

Con/texto: Cultural Relevance & Linguistic Resources in Reading After-School

Leslie López & Corre la Voz (CLV)

UC Links Conference, UC Berkeley March 2019

“The autonomous school builds different worlds
Where many true worlds fit with truths”



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2009-2018: Developing an “autonomous”
CLV literacy curriculum:
cultural intentionality, multi-modal interaction,
inquiry, critical thought, expression

2009-11 unstructured/reactive--**movie projects as literacy**--
“kids’ ideas”--often dominant culture

2011-2015 reactive “homework support” (+ CLV movies)

- 1 day read whatever books kids bring (Wimpy Kid era)
- 1 day help with math hw (basic skills --> CCore transition)

2016-2018 “negotiated” curriculum w/schools (+ CLV movies)

- Sometimes read whatever books kids bring
- *Weaker help* with math hw (*no access*--> CCore complexity)
- **Expanding CLV curriculum (research, poetry, councils, etc)**

2015-2018 STRONGER CLV PROJECT CURRICULUM:

Objectives, improving scaffolds, logic for justice

- Drama, Poetry, Letters, Research (interview, online);
- *Process/production, teamwork--mentors & mentees*

○ **MOSTLY WRITING/CREATION CURRICULUM, NOT READING**

2018-19:
Develop reading curriculum;
Develop translinguaging

centering & developing
CLV/UC Links assets--*language & literacy.*

No more math in CLV

Our school also expanding reading
So is B&G

- **Poder de la Palabra 40 min (1:1 or 1:2)**
- **Dinámica 20 min (whole group)**
- **Proyectos 50 min (small group)**

Why reading curriculum? Defending the community when we teach “reading to learn”

See also: “The Right to Be Literate: Literacy, Education, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline”
Maisha T. Winn, Nadia Behizadeh, Garrett Duncan, Michelle Fine and Vivian Gadsden (2011)

“4th grade reading slump:”
across the world, 9-10 year olds’
reading declines, especially low
SES, ethnically
under-represented. **Intersecting
factor: learning national
language (L2)**

**Students don’t make the shift
from “learning to read,” to
“reading to learn”** (e.g., Brozo
2005; 2008; Chall 2003)

Spiraling exclusion pieces: CAST as “DEFICITS”

- (Academic English) vocab;
- Formal tools, diverse sources;
- Supported environment to express self, form co-constructed learning environment (identity and shared meaning with adults and society);
- Access to increasingly complex syntax in either language;
- Access to domain knowledge.

PUNITIVE “CONSEQUENCES”

- “Ranking” & individualistic systems in education over time peg students to rudimentary, stigmatizing “decoding.”
- **Intersecting:** *English Proficiency tests profoundly disadvantage ELLs*

More privileged students, spiraling promotion/inclusion:

- ***can read for independent pursuits;***
- have access to internet;
- opportunities (library, travel, camps, adult presence, adult advocates, teachers of dominant-culture skills);
- people to admire and co-construct their sense-making

“Reading to Learn” good fit with CLV & ELL-support (Meanwhile...)

Recommended (Brozo; Robertson ELL specific, 2010; Ogle & Corre-Kovtun 2010; Fisher & Frey 2014 etc)

Balance teacher & student-centered approaches: applied and useful activities; inquiry-based; content relevant to student learners; *build on prior knowledge (funds of knowledge), home language*

Expand student choices: genres and formats, gender identities, ethnic, language, and family identities. *Include non-fiction. Include web, combine multi-modal, translanguaging.*

Boys’ reading worldwide declining much more steeply than girls’. (Ortiz et al Boys’ Literacy Practices 2014)

Expand the social: make reading a social, interactive, discussive activity. Emphasize collaboration. Expand oral language opportunities.

Dominant reading curriculum at schools include:

Single-measure, computer-based reading tests/analysis to “level” kids (e.g., Lexile)

Needs more research. See:

“Assessing the Lexile Framework: Results of a Panel Meeting” NES Working Paper 2001

(“Concerns for ELLs:” Spruck-Wrigley pp 39-45)

Word-per-minute tests (with stopwatch) for ELLs pervasive.

The Scholastics publishing monopoly built into school libraries; classroom curriculum.

(Improving-expanding somewhat)

Silent, solitary reading. Nightly logs. 20 minutes + 1 sentence “what did you read.” HW

What is the “curriculum?”

Building on our existing strengths; contribute directly to school-relevant needs

Objective 1: To make “reading” one of those activities that is culturally and linguistically proximate, socially comfortable and nurturing; explicitly and tangibly modeled, practiced, enjoyed.

a) Building intentionally on our primary strength: our collaborative classroom environment and practices. Our social habitus of community support, care, interaction, inquiry, translanguaging. “Mature speakers” of the students’ bilingual background, facilitating conversation and modeling learning together.

LOPI (Learning by Observing and Pitching In) Rogoff

b) Purchased books to test and enjoy (Program Assistant research collaborative project)

Objective 2: To develop “flexible routines” and teachable techniques that allow mentors to work with individuals and dyads, whose interests and language backgrounds vary.

Partner reading curriculum for close reading, discussion, then writing, based on previous research & project scaffolds.

Mentoring tips--working with text features, voice, moving in and out of text; recognizing “key” or generative words, etc.

Non-fiction more cognates--social-political vocab compelling

Biographies compelling--narratives chronologically organized, how do people grow up, face adversity, make decisions, different shapes of lives

Fiction: a rich thicket of idiomatic expressions and culturally inexplicable references, unpredictable genre features

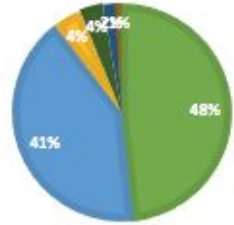
SCHOOL ETHNIC RATIOS

STUDENTS

2016-17
White 48%
Latinx 41%

TOTAL STUDENTS (N=522) BY ETHNICITY 2016-17

White Latinx Two or more
Asian/Asian Am. Black/African Am. Pac. Is/Haw/Filip.



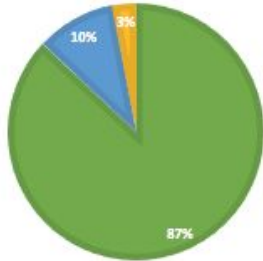
Proportion flipped in last 8 years : 50/40



3 Latinx Teachers for 145 ELLs
213 Latinx Students

TOTAL STAFF (N=30) BY ETHNICITY 2016-17

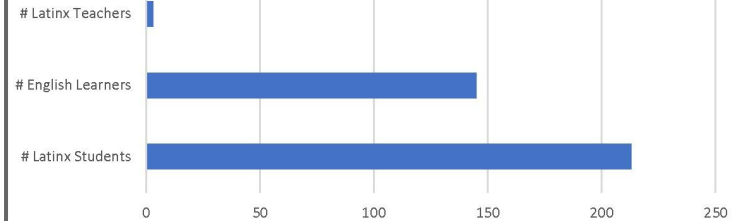
White % Latinx % Native American %



STAFF

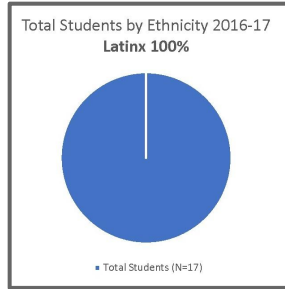
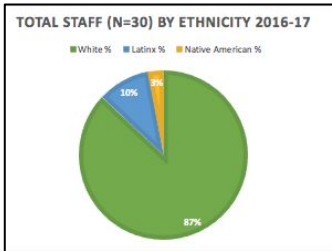
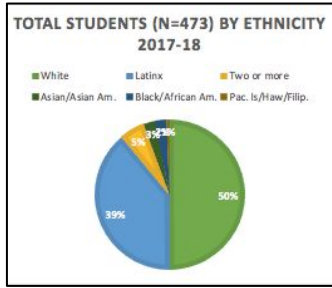
2016-17
White 87%
Latinx 10%

Ratio of Latinx Teachers to Latinx Students 3:213 2016-2017

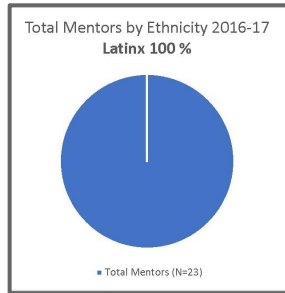


The social habitus matters

CLV Ethnic Ratios 2016-17 (typical)



100%
Latinx
students

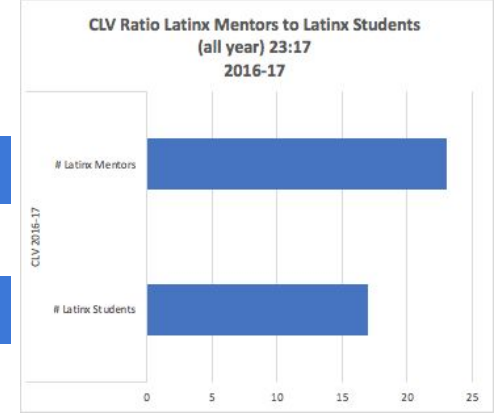


100%
Latinx
mentors

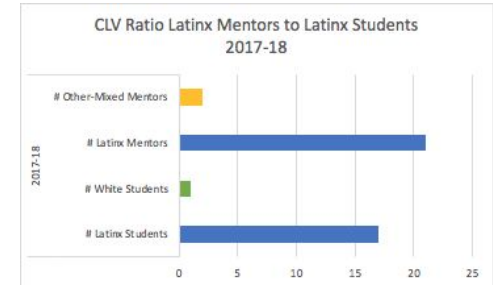
mentors

students

Total 23 mentors: 17 students



2017-18 variation



CLV multiplies students' access to speakers of their own language; immersed in room of rich, supportive communication

CLV's first set of books

Co-constructed w Undergraduate PA (Summer Research)



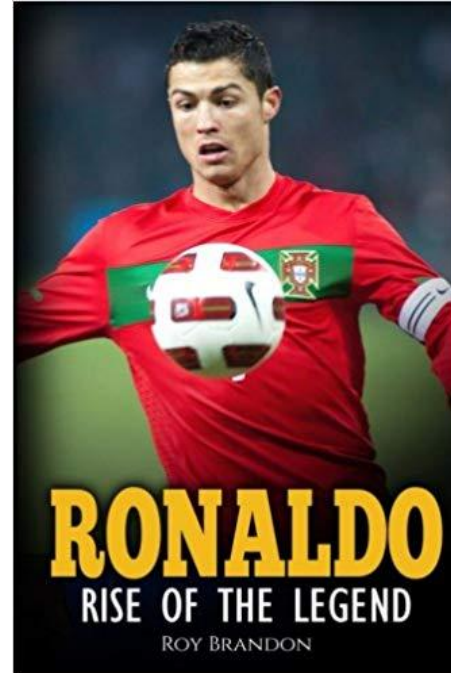
Reading (avidly) to learn

These slim books are not cheap, and are highly coveted by students--and school teachers. Two 4th grade male teachers saw these and asked the principal for books like them, to motivate their students.

Fall 2018: many pages of fieldnotes on A. & E., two 4th graders who sat together in Partner Reading.

Little previous interest in reading;
difficulty focusing.

Deeply engaged in Ronaldo & Messi.



Good pair of books for Partner Reading
Compare and Contrast during discussion time

WRITING RUBRIC: It has been tough to get [them] to write in their journals as their high levels of energy make them prone to distractions. However, they have been making progress and **began to write in their journals slightly more when they did partner reading....**

READING: ...**[I]n partner reading in which they worked through the text to fully comprehend the text.** A___ made connections to the autobiography of Lionel Messi through the real life examples that he saw on television. **He began to become invested in the book on Messi's life and worked through words he did not understand with E___.**

VERBAL: ...As [they] both read sections of the autobiographies of both Ronaldo and Messi, they **began to talk about the readings together.** A___ began to talk about Messi's struggles with a hormone deficiency but he still prevailed while E___ discussed the importance of working hard with Ronaldo's work ethic. ...

CRITICAL: A___ believed that Messi was just naturally talented and did not work hard like Ronaldo, but E___ **disagreed as he said that they both train really hard to be the best soccer players in the world.** E___ elaborated and said **that you have to first think about what you are going to do before doing it so that you can imagine yourself being successful.** He even compared it to when he plays football himself, as he says that *he is always thinking about how and in what direction he will run with the ball before he does it.*

Collaborative, critical engagement of text (4th graders)

CRITICAL (continued):

A__ began to have a discussion on Messi and his upbringing as Messi's grandfather's death played a major role in his life as a kid. Once he died, Messi still continued to play really well, and A__ acknowledged this. Messi was talented from the start as a kid. A__ did not stop talking about him being the best player and comparing him to Ronaldo. After reading a section on Ronaldo, A__ said he is not better than Messi because he only works hard to be good and that Ronaldo has to practice to be great. This is when E__ stepped and said well Messi also worked hard to be good as he had to go through a lot as a kid and he trains every day or else he would not be good even if he is talented. E__ said that A__ had an opinion and that he did not really know if Messi is better than Ronaldo or vice versa. E__ [said] that he was not biased because he did not like soccer and had no interest in the players

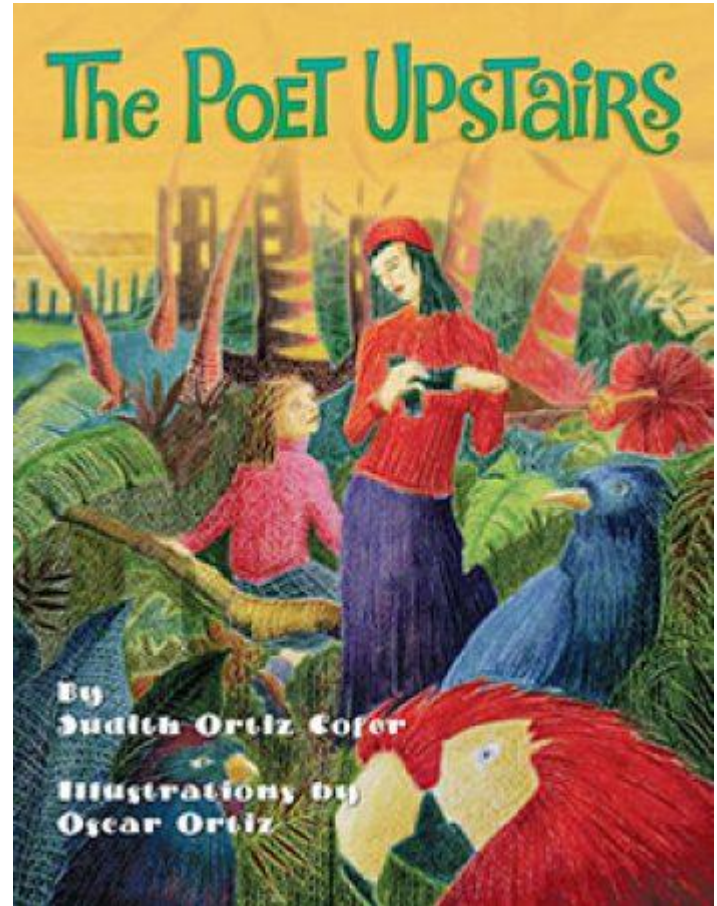
Collaborative, critical engagement of text (4th graders)

Help readers connect their physical and emotional senses (embodied experience) to language, imagination, & text

“That’s a beautiful dream, *hija*. You dreamed of my island. I think a happy dream means you will soon be well.”

...

She heard the sound of a chair scraping the floor, and then the music of the typewriter keys. Juliana closed her eyes and imagined each letter the poet typed was a brushstroke, painting a picture in her head.

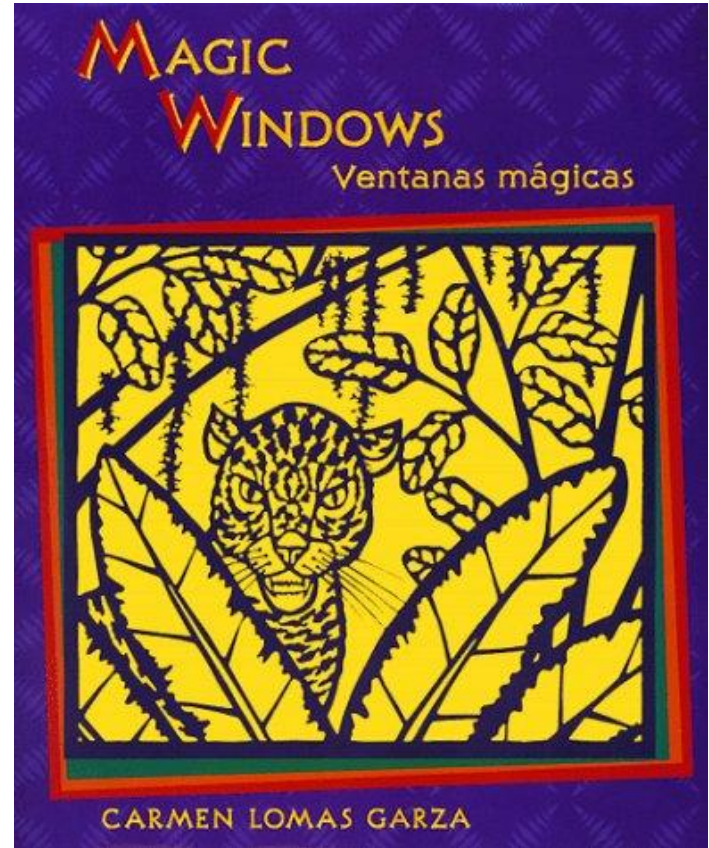


Magic Windows/ Ventanas Mágicas

(2 books, fully bilingual)

Mixed genres:

- Autobiographical, concrete
 - (embodied memory, narrative, sensory)
- Ancestral culture/mythology
 - (deeper collective identity, history)
- Art form; How-to (papel picado)



I've always loved to watch the work that people do with their hands. This is a close-up of my grandfather's hands cutting a nopal cactus. He's cutting the cactus and I'm cutting the paper.



“Learning by Observing & Pitching In” (Rogoff et al)

NOPAL CACTUS

I've always loved to watch the work that people do with their hands. This is a close-up of my grandfather's hands cutting a nopal cactus. He's cutting the cactus and I'm cutting the paper.

I first did this as a painting. It was very different to do it as a paper cutout. All you have is a craft knife and a piece of paper, and everything has to connect. In this piece the cactus spines are the connectors. They hold the design together. Without them it would fall apart.

This is one of the first paper cutouts that I did. It's not very big. It measures fourteen by eight and a half inches. I started with small paper cutouts, then I made bigger ones.

NOPALITOS

A mí siempre me ha gustado ver el trabajo que la gente hace con las manos. Aquí podemos ver de cerca las manos de mi abuelo que cortan un nopal. Él corta nopales y yo recorto papel.

Primero hice esto como una pintura. Fue muy diferente hacerlo como papel picado. Sólo tenemos un estilete con navaja y una hoja de papel, y todo tiene que conectar. En esta pieza las espigas del nopal son los conectores que sostienen junto a todo el diseño. Sin esto, se vendría abajo.



Tia Lola

Favorite of the year

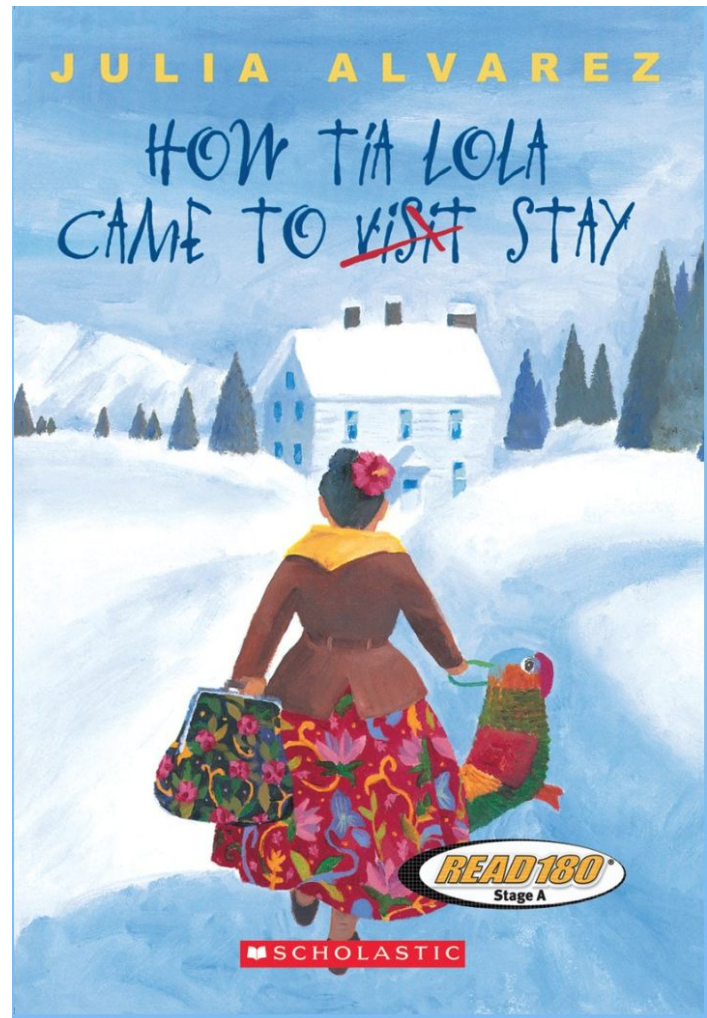
Protagonist:

10-11 year old sensitive Latino boy, family experiencing divorce and displacement. They wind up in Vermont (whitest place ever?)

Beautiful, subtle complex “dilemma” situations involving language, culture, values, family.

Translanguage reality and meta-discourse on it

The book itself is a short novel. It fits what they are “supposed to be reading.”
The library had 12 copies!!



To be continued...

Continuing to document amazing outcomes in the classroom

Continuing to develop methods and techniques

Continuing to think through translanguaging in reading methods (space and tools for selves, stories, discussion) as well as writing/production