. When students observe the same stories, trades and skills, and family values in the classroom as the ones they experience at home they can merge pieces of their identity as language minorities, students of color, and intelligent academics.

Rupiper and Zeece (2005) researched the benefits of using folklore literature. They reiterated the universal appeal, the link between generations, and the unconventional thinking of folklore. They maintained that the traditional purposes of folktales - to pass on history, explain natural phenomenon, and teach morals - are still of interest to children today. With happy endings, justice served, and good triumphing against evil, folklore has always created an entertaining fantasy world for societies, particularly for the youth. The presentation of these folktales be it through song, rhyme, or sly humor is engaging to beginning readers without being diluted in content.

Rupiper and Zeece (2005) point to various versions of the same folklore as a space to explore the content of a story. By using the same basic storyline students can discuss various points of view, compare and contrast, and find multiple paths of problem solving to the same solution. Rupiper and Zeece (2005) concluded that the benefits of folklore go beyond cognitive development and that they feature many life lessons for kids

about appropriate behavior, overcoming difficulties, and diversity. As educators begin to include diverse folklore into the curriculum they can find further uses for this tool.

It is difficult to discuss folklore without bringing up issues of cultural authenticity. I find it imperative to bring up the subject, even if briefly, so as to promote awareness in educators about this issue. The importance of cultural authenticity is especially relevant among historically marginalized groups. As Bishop (2003) states, “When a group has been marginalized and oppressed, the cultural functions of story can take on even greater significance because storytelling can be seen as a means to counter the effects of that marginalization and oppression on children” (p. 25). Counter-storytelling is the story that fails to make it into textbooks, the story of the other side, the story that dismisses negative statistics, and the voice of ordinary people. The power of counter-stories has long been recognized as an effective tool against discrimination within critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998). By selecting authentic texts for classroom use, the educators can promote that power of counter-stories.

The most controversial aspect of this issue is how to define authentic texts. Bishop (2003) noted that the distinction lies between a text that overlooks cultural differences and one that celebrates them. She explained that the manner in which an author describes and visualizes the local and social environment can demonstrate his knowledge of the community being represented. That insider perspective is also distinguished by the details in character dialogue, mannerisms, and narrative voice.

The emphasis on cultural authenticity is pressing because there is a history of inauthentic, stereotypical, and discriminatory children’s literature publications. Bishop

(2003) argues that educators must recognize the inequalities in the publishing world and question who gets published and why. Ownership of cultural folklore is a valid debate that can have high stakes for members of the marginalized group. Bishop does not condemn cross-cultural literature (authors outside of the culture they write about), but instead raises caution about gaps in knowledge and experience.

When oral histories such as folklore are translated into print, questions of ownership arise. Hearne (1999) argues that a lack of or slim source notes contests the ownership of a story. She points out that there are no legal boundaries or copyright laws on stories, yet ethical pressure is present to credit the storytellers. The ancestry and storytellers of any folklore deserve to be acknowledged and honored. It is the least that can be done by those who may profit from printing those rich stories.

Everyone benefits when we can learn the history of a folktale along with the story. Hearne (1999) remarked, “Every story has a story that enriches the telling of it and therefore enriches the teller” (p. 526). Our children at the other end of that story can only be more ensnared with that additional narrative. Storytellers have been swapping, retelling, and sharing stories as part of their art for centuries. This kind of exchange is essential to the oral livelihood of folklore, but it must be openly recognized to maintain cultural authenticity in print.

Methods for Selecting and Evaluating the Literature

I used Naidoo's (2010) "Detailed Evaluation Sheet for Evaluating Latino Children's Books" (see appendix 1) as a guide to selecting children's literature. Along with cultural authenticity, his evaluation criteria raise questions about the gender, socioeconomic status, and race dimensions of characters portrayed in the book being evaluated. I used it to select the books on folklore many of which were included in his recommended list of Latino children's books. Additionally, I completed online searches using Google to find basic information about the books. I then either purchased or checked out the books from the local public library and read about 25 books. These included several newer Latino children's books with various folklore elements.

I created categories to describe the books based on the patterns I saw within the books and I selected for discussing in this paper the books that seemed most relevant for each category. I found several books that fit the definition of folklore, written in both English/Spanish. These books could support biliteracy development, since they seemed inspiring for young writers, and were culturally authentic. Among this selection I finally chose thirteen books and categorized them into four themes within Latino children's literature. The themes I identified are Latino Counter Stories of European Folklore, European Cumulative Rhymes Acculturated, New Adaptations of Old Latino Folklore, and Folklore Characters in New Adventures.

Categories in Latino Folktales

The universality of folktales allows for readers to make several connections. They can compare an original text and find new meaning and possibly identify more easily with the new version. Generations may find common ground and discuss different versions told in their time. Point of view is also a powerful tool in these stories because they have the power to voice a traditionally misunderstood or overlooked character. The categories include stories adapted, revived, retold, and created.

Latino Counter Stories of European Folklore

This category includes modernized, Latinized stories. All of these stories have their origins from Western Europe and have centuries of retelling. The three books presented in this category take a traditional Western European story line and apply it to modern times and a Latino setting and characters. More importantly, the authors changed the mentality of the victimized protagonist within these stories as not just poor and vulnerable, but empowered and capable. The characters discover something about themselves, who they are, and who they want to be with help from their community.

Author Yanitzia Canetti (2009) of Cuban descent wrote a series titled “Había OTRA Vez”. This series of classical European folklore with a Latino twist is written in rhyme and contains useful and updated morals. The titles vary giving a glimpse into the differences such as: *El patito bello* (the Beautiful Duckling), *Fea durmiente* (The Ugly Sleeper), *Ceniciento* (Cinderello), *Blanca Nieve y los siete gigantones* (Snow White and

the Seven Giants), *Pinocho no era el mentiroso* (Pinochio was not the liar), *La peluca de Repunzel* (the Wig of Repunzel) y *Caperucita Descolorida* (Faded Cape).

For example, in this Spanish version of Little Red Riding Hood, Margarita is poor, uneducated, but finds a discolored yet colorful cape to use during the winter. She takes traditional Mexican food like chile verde, beans, and avocados to her ailing grandmother. Along her path she must outsmart a coyote who tries to lure her to the desert. Instead she tricks him to carry her load while she finds help and gets to Abuelita's house first. A policeman is disguised as grandma when the coyote gets to her house. All ends well and Margarita wins a red cape while attending school. The ideas here are subtle, but profound: Despite her lack of education and resources Margarita was able to outsmart the coyote and help her family. The moral diverges greatly from the original tale of a helpless girl to one of empowerment and status gained through education. The characters and small changes to the scenery do not go unnoticed by children as local and relatable.

Another example in this category is *Cinderella Latina* (La Cenicienta Latina) by Bobbi Salinas (2003). This bilingual retell of a European classic follows the traditional story line, but with distinct changes revolutionizing the main character, Serena. She is an independent young woman who carries a heavy burden without complaint or wanting pity. She remains true to herself and her dreams of a great education and of becoming a doctor to help her people. This is especially significant because she achieves this even after she is "rescued" by her prince charming. The oppressed and abused Serena overcomes all by her own merit and with the spiritual guidance of a very real and human

curandera, Dona Flor. While this book includes changes in scenery and dialogue using colloquial language to describe her home and life; it is her spirit and way of thinking that makes this book an authentic Latino rendition of Cinderella.

In the book, *Red Ridin' in the Hood: and Other Cuentos* by Patricia Santos Marcantonio (2005) we see several traditional European folktales take on a new setting and perspective. The language used is Spanish and English with slang, the settings are present day inner city. The author changes the characters' attitude and adapts the storylines to modern city dwellings which may be far more relatable to the children reading them than the traditional farm and country settings in the original folktales.

One story from the book, Juan and the Pinto Bean Stalk is amusing because of the easily relatable arguments between mother and son about hard work and education. In the story, the mother who washes laundry for a living tries to guide her son to pursue his education further than hers so that he might live under better life circumstances. She sends him to go sell their old station wagon nicknamed Old Vaca, a modern reference to the cow sold in the original folktale for money. He sells the automobile for magic pinto beans instead. There is also the usual giant with a chicken (goose) who lays golden eggs. While this is still included in the story, the moral is rather about hard work and completing an education. Just like in Cinderella Latina, at the end of the story, the protagonist Juan shows that he has learned his lesson about laziness. Through dedicated studies and hard work, he follows his dreams to escape his precarious life situation and to care for his mother.

The books in this category challenge the values ascribed in the original Eurocentric versions and play with counter stories of the main characters. Beyond the visible setting changes, language use, and Latino storylines, the messages can greatly impact students in their way of thinking by providing an alternative to accepting their circumstances or wishing for rescue. All three stories highlight education as key to change in their lives and make it clear that the main character has the power to do so.

European Cumulative Rhymes Acculturated

Like the previous category the books listed here also originate from Western Europe and traditionally describe the age and culture from which they came. Cumulative stories are tales that continue to build up throughout the story, often seeming endless, with every addition appearing on the following page until all the additions are summed on the final page. The fun here is in the repetition that engages young ones to remember all the additions and maybe add some of their own. This category is an example of how students and their families can derive great pleasure from a familiar tune with new-found meaning and warmth. These three cumulative rhymes celebrate Latino culture and arts in a festive way.

Nancy Andrews-Goebel's (2002) version of *The House that Jack Built* is based on the life and work of esteemed Mexican potter, Juan Quezada. The story includes in its rhymes the traditional steps it takes to make a pot from using human hair brushes to cow dung for fire fuel. Along with every page of cumulative rhyme is a short paragraph with factual information about the pottery process. The reader leaves the story amused by the

rhymes and appreciative of the hard work and great talent of Mr. Quezada. This folk art is another wonderful way to make connections between literacy at home and school. *The Pot That Juan Built* is a unique addition to folklore libraries because there is so much background behind the story within the book.

A cumulative Christmas carol with a very long history of its own stood well to being adapted with holiday customs from Latin America during the Christian holiday. *A Piñata in a Pine Tree: A Latino Twelve Days of Christmas* (2009) by Pat Mora is brilliantly done in rhyme with English and Spanish. Piñatas (candy stuffed paper mache), burros (donkeys), luminarias (candles), pastelitos (cakes), tamalitos (traditional holiday dish) y campanitas (bells) are a few of the elements replacing the maidens, trumpets, and a partridge from the original verses. A unique twist to the original's true love the gifts are given from an unknown Amiga (friend) who turns out to be a new family member. This book is one of only a few in a sea of books celebrating the Christmas season: it reflects a specific culture and their interpretation of this special time of year.

The Cazuela That the Farm Maiden Stirred by Samantha R. Vamos (2011) is based on *The House That Jack Built*, but with a delicious ending. The pot gets full of ingredients by various farm animals to make a delicious dish. As the story progresses the ingredients and animals are listed in English and Spanish layering the understanding and translation between the two languages. The illustrations of the animals and ingredients familiar in the southwest farms are bright and attractive. The book ends with a recipe for Arroz con Leche (rice pudding), which is a traditional Latino treat. This book would follow *The Pot that Juan Built* well in building on the meaning that students have created.

These three entertaining and creative cumulative tales reflect the best of Latino culture in a celebratory way. It is important to reflect on that and allow it to inspire students to find their own rhymes and traditions worth celebrating and writing.

New Adaptations of Old Latino Folklore

The books within this category are relatively new in Latino children's literature because they stray from the traditional storyline. All the books in this category are Latino in origin and some have deep roots in indigenous tales. There is a large selection of Latino Folklore that is simply retold by Latino and non-Latino authors. In this category, authors not only retell a traditional Latino folktale, but also add real flavor through amazing illustrations, distinct Cuban or Mayan settings, and play with critical elements of the original storyline.

Martina una cucarachita muy linda (Martina a Very Lovely Cockroach) (Deedy, 2007) continues to keep alive the popular Latino folktale of Martina the cockroach and Perez the mouse, which was first published in the U.S. by famed Puerto Rican author Pura Belpré in 1932. In this Cuban version by Carmen Agra Deedy, Martina follows the advice of her grandmother for finding the best suitor by offering a cup of coffee which is intentionally spilt to reveal the suitors' true nature. In the end Perez the mouse beats her to the punch line and they fall for each other to their grandmother's delight. The greatest distinction in the story is how Martina gets her suitors to reveal themselves. In many versions she asks them to sing, and Martina is portrayed as a very picky girl. In this version she seems more cautious and wise, since she applies her grandmother's advice.

The most distinct difference from the original story is the omission of Raton Perez's tragic end from Pura Belpre's version. Despite being a different version, this story has a rich heritage and serves as a revival of folklore between generations. The illustrations create a beautiful Cuban setting and will leave adults craving un cafecito.

Previous versions of the La Llorona folktale follow the storyline in which a beautiful, but vain woman marries for the wrong reasons and ultimately kills her children with her own hands in a fit of rage. Her legacy is to wander the earth in search of her lost children, taking any child found along the way. In *La Llorona: the Crying Woman* by Rudolfo Anaya (2011), we are presented with a very unique version of a traditional Latino folktale.

This version took place in Mexico in an indigenous village, a long time before the arrival of Cortez. Maya was a young woman blessed to live forever by the Sun, but was not liked by Father Time who age people and controlled when they die. Maya is sent away to protect her from Father Time and she has many children with the help of a wise owl. When Father Time discovers where Maya is hiding, he schemes a plan to trick her and take her children away. Maya tells Father Time who is disguised as a wise man how her children came to be from clay pots, earth, and seeds, which made them immortal. He tells her to keep her children safe; she should break the pots and throw them in the lake. When she does this though, her children become mortal and Father Time drowns them in the lake. After that, all she can do is to grieve her children and wander the earth looking for them forever.

The illustrations are wonderful and this story reads like an old Mayan tale. What is really different from the original story is that La Llorona is punished even though she does nothing wrong, but simply misplace faith in a stranger. Secondly, she does not kill her children herself as in the traditional version of the story, but the pain she feels for her children is the same; as is the story's warning to keep your children close to you, and safe from harm.

The rooster who is going to his uncle's wedding has many versions throughout Latin America, especially in the islands of Puerto Rico and Cuba. This cumulative tale follows a rooster with a dirty beak bullying everyone in his path to help him clean up in time for the wedding. In Lucia M. Gonzalez' (1999) *The Bossy Gallito/El Gallo de Bodas: A traditional Cuban Folktale* the setting takes place in Miami, Florida in an area called Little Havana for its Cuban influence.

The illustrations have the famous Calle Ocho (Eighth Street) as the background and use Native birds as the cast of characters. This special adaptation to a very specific place in the country and a very specific feel for the story with hints of tradition, architecture, and local fauna could have an impact on students from the area as they see their everyday surroundings and customs framing the story of this book.

Overall these three stories create shifts in the storyline and provide some rich elements that would help to incite great discussions among students in the classroom and at home. The authors show pride in their point of view and reflect on their culture through the stories that they rewrite. Teachers can use this to empower their own students to tell and write new versions of their folklore that they have learned from

family and community without worries of perfecting every detail to match some published version, or even a folktale that has never been published.

Folklore Characters in New Adventures

This category of stories is about bringing characters to life, by continuing the story past the common folktale into new literature. These books contain the characters of both or either European and Latino folklore but none of the original storyline. The stories are all new and refreshing because the authors take poetic license to stretch their imagination beyond the original endings. Within the first two stories presented lies a platform from which discussions about biculturalism could occur. The latter two stories press readers to view characters from a new perspective, allowing the characters to grow in depth and dimension.

Rene Colato Laínez (2010) wrote a story about the meeting of two folklore characters from different cultures, the tooth fairy of the U.S. and El Raton Perez (the rat, Perez) of Latin America who both collect lost teeth from young children. In *The Tooth Fairy Meets El Raton Perez* the storyline is very simple. It is about a boy named Miguelito, who is Latino by heritage but lives in the United States, and loses a tooth. When two tooth collectors show up an argument ensues about who will collect the tooth, and the tooth is thrown into a difficult spot. The two must work together to recover the tooth and then negotiate how to share it. While this seems overly simple, it is a wonderful glimpse into the daily lives of bicultural children who negotiate the terms of their dual

identity every day. It provides a springboard for the discussion of old cultural folklore and traditions passed on and new customs and stories embraced.

In *Charro Claus and The Tejas Kid* author Xavier Garza (2008) relays a bit of family folklore passed down from his father and inspired by a Tejano song “Pancho Claus”, by Lalo Guerrero, still popular in this region. In this story, a boy named Vicente visits his uncle Pancho on his ranch in the Texas, Mexico border. On Christmas Eve Santa Claus visits his cousin Pancho and asks for help for delivering presents in the Rio Grande Area. Pancho Claus dresses in a Mariachi’s traditional Charro outfit and drives a flying wagon with burros. Vicente assists Pancho on this fateful night as The Tejas Kid. The story ends with all presents delivered on time to both sides of the border, with no border patrol, fence, wall, or weather being able to stop them.

Creating a new story with very old characters is novelty not overlooked by well-known children’s author Alma Flor Ada (1997, 2001) in her continuation of *Dear Peter Rabbit* and *Yours Truly Goldilocks*. In *With Love, Little Red Hen*, Ada (2004) continues the pattern of letters criss-crossing through various characters’ lives. Little Red Hen and her chicks are in a new home and she is having trouble finding help among their neighbors. Goldilocks comes up with a solution for her friend, with everyone pitching in, and is sure to delight Hen. Unfortunately, the wolves seem to be up to their old tricks again and plotting a different plan. The divergence from the traditional story line is refreshing and imaginative. This is a great way to discuss with students what usually happens after “happily ever after”. A wonderful extension activity could be for students to create their own imaginary letters written between their favorite folklore characters.

Another interesting story in this category is about the Bogeyman that exists in many cultures throughout Latin America. He is often referred to as El Cucuy. Parents tell their children that the Cucuy will come after them if they do not obey their parents or go to sleep when they are told. Claudia Galindo (2008) provides a fresh perspective on the Latino bogeyman in *Its Bedtime, Cucuy/A La Cama, Cucuy*. Cucuy is a little blue monster who does not want to go to bed. He fights his mom, kicks and screams, complains and stalls until he somehow falls asleep despite insisting he is not tired. This new perspective of El Cucuy who is more like the children he terrorizes is bound to fascinate and inspire children to review what they know about this folktale and create their own stories.

This last category provides new experiences for students as a familiar and traditional character is placed in a setting they think might not fit. In these stories, not only do the characters adapt to their new surroundings, but they also make new friends and give us a deeper understanding of how these characters can be. This is a critical message for students as they try to identify who they are and who they want to be. These stories open the door for discussions about students' own journey through biculturalism and identity.

Discussion

By using books like the ones presented above educators can navigate students through colorfully illustrated, meaningful literature that honors their language and culture. While each story might not directly reflect every Latino student's life (no story can do that), they open the door to similar ways of knowing, and diversity in character, physical features and settings; most important of all, they diverge from the saturation of mainstream media. Students from all backgrounds can take advantage of the unique storylines, luscious language, and artful illustrations in Latino literature. My argument is not about limiting Latino children's literature for Latino students nor limiting Latino students to Latino literature; I simply join the group of educators and scholars who recommend that quality authentic literature representing ethnic and language minority students' home cultures be made available and used frequently in classrooms.

When students see stories they know, have heard, or experienced within family in school books, they model their own narratives after them. This process is validating and inspiring for students of all ages and ethnic backgrounds. It is exceptionally meaningful for students who are marginalized in society and have been ignored in the classroom literature. Medina & Martínez-Roldán (2010) argued that diverse literature can pave the way for "children to position themselves as children with agency, children who reinvent themselves through narratives and borderlands in literature discussions" (p. 270). When students articulate and publish their own narratives, they are in the role of storyteller/writer/author/illustrator and those roles become a reality within their identity

as a successful student. Marginalized students often do not have the same background as the majority of the main characters of books which they read. This is why counter stories, new stories, adapted stories can support young Latino students.

Meier (2003) found many studies that express how young children develop advanced linguistic abilities through daily interaction in their homes and communities. Whether these abilities are useful in a school setting often depends on their cultural background and its congruency with school culture. Through her own experiences as an educator, Meier has observed the powerful connection between students and a book, particularly when they are able to find within the text meaning that is linked to their lives. In her work, she found that young children make their greatest advances in literacy when they use texts connected to their lives. Meier is not suggesting that every book has to be bilingual, or that every story has to be multicultural, but argues that bilingual and multicultural texts should be a significant portion of the texts used if they are to serve younger multilingual populations. She states, “Books are not meaningful to children who do not see themselves” (Meier, 2003, p. 247). She gives the example of Spanish in a book presented to bilingual students claiming that it gives the children the message that their native language is worthy of being spoken and written, along with the possibility of adding cultural authenticity to a story. For young children, establishing a cultural connection through their earliest interactions with books is critical for building the foundation for their literacy.

I believe the themes I uncovered in recent Latino children folktales give good examples about the importance of this process of self discovery and validation. As we

explore variations and counter stories of traditional folklore we are pressed to discuss multiple perspectives of the same time, space, and storyline. Students can be guided by educators to place equal value on all the various view points, and at the same time, be engaged in finding new and untold points of view. While the concept is not new, it is refreshing when it includes cultural aspects, regional dialogue, and values not previously explored.

Conclusion

Very mundane and humble acts within our daily lives such as sharing a story, working on a hobby, or interacting with elders are the very spirit behind who we are as people. The facility with which our educational institutions undermine the core of our student's being and cultural identity is appalling and real. My work here urges educators to be conscious of the impact that their instruction has upon the most vulnerable and marginalized members of our society. The books and themes presented here are best utilized within an additive bilingual model that incorporates culturally relevant curriculum and humanizing pedagogy. Educators can instill pride and promote diversity with the use of Latino folklore literature in their classroom. Biliteracy is an important part of the bicultural self that should be highly regarded within school and community. The integration of diverse languages, cultures, and ways of knowing into an academic setting is of great benefit for all participants.

Appendix

Detailed evaluation Sheet for evaluating Latino children's books (Naidoo, 2010)

TITLE OF BOOK:

PUBLICATION DATE:

PUBLISHER:

AUTHOR: ILLUSTRATOR:

BOOK CHARACTERISTICS:

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE ANSWER

1. WHAT IS THE GENRE OF THE BOOK? FICTION / NONFICTION
2. WHAT IS THE FORMAT OF THE BOOK? PICTURE BOOK / NOVEL / OTHER
3. IS THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK LATINO OR NON-LATINO? LATINO / NON-LATINO
4. IS THE ILLUSTRATOR OF THE BOOK LATINO OR NONLATINO? LATINO / NON-LATINO
5. IS THE TEXT OF THE BOOK BILINGUAL, INTERLINGUAL, OR WRITTEN ONLY IN ENGLISH?
BILINGUAL / INTERLINGUAL / ENGLISH ONLY
6. WHAT SUPPLEMENTAL LINGUISTIC FEATURES ARE PRESENT IN THE TEXT? SELECT ALL
THAT APPLY.

GLOSSARY

PRONUNCIATION

GUIDE

AUTHOR NOTES

NONE

7. WHICH CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD(S) DID THE BOOK RECEIVE? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

AMÉRICAS AWARD/ HONOR/COMMENDED

TOMÁS RIVERA AWARD

PURABELPRÉAWARD/HONOR

NONE

OTHER

CHARACTERIZATION IN NARRATIVE & ILLUSTRATIONS: PLEASE CIRCLE
ONE ANSWER

1. OVERALL, ARE FEMALE LATINO CHARACTERS DEPICTED IN MINOR OR MAJOR ROLES IN THE NARRATIVE (TEXT)? MINOR ROLES / MAJOR ROLES / NO FEMALE CHARACTERS
2. OVERALL, ARE MALE LATINO CHARACTERS DEPICTED IN MINOR OR MAJOR ROLES IN THE NARRATIVE? MINOR ROLES / MAJOR ROLES / NO MALE CHARACTERS
3. WHICH GENDER OF LATINO CHARACTER APPEARS MORE OFTEN IN THE NARRATIVE? FEMALE / MALE / EQUAL REPRESENTATION
4. WHICH GENDER OF LATINO CHARACTER APPEARS MORE OFTEN IN THE ILLUSTRATIONS? FEMALE / MALE / EQUAL REPRESENTATION
5. OVERALL IN THE NARRATIVE, ARE FEMALE LATINO CHARACTERS PORTRAYED IN GENDER STEREOTYPED ROLES SUCH AS HOUSE WIFE, MAID, COOK, MOTHER OF MANY CHILDREN, SWEET AND SUBMISSIVE GIRL? YES/ NO/ N/A
6. OVERALL IN THE NARRATIVE, ARE MALE LATINO CHARACTERS PORTRAYED IN GENDER STEREOTYPED ROLES SUCH AS BREAD-WINNER OF THE FAMILY, MAN FULL OF MACHISMO, SUPERIOR BOY? YES/ NO/ N/A

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7. DO LATINOS HAVE A PRIMARY OR SECONDARY ROLE IN THE NARRATIVE? PRIMARY ROLE / SECONDARY ROLE
8. WHAT IS THE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF LATINO CHARACTERS IN THE STORY? (MAKE YOUR BEST ASSUMPTION BASED ON THE TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS)

LOW / MIDDLE / HIGH

9. WHICH LATINO CULTURE IS REPRESENTED? (PLEASE SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING AND LIST THE COUNTRY UNDER THE CATEGORY HEADING. IF A CULTURE IS NOT SPECIED, SELECT THE GENERIC LATINO CATEGORY. IF A CULTURE IS GIVEN BUT NOT A SPECIC COUNTRY, **INDICATE** THE CULTURE ONLY, LEAVING THE AREA UNDERNEATH BLANK.).

PUERTO RICAN:

MEXICAN/MEX. AMER.:

CUBAN:

CENTRAL AMERICAN:

SOUTH AMERICAN:

CARIBBEAN (NONPUERTO RICAN OR CUBAN):

GENERIC LATINO

10. ARE LATINO CHARACTERS WITH DISABILITIES REPRESENTED IN THE STORY OR ILLUSTRATIONS? YES / NO

11. ARE THERE GAY OR LESBIAN LATINO CHARACTERS REPRESENTED IN THE STORY OR ILLUSTRATIONS? YES/ NO

12. DO ALL LATINO CHARACTERS HAVE A “LATIN LOOK” OF BROWN SKINS, BROWN EYES, AND DARK HAIR? YES/ NO

13. IF LATINOS WITHOUT A “LATIN LOOK” ARE REPRESENTED, WHAT IS THE OTHER LOOK? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.

BLACK (AFRICAN) / WHITE / NON-ANGLO / ASIAN / OTHER,

PLEASE SPECIFY: N/A (ALL HAVE LATIN LOOK)

14. ARE ANY OF THE LATINO CHARACTERS DESCRIBED AS BEING OF MIXED RACE? YES/ NO

15. ARE THERE ANY ELDERLY LATINO CHARACTERS IN THE STORY OR ILLUSTRATIONS? YES/ NO

16. IF ELDERLY LATINO CHARACTERS ARE PRESENT, ARE THEY DEPICTED AS FRAIL AND FEEBLE-MINDED?

Yes/ No/ N/A

17. DO THE LATINO CHARACTERS IN THE BOOK INCLUDE AN EXTENDED FAMILY OF AUNTS (TIAS), UNCLES (TIOS), GRANDPARENTS (ABUELAS OR ABUELOS), OR COUSINS? YES/ NO

18. DO ANY OF THE LATINO CHARACTERS HAVE A ROLE AS COMMUNITY LEADERS? YES/ NO

19. ARE THE LATINO CHARACTERS IN THE STORY RECENTLYARRIVED IMMIGRANTS? YES/ No

20. ARE THE MAIN “LATINO” CHARACTERS ANIMAL OR HUMAN? ANIMALS /HUMANS

SETTING & PLOT:

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE ANSWER

1. DOES THE STORY HAVE A CONTEMPORARY OR HISTORICAL SETTING?

CONTEMPORARY SETTING (1980-PRES) /HISTORICAL SETTING (PRE-1980)

2. IS THE STORY SET IN THE UNITED STATES/PUERTO RICO OR IN ANOTHER COUNTRY?

U.S. SETTING/ PUERTO RICO / NON-U.S.SETTING /NOT ADDRESSED IN NARRATIVE

3. IS THE OVERALL MOOD OF THE STORY UPBEAT AND POSITIVE OR FULL OF DESPAIR AND NEGATIVE?

POSITIVE MOOD / NEGATIVE MOOD

4. DO LATINO CHARACTERS OF THE STORY FACE COMMON, EVERYDAY PROBLEMS SUCH AS BILINGUALISM, IMMIGRATION, FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS, SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS, ETC? YES/ NO

5. IS THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE A BARRIER TO THE LATINO CHARACTERS?

Yes/ No / N/A BECAUSE NATIVE COUNTRY

6. IF THE STORY IS ABOUT A CONTEMPORARY LATINO CHILD, DOES HE/SHE FACE ISSUES WITH RACISM AT SCHOOL OR IN SOCIETY? YES /NO /N/A

7. DOES THE BOOK'S NARRATIVE IMPLY THAT LATINO PEOPLE ARE UNABLE TO SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS WITHOUT THE HELP OF ANGLOS? YES /NO

8. DOES THE NARRATIVE OR ILLUSTRATIONS CONTAIN MAGICAL REALISM? YES/ NO

THEME:

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE ANSWER

1. WHICH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THEMES BEST REPRESENTS THE THEME OF THE BOOK?

CELEBRATIONS/ FESTIVALS

IMMIGRATION/MIGRANT WORKERS

FAMILY

TRADITIONS

FOODS/CUSTOMS

GROWING UP & GAINING CONFIDENCE

IMPORTANT LATINO FIGURE/ROLE MODEL

OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY:

CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY:

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE ANSWER

1. IS THE USE OF SPANISH ACCURATE AND AUTHENTIC OR DOES IT CONTAIN ERRORS?
ACCURATE/ ERRORS/ N/A

2. IS THE CHARACTER'S USE OF SPANISH NATURAL OR DOES IT SEEM FORCED/CONTRIVED?
NATURAL /CONTRIVED/ N/A

3. DO LATINO CHARACTERS DECIDE TO GIVE UP SOME ASPECT OF THEIR ROOT CULTURE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE HAPPINESS OR SUCCESS? YES/ NO

4. IS THE LATINO SUBCULTURE TRIVIALIZED BY LIMITING TO FIESTAS, PIÑATA PARTIES, FOODS, PATRON SAINTS, ETC.?YES/ NO

5. ARE LATINO CULTURAL FACTORS COMMUNICATED, SUCH AS STRONG SENSE OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS, SENSE OF HUMOR, RESPECT FOR ELDERLY, RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNAL WELFARE? YES/ NO

ILLUSTRATIONS: (IF APPLICABLE)

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE ANSWER

1. ARE THE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR OR BLACK-AND-WHITE? COLOR/ BLACK-AND-WHITE
2. ARE THE ILLUSTRATIONS PHOTOGRAPHS OR MEDIA BASED (DRAWINGS, PAINTINGS, COMPUTER GENERATED, ETC.)?PHOTOGRAPHS /MEDIA BASED /BOTH
3. DO THE ILLUSTRATIONS EXTEND THE STORY, ADDING FURTHER INFORMATION? YES/ NO
4. DO THE ILLUSTRATIONS CONTAIN CULTURAL “PROPS,” SUCH AS SOMBREROS, BURROS, AND CACTI THAT SEEM EMPLOYED TO ADD A CULTURAL FLAVOR TO THE STORY? YES/ NO
5. HOW ARE BARRIOS (LATINO NEIGHBORHOODS) PORTRAYED? CHARMING/POST-CARD APPEARANCE OR DIRTY AND CRIME-FILLED OR NATURAL, EVERY-DAY ENVIRONMENTS OR N/A
6. DO LATINO CHARACTERS WEAR PERIOD OR PEASANT CLOTHES IN SETTINGS WHERE THEY WOULD ORDINARILY WEAR CONTEMPORARY CLOTHING? YES / NO
7. ARE FEMALES SHOWN OUTDOORS AND ACTIVE IN THE ILLUSTRATIONS? YES / No/ N/A

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS OR COMMENTS REGARDING THE BOOK’S DEPICTION OF LATINOS AND/OR THE SPANISH LANGUAGE OF THE TEXT:

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Rebecca Casas De Leon was born in Eagle Pass, TX in 1981. She was raised in San Antonio, TX. She graduated from James Madison High School in 1999. She attended the University of Michigan from 1999 till 2003 when she returned to San Antonio. She attended the University of Texas at San Antonio from 2004 till 2005. She graduated with honors earning her Bachelors of Arts degree. Rebecca worked from 2005-2009 as a fourth grade dual language teacher at Storm Academy with San Antonio Independent School District. She started on her Master of Arts degree through the department of Education in Curriculum and Instruction under the Bilingual/Bicultural program at the University of Texas at Austin in 2009.

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