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“I AM FROM *EPIFANIA AND TOMAS*” —
AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AND BI-LITERACY NARRATIVE
OF A MEXICAN AMERICAN ORCHARD WORKERS’ DAUGHTER

A Thesis
Presented To
Eastern Washington University
Cheney, Washington

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Arts in English
Teaching English as a Second Language Emphasis

By
Brenda Lorena Aguilar
Summer 2016

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MASTER'S THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This is an autoethnography and bi-literacy narrative of a first-generation Mexican American woman whose parents work in the orchards around Mattawa, Washington. It is a collection of 44 written artifacts dating back to high school Spanish class and moving forward to the graduate papers written in the master's program at Eastern Washington University as well as concurrent and retrospective journal entries documenting her infancy years through her graduate studies. A close and interactive reading of works by Mexican Americans, Richard Rodriguez and Gloria Anzaldua, is offered by the author who connects her own experiences growing up bilingually and biculturally in the United States with their experiences. She also reviews literature about the role of the bi-literacy narrative and value of autoethnography in the lives of first-generation college students like herself. Providing both emic and etic views of the orchard community and cultural practices, the author highlights the values of respect, hard work, and responsibility taught to her and her three siblings by her Mexican-born parents who have worked for the same company in the orchards for 25 years.

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Lastly, I want show my appreciation for the valuable internships I had in English 112 Composition for Multilingual Students with Dr. LaVona Reeves and at the Asia University America Program with Janine Alden and Diane Adler. They were both wonderful opportunities where I was able to learn from students coming from different countries. The English teachers I worked with are great examples of what I hope to be in the future—to be compassionate, open-minded and inspiring so the students can feel comfortable and safe in my classroom.

Preface

Language Learning Experience/s

Part 1. Before the M.A.

Though I was born in the United States, my family spoke *español* (Spanish) at home. When I started kindergarten in Mattawa, Washington at age five, I acquired English because everything was taught in English, and eventually I was able to distinguish English and *español* as separate languages. This model that insures bilingualism is called diglossia: at home and church, I would speak *español*, and at school and in the larger community, I would speak English. In high school, the only foreign language class offered was Spanish, so college-bound Mexican Americans began to learn Castilian Spanish grammar and syntax, but it was taught by an Anglo, non-native teacher who explained everything in English, not in *español*. Let me first emphasize that even though I spoke *español*, it didn't necessarily mean my *español* was what is considered the correct spoken or written Spanish from Spain. I did not know the rules applied in *español*. I had tacit knowledge because I was a fluent Spanish speaker, but I could not state the rules. We Mexican Americans had to learn about *los artículos*, *los participios*, *la conjugación de los verbos*, and soon we were writing in *Español*. There was also reading involved in the target language, but it did not seem age appropriate and was more like children's stories that I felt had no real purpose for me since they had no cultural information about *México* or anything relevant to my current life as a Mexican American teen. It was mostly focused on getting practice with speaking the language by reading aloud to peers. There were also never any opportunities to use the language with the other students in the class in communicative activities.

As I explained before, the Spanish courses I took for two years were not very challenging for me as a heritage Spanish speaker. I was able to learn the rules for the Spanish language (in English), but I never learned how to explain these rules in Spanish or how to pronounce or

recognize them in Spanish because my teacher always explained in English. However, I valued the opportunity to *escribir en español* (write in Spanish) in class every day. The class would get the chance to journal for five minutes on a prompt the teacher gave us, for instance, our thoughts from the news or would give us the option of a free write. My free writing was always about how my day had been in school, what I had planned, and what I did over the weekend. As a matter of fact, Spanish class helped me think about what I wanted to do if I ever became a Spanish teacher. I would imagine how my classes would be, and it was for this reason I was more motivated to learn Spanish. My dream in high school was to become a teacher—Spanish teacher perhaps.

Pre-M.A. Teaching Experience in the U.S. and Abroad

When I went off to college, there came a time where I had to think what I wanted to be, and my goal of becoming a teacher became clearer. As a freshman at EWU, I started taking Spanish and education courses along with English as a Second Language (ESLG) courses at EWU that would allow me to teach in the near future. However, with the ESLG courses, I would be able to earn only a minor, but I continued down the path of becoming a high school Spanish teacher.

One of the challenges I had when I began my first Spanish classes was keeping up with the terminology for the rules applied in Spanish. In some ways, it felt as if I was starting over, but it wasn't too difficult as I started picking everything up and then was moved into the classes for heritage speakers. The EWU classes for heritage speakers were more advanced than I had expected since the Spanish I was learning was the academic Spanish from Spain. There was some Spanish variation I was still not used to such as the *th* sound for *z* in *cora^zon*. After I completed all of the Spanish courses, I was also in the process of completing education courses in order to complete the B.A. in Spanish Education. While I was taking my few last education classes, I had the opportunity to teach in middle school and high school settings at Medical Lake.

At Medical Lake, I assisted and taught different levels of Spanish along with my master teacher, Ms. Eliassen. My master teacher was a wonderful mentor who would give me

suggestions such as finding my own teacher voice, timing myself, and designing activities like ones she had created. I cannot find words to express how wonderful it was to teach the students there. I remember teaching the students in the class different vocabulary depending on the unit *conjugación de verbos* with past tense, present tense, and future tense. There were also a lot of game activities I was in charge of in preparing the students for their spelling tests. Whenever another Spanish teacher needed help, I would be asked by my master teacher to go and help out in the next classroom where I would walk around to each group and answer any questions they had.

Working with the middle school students was a very different experience from the high school students. I was at the middle school a number of days, and I was asked to assist the teacher in helping the students individually, making sure they were on task. The middle school students were very outgoing and had more projects to work on than the high school students. The students were not afraid to ask any questions and were more engaged in learning the Spanish language. Overall, I would say the students in both high school and middle school all tried their best to communicate in *español* and were really interested when it came to learning about Mexican holidays such as *Día de los muertos* (Day of the Dead) y *Día de las madres* (Mother's Day). *Día de los muertos* was great because the teacher would create an altar where the students would bring a photograph of their deceased loved one and would then place it at the altar. This was one of my most memorable moments where the students shared their photograph with the class.

In the last quarter of the Spanish Education Program, I was placed in Richland, Washington. The high school itself was very different because it almost looked like a community college, and the atmosphere was different from the high school at Medical Lake. At the high school in Richland, I was teaching about five classes a day, and I attended the teachers' meetings. This was the most diverse school I had ever attended, and the school is also known for students' success. For the first time, I had students asking about what they could do to improve their grades since their parents became concerned when their grades had changed.

In this school, I was teaching different levels of Spanish from Spanish I, Spanish II, Spanish III, and Spanish for Heritage Speakers, AP students, and Spanish IV students all together. I was not expecting to be teaching right away since I came around the time my master teacher, Mrs. Jolley, was going on a trip to Costa Rica. When my master teacher left on her trip to Costa Rica, I was left to teach while there was a substitute teacher. I created an activity to get to know the students, and they would get a chance to know me. Through the activity, I learned about each student's favorite sport, animal, food, and hobby. The teaching experience was something I had to get used to since I was teaching all classes as opposed to teaching one class period.

The teaching portion during my time in the school was all set, which I couldn't change entirely since each Spanish level followed a textbook and the curriculum. I remember incorporating journaling at the beginning of the class, and the students would be asked to be prepared before I had a volunteer share what they had written. Sometimes we would start with a quick warm-up from what the students learned the previous day. Each class had its own lesson where I would be teaching *conjugación de verbos*, vocabulary, and readings. The students also had projects where they had to come up with a food recipe from a Spanish-speaking country and bring in a sample for the class to try out. There was a lot of food from *salsa de mango* (mango salsa), *guacamole*, *tortilla de harina* (flour tortillas), *enchiladas*, *totopos* (tortilla chips), and many other dishes. The students enjoyed this project and getting to taste different foods from other Spanish cultures.

Clearly, the challenges I had during my teaching experience helped me think about different strategies I could use as a future teacher. The first challenge was how to motivate my Spanish II class where I had a hard time getting them engaged enough to talk. My master teacher had told me about how I would struggle with this class the most since it was a big class. One way was to provide interesting games to engage the learners, which worked really well. When I created games—whether it was as a whole class or in groups—the students did well communicating in the language. Some of the games consisted of Pictionary, *Matamoscas*

(Flyswatter) game, *juego de dado* (dice game), *manzanas a manzanas* (apples to apples), and also using the small white boards for the students to practice vocabulary. Another challenge was being able to assist the class that included the heritage speakers, AP students, and Spanish IV students. They were all at different levels, so I had to make sure I was able to differentiate instruction to where the students could all follow along. This class included a lot of literature where the students had to use critical analysis as well as journaling. My last challenge was being able to communicate with other teachers, so I could offer helpful insights in teaching a foreign language in the classroom. As a future teacher, I made sure to join teacher meetings within the foreign language department at the school, which included other Spanish teachers and a French teacher. It was a wonderful opportunity to hear about their experiences and receive advice from them working with students as well as about the teaching material. I even had an opportunity to do an observation in the French classroom where the students had book presentations they had created in the target language. There was also an opportunity to do an observation and to interview the teacher in the special education classroom. The teacher explained to me how the purpose of the class was to assist the students, depending on their learning abilities. I remember some students were doing testing on the computer, others worked on math problems at their desk, and others worked with another teacher who would have them work on a reading passage. It was interesting to me to see the students work at their own pace, and this seemed to be structured differently from the regular classes.

Let me end by sharing what I learned through my teaching experience in both of these places. I would say I was able to learn about my strengths as a teacher where I was able to be a model for the students. In other words, the students were able to learn about the importance of being able to journal in Spanish or create tasks that would help them recall what they had learned the previous day. Strengths I have are being patient and having organization skills to create lesson plans and make sure that if something is not working to be able to adjust accordingly. Creating a positive environment was also important in the classroom where I provided space for the students

to be able to have equal participation in sharing their thoughts. During my last week in the school, I appreciated the wonderful experience I had teaching the students and getting to learn a lot about them, such as their interests in sports, in music, in drawing, in learning different languages. I also enjoyed reading about their future plans. Soon enough it was time to think about my future in the graduate program where I was interested in Teaching English as a Second Language.

Pre-M.A. Cross-cultural Experience/s

When I was about six years old, it was my first time to go on a trip *con mis padres* (with my parents) to *México*. As a young child, I was really excited—not only because we would meet our *hermano mayor* (older brother) we did not know, but also because I was curious about this new place. However, I never realized how different it would be from the United States or what I would expect. Right as we arrived at the *pueblo* (town) I noticed how different the environment and the land were. *Mis abuelos* (my grandparents), may they rest in peace, lived up *en el monte donde tenia un rancho* (in the hills where they had a farm) filled with many animals such as chickens, cows, pigs and goats. *En el rancho* (in the farm), I had to learn to communicate *con los familiares* (with relatives) in the house, where greeting them was of high importance to our elders. In *México*, I also learned about *las posadas en el tiempo de Navidad* (during Christmas time), about the community coming together, helping the family out with chores at the farm, with the plantation, and more. One thing I will say is how *maíz* (corn) is the main source of food within my family who use it to make *tortillas*, *atole* (cornflour), and *pozole* (maize stew). As a girl, I was truly amazed to see stacks of different *colores de maíz* (colors of corn). Talking about food, I was shocked and curious about people eating *chapulines* (grasshoppers), some type of worm, and *alacranes* (scorpions). I never tasted them myself since I was very scared to do so, yet *mi abuelito* (my grandpa) would eat them as if it was so tasty. Being in *México* helped me understand a lot more of how the place was and how people traveled to the United States for a better job opportunity to help the family back in *México*.

Growing up, I was raised in Mattawa, Washington where there are many agricultural jobs for many people to work in. The place is a community of many Latinos who came from different places from *México* down to the strip of Panama. Even though we all can communicate in Spanish there were still differences in culture, food, vocabulary, dialect and intonation in the Spanish language. A particular example of this cross-cultural experience was when I started working in the cherry orchard during the summer. When I worked there, I would meet new people and would hear their different experiences and their struggles. They would talk time to time in a different dialect I did not understand, but I enjoyed listening to them. From the workers, I learned to appreciate hard work in order to progress in life. They were motivated to earn money for their family, and something some people don't see or understand is the hardships parents go through, yet never complain. They work hard each day with a positive attitude making sure not to slow down since time is money. Even today, there will be times where I will listen to *mis padres* talk about who the various people at work were and what hard-working people they were. Again, even though there are some differences, there are also similarities where we were working for the purpose of helping out our families at home, as well as to send money back to the family in another country.

Part 2. Language Learning During the M.A. Program

In winter 2014, I started my first quarter in the M.A. TESOL Program where I was still in great shock as to how far I had made it. During the program, I met many new people coming from all different countries and having different experiences in learning a new language and teaching English in different countries. There were people who came from Saudi Arabia, Japan, Russia, Brazil, and other places who have been of great help in sharing their experiences teaching and learning English in their home countries. After being in this program, I, as a person, have been shaped into a new person who carries with me a mix of identities. In the following, I will go deeply into my language learning, my teaching experience, and my cross-cultural experience/s during the program.

Language Learning

As I recall back to my M.A. TESOL Program, I remember my language learning experience in two different settings. One of them was in English 582 called Modern Language Methodology, a class where French and Japanese were integrated. In this class, I learned about the different methods in teaching such as the direct method, Berlitz method, grammar-translation method, audiolingualism method, affective-humanistic method, and communicative approach. Through these approaches, Dr. Reeves taught as French and Japanese, which gave me an idea on what it felt to be a language learner. Even though we were learning new languages, it was not difficult to grasp French and Japanese since French is close to the Spanish language, and I had studied Japanese Hiragana. What helped a lot was being able to understand the alphabet/characters for both French and Japanese Hiragana to easily become familiar with the sounds. It was also very helpful to use the language without speaking in English in order to retain the language. Some activities I remember are the songs we followed along to, such as Alouette, the Japanese song called, ふるさと (Furusato meaning “hometown”), and other in-class activities. The class, as a whole, was an amazing experience where I not only learned Japanese and French, but also was able to learn from the rest of the class who also spoke different languages and were able to teach us some vocabulary dealing with family, eating, food, numbers, and animals.

My second language learning experience was when I was enrolled in Japanese 101, a class for first-year students learning Japanese. The class all started out with getting familiar with the Hiragana (ひらがな) characters where ていこ (Teiko) せんせい (sensei meaning “teacher”) started with the Roman letters. This was only in the beginning, but as we progressed, she said it was best to use the ひらがな characters in order to get familiar with the language. Then we started learning vocabulary about how to greet people, about one’s own major, occupation, family, age, and time on the clock. There were other nouns we learned in class, and soon we were able to use everything in sentences as well as to write it and speak it. Some

Japanese vocabulary I still recall learning are, good morning (おはようございます = ohayoo gozaimasu), thank you (ありがとうございます = arigatoo gozaimasu), I'm sorry (ごめんなさい = gomenasai / すみません = sumimasen), teacher/professor (せんせい = sensei), student (がくせい = gakusee), mother (おかあさん = okaasan), father (おとうさん = otoosan), umbrella (かさ = kasa), bag (かばん = kaban), and newspaper (しんぶん = shinbun). Close to the middle of the quarter, our class was invited into an AUAP class where we had the opportunity to practice our Japanese and to help the AUAP students practice their English. AUAP stands for Asia University America Program, a program where Japanese students from Asia University come to study English for five months in the U.S. I will talk more about the AUAP program in the teaching section. In all, I was able to learn the basic Japanese hiragana, and I hope to learn other languages in the near future.

Teaching

Even though I had taught Spanish both in a middle school and high school, I also did a couple of teaching internships as a graduate student. One of the first teaching experiences in teaching English as a Second Language was when I taught in English 112: Composition for Multilingual Students. This I will say was my first quarter into the program where I would teach my journals and assist the various students coming from France, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Japan, Spain and other places. In English 112, there is a textbook assigned for the course called, *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery* by Russell Freedman. This book is a biography of Eleanor Roosevelt where the author captures an inspirational woman where one learns to have hope and do so much more for the world. Through the biography of Eleanor Roosevelt, I was able to connect certain aspects to her experiences, and it is what helped me to share my weekly journals with the students in the class. The students had a model where they would also write journals for five minutes, and they would share as a class. This was one of my first experiences where I would say I learned so much more from the students and I was able to work in pairs and in groups.

There was a lot of writing, speaking, listening, and reading involved in the activities prepared by the professor. I would assist the students in any way possible while at the same time observing what I could do as a teacher. I noticed the students were very engaged in the mini videos, poems, including lessons where they worked in a group.

Another instance was helping a particular group I was in charge of in creating a dialogue they would present to the class and be graded on. Outside of class, I would meet with the group and have them plan out an outline, making sure they followed the guidelines of what they needed to have. For sure, the students needed to come up with their own dialogue, use props for their scene, and have a final written dialogue that would be turned in to the professor. As a whole, I really enjoyed working with various students helping me develop as a teacher.

My other experience, as I had described before, was working with Asia University America Program (AUAP) students. I had already been involved in volunteering in AUAP classes, and I also worked for AUAP as the Student Services Assistant. As an intern, I worked with two teachers Diane Adler and Janine Alden. Before being an intern, I did do teaching where the staff would ask me to teach a class when they couldn't make it due to a cold/flu. This really gave me an idea of what to expect teaching AUAP students. During their first term, the students take Functions, TOEIC, Integrated English skills (IES), and American Studies. During the second term the students have Global Issues, IES, TOEIC, and American Studies. Some classes change and some stay the same, depending what the staff decided will be best for the students where sometimes Functions class will be extended in up to the second term. The first class I interned in was Functions, a class designed to help the students practice speaking the language. The students would practice the dialogue from a packet they received in the beginning of the course. The packet is divided by units and includes how to greet people, start a conversation, order at a restaurant, call 911, travel and other units. While I was interning in the class, I would work with a particular group of students who needed the most help. The staff I worked with had already informed me about the students' English proficiency and I knew section one would have the most

difficulty understanding in class. My role in the class was to make sure the group of students I was responsible for were not falling behind. This meant the students understood what they were doing such as completing worksheets or following the rules of the game. Outside of class, I would help students who wanted practice using the language by having a one-to-one conversation. The goal was to have the students gain more confidence in developing their speaking and listening skills. It was difficult in the beginning, but the students tried really hard to speak in English and slowly saw a difference. Eventually, the students were able to keep a conversation, and sometimes when they learned a new word in class, they would ask me to define the term. Along with the definition I would give them an example using the word. In class, the students would learn slang words such as gonna, gotta, sup, cool, chill, and more. The students really enjoyed using the terms outside of class as practice, which would make me happy when they used English to practice. In Functions, the students also did role-plays where they were asked to come up with a dialogue (depending on the unit) and then do a short presentation to the class. As an intern, I would help the group making sure their dialogue wasn't too short, but not long either. Then I would help them with their pronunciation and make sure there was eye contact without reading their papers. Everything had to be memorized making sure they used terms/phrases they had learned in the unit. Jazz chants were also another component in practicing rhythm and stress. As a whole, I really enjoyed working in a class where the students practiced through a communicative approach.

In the second AUAP class I interned was American Studies, a class designed for the purpose of teaching important events that happened in U.S. history. Here the students learned about the first settlers, the Harlem Renaissance, the Cold War, World War I, World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, and more. My role as an intern was to work with a group of students where we were to review what they had learned the day before, which would lead to the next lesson/activity. The students learned about important people such as Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, John F. Kennedy, Neil Armstrong, W.E.B Dubois, and many other people. Within our

groups, we would also watch a short video where the students had to talk about what they saw and what the message the video was conveying. American studies allowed the students to not only listen and write, but also be able to use critical thinking and communicate their thoughts on certain issues (e.g. war, slavery, The Great Depression). The challenge I noticed in most students I worked with was being able to convey their message about certain issues and remembering years and dates. It is difficult to have to remember many dates since they can get all mixed up. For the time I was in both classes, I was able to learn a lot working with AUAP students and seeing how it differed from English 112 where the students were at a higher level and were writing essays of 500+ words in class.

Cross-cultural Experience/s

During the M.A. program, I was able to have many cross-cultural experiences inside and outside of class. One of my first experiences was working with AUAP students who taught me a lot of their culture. AUAP students taught me about how respect is huge for them when it comes to respecting those in higher positions. I also learned to take off my shoes when coming into someone's home and to be thankful when they offer me food. Bowing down is also a sign of respect and saying, "I'm sorry," many times as one student explained to me. Through this learning experience, I was able to reflect on the way my parents had taught us to have deep respect to our elders and to others. They would always let me know that it was rude to and bad to do things without permission.

Another cultural experience was through my classmates in in TESOL program where I met great classmates coming from Saudi Arabia. One of them was a better understanding of the *hijab* (covers the head) vs. the *burka* (covers the whole face) women wear in Saudi Arabia. If I had not known about his, I would have never learned the appropriate term. One of the most important values I learned was the role of the *mother*. They talked about how in the Quran the mother comes before three times placing the mother above. The father comes after that, which for me was new since I was not familiar with their values. Thanks to the people who have shared

their experiences and their cultures, I was able to make comparisons. For example, I was able to connect my feelings towards how important *mi mamá* (my way of referring to “my mom”) means to me. *Mi mamá* has been there for me throughout my entire life, and I cherish her the most for being *una fuerte mujer* (a strong woman).

Part 3. Teaching Philosophy

As a language learner and future language teacher, I trust that we learn by having HIGH and equal expectations for all students, regardless of their background. Students learn language by daily practice, meaning that we learn to read by reading every day; we learn to write by writing every day; we learn to speak by speaking; we learn to listen by listening.

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and philosopher; Martha Graham, an African American dancer and choreographer; and Jean Piaget, a Swiss philosopher who focused on the social aspects of learning—all of whom helped me to imagine the kind of teaching I want to do. The following is what each person said:

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

— Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

I believe I am the “younger generation” Freire is referring to in his concern that excellent education “becomes the practice of freedom” in which we, the next generation of teachers, who are but novices now, but will “critically and creatively” transform the system, keeping the best practices and letting go of outdated approaches.

I believe that we learn by practice. Whether it means to learn to dance by practicing dancing or to learn to live by practicing living, the principles are the same. In each, it is the performance of a dedicated precise set of acts, physical or intellectual, from which comes shape of achievement, a sense of one's being, a satisfaction of spirit. One becomes, in some area, an athlete of God. Practice means to perform, over and over again in the face of all obstacles, some act of vision, of faith, of desire. Practice is a means of inviting the perfection desired.

— Martha Graham

My mentor and I believe that we learn by practicing writing every day in class, by practicing teaching, and by performing as we desire and invite “perfection” though we seldom achieve that level. We write with our students and share our writing with them as we create and enter a writers’ community in the classroom.

The principle goal of education in the schools should be creating men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done; men and women who are creative, inventive and discoverers, who can be critical and verify, and not accept, everything they are offered.

— Jean Piaget

The classroom is a place where students will create their own space, a place where they are able to show their own individual creativity. The classroom will be a community built by sharing and learning from one another’s personal experiences. Students would be writing in class every day as a way to develop their voices while sharing their writing and increasing understanding of and compassion for other writers. This sharing helps students to trust one another and establishes a safe environment for all the students in the class without feeling judged or left out.

Furthermore, I believe students come with different learning styles, so it is important to be aware of students’ needs by providing different types of activities to engage visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. For example, having hands-on activities and incorporating technology involves not only watching a short video and responding to it, but also fosters cooperative learning. Group work can help students negotiate meaning by clarifying any questions or eliminating confusion. Motivation plays a significant part in the students’ learning, so it is important to create authentic lessons in which the students will find a connection and a purpose to their learning. In all, this is what teachers should take into consideration when thinking about our students who are coming from different countries all over the world.

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Chapter 1
Introduction



Figure 1: The girl in the pink coat looking away from the camera on a school field trip.

I Am From

I am from *Epifania* and *Tomas*, *Elena* and *Ignacio*, *Maria* and *Arnulfo*.

From the many apple orchards of Central Washington.

From parents who have poured their hearts out to provide food and shelter.

I am from a small town called Mattawa filled with hardworking families,

From the calm beautiful Columbia River and the scenic Wanapum Dam

keeping the water in place.

I am from *pozole* eaters, *tamale* eaters, and beans, rice, apples, and *maíz* eaters.

I am from love, respect, positivity, non-quitters, and success.

I am from “*sigan adelante*”, “*no se den por vencidos*”, and “*que Dios y La Virgen estén con ustedes.*”

I am from Catholic faith, from parents who never finished their education, and from parents who
 have shown me how to strive for my goals and always be a humble person.
 From a community of people who value their heritage and have passed it down
 to the next generation.
 From the idea of retaining one's own language—
 To never be ashamed of who we are
 I am from a family who values unity.
 Staying together is a way of surviving our struggles.
 I am from a mixed mold of identities that are still blooming
 like roses, orchids, and dahlias.
 From happiness, joy, sadness, and trust.
 From Selena, Hardwell, The Killers, OneOkRock, J Balvin, Maluma, BTS, Epik High,
 and Prince Royce.
 From a world where there is so much to learn.
 I am from beautiful memories that will one day be known as stories.
 I am from here, there and everywhere.
 Brenda Aguilar (2015)

Our lived experiences have deep meaning. They are more than stories. They are part of us. Whether we testify in *español* or in English, we must tell of our travels to literacy in both languages and cultures in the Northwest—tell them in the cherry orchards at our parents' sides and beyond. What follows, therefore, is what Kara Wittman (2016) might call a “literacy narrative in the margins” (p. 678). She asks a question: “What would it mean to understand each marginal comment as a tiny literacy narrative, a story of the professor’s experience learning to read not only a student’s essay but also a more and less clumsy tale of becoming more or less literate?” (p. 678). Like Wittman’s freshman literacy narratives, this thesis will be “a clumsy tale” in some places, but it is about being the first in my family to become bi-literate, to come to college, and to earn both an undergraduate and a graduate degree. This “clumsy tale” is about writing in and from the margins while learning from my mentor, LaVona Reeves, and from her notes in the margins for two years—first as her graduate student in TESL classes (Artifacts 12- 31) then as her intern in Composition for Multilingual Writers (Artifacts 7- 11), and then as her thesis student. Like Patricia Hill Collins, many of us consider ourselves “outsiders within”: “the experience of outsiders within is one where intellectuals learn to trust their own personal and

cultural biographies as significant sources of knowledge.... outsiders within bring these ways of knowing back into the research process” (1986, p. S29). In telling our stories, we also create a community of writers by allowing others to step into our lives and make connections to their own lived experiences.

This is why I started this thesis with a poem about my heritage that I wrote in English 580—Second Language Acquisition— after reading Mary Pipher’s poem, “I am from” in the introduction to her 2002 book, *The Middle Of Everywhere: Helping Refugees Enter the American Community*. Reading her book as well as Richard Rodriguez’ s *The Hunger of Memory* (1982) and Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands: La Frontera The New Mesriza* (1987) has inspired me to write about being born and raised in the United States while retaining the Mexican American language and culture in the orchard community.

I am a bilingual and bicultural Mexican American woman from a small town, Mattawa, Washington, known primarily for growing apples, potatoes, onions, grapes, cherries and asparagus. This is the main resource the people have to make a living and provide the family with the necessities. Most people will work from 4 A.M. to 3 P.M. each day in the summer and fall, and sometimes this includes Saturday and Sunday. The majority of the people in my community are Spanish speakers who come from *México* and who are devout Catholics for the most part.

To honor this orchard community, as a bilingual writer, I will at times mesh codes— switch from English to Spanish as suggested by Jay Jordan (2015), in his article, “Material translingual ecologies”:

Gilyard’s pluralism and Canagarajah’s difference-as-resource would remove judgments about language varieties’ relative values altogether, encouraging composers and their teachers to think less about ‘home’ versus ‘school’ appropriateness and more about how rhetorical situations and ecologies call for linguistic codes to combine, often unexpectedly and in a single composition, to fulfill rhetorical purposes. (p. 364-365)

For this reason, at times I will provide a full English translation that follows the Spanish word or citation in context. At other times, I will use just the Spanish word within an English sentence without translation to honor the culture. For example, I will always refer to my parents as *mis*

padres, to my mother as *mi madre*, to my father as *mi padre*, to my brother/s as *mi hermano* or *mis hermanos*, to my sister as *mi hermana*, to *mis padres* homeland as *México*, and to the United States as *el Norte*—the word *mis padres* and their *padres* always used when growing up in the United States or visiting the homeland.

Let me begin by introducing *mi familia* to whom I am greatly thankful for being where I am today. *Mis padres* were born and raised in a small *rancho* (ranch) in *Puebla, México*. *Mi padre* was from Chazumba de Tapia Puebla, *México* and *mi madre* was from San Miguel de Chiautla de Tapia Puebla, *México*. They both lived in different areas where *mi madre* had to walk about an hour to a nearby town for supplies, church services, and the one-room school. It took about 30 minutes for *mi padre* to get to the same nearby town. They both attended school, only completing *la primaria* (up to 6th grade). However, *mi madre* started school when she was a little older and by the time she started, *mi padre* was already working in *el Norte*. After a year of getting to know each other, *mi padre* then 21, and *mi madre*, then 16 years decided to marry. Later, *mis padres* decided it would be best to move to *el Norte* where they would have more opportunities for a better life. In their minds, *el Norte* was the place to be where they knew they would have a better chance finding a job. They first arrived in California, where they had relatives, and soon after moved to Washington, where there were more job opportunities. While in Washington, *mis padres* dedicated their time working as much as they could to provide shelter and food for my siblings and me. It was also important for them to send money to my grandparents in *México* who were raising their son and who were paying for his education, food, and clothes. To me, it felt as if *mis padres* had kept this secret to themselves because they never spoke about him, perhaps because it was painful for them to have to leave him behind. It was not until years later when we were preparing to go to *México*, that I found out I had an older brother. *Mi hermano mayor* (My older brother), *Ismael*, later joined our family when *mis padres* decided to bring him home to the United States that first time we were back in their home country. Soon

after, *mi hermana*, Crystal, was born in Washington, but she almost died at birth, so I have been very protective of her all of our lives.

Over the years, *mis padres* have been there for all of us and have always been big supporters of higher education. They always reminded me not to follow in their footsteps and get married young. For them, it was important for me to find a decent job before settling down and having children. Their reason for getting a good education along with a decent job was to keep me from working in a place where hard labor is very harsh. *Encima de todo les causaba a mis padres mucha tritesa verme trabajar en el manzanal y en el cerezal*. Above all, it caused *mis padres* a lot of sadness to see me work in the apple orchard and in the cherry orchard. They have been working for 25 years or more in the orchards under extreme weather conditions. The company is the only place they have ever worked, even after the owner passed away and the company transferred to another owner. If there is something I will always remember, it is “*Échale ganas a tus estudios*,” which means, “Do your best in your studies.” For this reason, like many recent scholars (Dendrinos, 2001; Eldridge, 2012; Leonard, 2014; Lee, 2008; Longman, Heewon, & Loyd-Paige, 2015; Lorde, 2007; Tauber, 2016, Wittman, 2016), I have decided to reflect on my experiences growing up as a bilingual woman in two worlds. One is looking back at my experiences at home and in my community, as well as my experiences at school. My goal here is to further reflect on these lived experiences and see how they have shaped me as an individual who is planning to teach English as a Second or Foreign Language somewhere in the world.

I am now 26, and I am in the English graduate program with an emphasis in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). The goal is to teach English to students who are learning the language and through the process, as Pipher emphasizes in her work, to be a cultural broker to them. As Pipher (2002) states,

Cultural brokers help ease people into each other’s cultures. Foucault wrote that ‘transformation is power.’ Cultural brokers give newcomers information that directly translates into power. The most important cultural brokers are schoolteachers. Schools are the frontline institution for acculturation, where children receive solid information about their new world. (p. 89)

In others words, without cultural brokers, there is little or no support, and the students who are in a different place learning a new language find themselves dealing with culture shock, and at times feel as if they are on their own with no help.

Statement of the Problem

While studying Spanish at Wahluke High School and majoring in Spanish at Eastern Washington University, I had only one class at EWU in which we read some writings by and about Chicanas. However, as a graduate student in English, with Dr. Reeves, I was writing about my own life and language learning almost daily and doing research projects and leading discussions about Mexican American cultures, and these readings and writings have become the focus of this thesis. While reading about the lives of other multilinguals—Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), Richard Rodriguez (1982, 1991, 2014), Sangho Lee (2012), LaVona Reeves (2012) Eleanor Roosevelt (Freedman,1993)—I felt a need to write about my own life growing up bilingual and bicultural in Washington. Surrounded by a large extended family, a church community, and *Chicana* school friends—all of whom spoke Spanish and followed Mexican customs, I had no contact with English-speaking people until I entered kindergarten in the fall of 1995 at the age of five. Being the first child in *mi familia* to go to school and being taught not to speak unless spoken to out of respect for elders, I appeared to be delayed in both my learning and my social skills. Similar to Richard Rodriguez, I spoke maybe 50 words of English, and the teachers spoke only English with us. None of them were bilingual, but most of my classmates spoke Spanish and picked up English quickly if they were not shy like me.

Throughout my entire life, I have always spoken *español* with *mis padres*, even though *mis padres* at one point wanted us to speak English at home—comparable to Richard Rodriguez’s parents, but we, being young children, kept speaking Spanish to them. There was no way I could stop using my Spanish language when it was a special language only used with *mis padres*. It was in my interest, as a bilingual Mexican American woman, to do further research on the retention of

heritage language and culture, to examine my own experiences, and to create lessons on honoring the family and traditions across cultures. The reason behind the research is to find insights I did not know before about myself. Therefore, the aim of my thesis is to trace my language learning experience growing up as a bilingual speaker, as a female, and as the first in the family to earn a degree and soon a second one.

There are some of us students in the education system aiming to get a higher education, and we are constantly working hard to overcome the struggles of being stereotyped or stigmatized by people according to minority status. For teachers in the education system as well as those who are unaware of students' backgrounds, there is a need to recognize the struggles and challenges students might face. Why is it important to have more bilingual minorities reflect about their past? Let me begin by explaining why I became interested in doing an autoethnography as a research method.

Sang Ho Lee's (2012) EWU masters thesis is a key example of both retrospective diary and autoethnography in his research study exploring his education experience both in Korea and in the United States. In reference to his thesis, *The communal diary, 나적의 (Naljeogi), transformative education, and writing through migrations: A Korean novice ESL teacher's diary and autoethnography*, I can infer from his writing the importance of looking back at people's work in order to become aware and considerate educators and individuals. This is why I chose autoethnography, an approach I want to take, to communicate my voice to my audience through my written reflection on my past and to let my voice be received as a Chicana/Latina [these Spanish terms are used to describe a female due to the "a" at the end] as Linda Prieto (2012, p. 412) would say. Due to the many other Spanish-speaking languages from other countries, I would clearly define myself as a Mexican American. I am a Chicana and also a bilingual speaker with the ability to speak and write using the Spanish and English languages. As a bilingual minority, it is helpful for me as a researcher to write about my language learning experience growing up at

home and throughout my school years. What can educators and others who are curious gain from learning from a bilingual Chicana's [myself] literacy narrative? For many bilingual minorities doing self-reflection writing would probably not dare to write about their personal experience, but it is clear for me that in order for educators, for those who want to learn about other cultures and for those who need to have a more open mindset, they must read about people's lived experience. We are all different, and everyone brings something different to the research study, and this is what auto-ethnography will do. It will allow me to reflect and analyze my experiences through the years.

Genres and Research Methods

Literacy Narrative

This thesis is multi-genre and includes aspects of literacy narrative (Soliday, 1994), diary (Lee, 2012), autoethnography (Anzaldúa, 1987; Canagarajah, 2012), and memoir (Rodriguez, 1982). Mary Soliday defines literacy narrative:

At the most basic level, the plot of a literacy story tells what happens when we acquire language, either spoken or written. But literacy stories are also places where writers explore what Victor Turner calls 'liminal' crossings between worlds. (1994, p. 511)

For about two years, as a graduate student, I have been writing—both in class and on my own—about “those moments when the self is on the threshold of possible intellectual, social, and emotional development” where I have entered “sites of self-translation where [I]... can articulate the meanings and the consequences of [my] passages between language worlds” (p. 511). This genre has allowed me to explore deeply into my experiences with heritage language and culture as I have identified themes and changing views, looking back from my birth in the United States to the present day. Through composing, collecting, and analyzing 44 written artifacts for this project, I have discovered that the literacy narrative can “expand...personal agency” as I “engaged in a broader critical dialogue” (Soliday, p. 512) responding back or comparing my experiences with well-known Mexican American scholars such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Richard Rodriguez, as well as thesis writer, Sangho Lee, and other scholars.

As I complete this thesis, I stop to read the July 2016 issue of *College English* and am drawn to “Writing and Rhetoric and/as Posthuman Practice” by T. Casey Boyle.

Kristine Johnson proposes that writing teachers like me follow *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*—

a 2011 joint report outlining a general arc for preparing students for writing into and beyond college—is provocative in two related ways. First, the report assumes writing and writing instruction to be a continuous activity, positing that ‘[w]riting development takes place over time as students encounter different contexts, tasks, audiences, and purposes’ (2)...Second, the report proposes cultivating students’ ‘habits of mind’ as the essential task for educators, countering current pedagogical orientations that instead focus humanities education on developing conscious and critical attention. (p. 532)

This thesis does take place over time with a focus on my early years and writing I have done in graduate school in a traditional English department with many monolingual literary scholars, but my goal has been to cultivate certain “habits of mind” in order to be both a good person and a devoted scholar who has learned to love daily writing:

‘Habits of mind,’ the Framework states, ‘refers to ways of approaching learning that are both intellectual and practical and that will support students’ success in a variety of fields and disciplines’ (1). The document identifies eight such habits that writing instruction should value and cultivate: curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition. (p. 532)

Through the 44 written artifacts I have collected, my aim is to discover certain themes that will help me answer my research questions. Perhaps, there is something valuable I did not know earlier, and I know this work will lead to many other questions. Boyle then argues that “the Framework provides occasion for renewing classical rhetorical education in concert with the report’s designed aims for writing studies and instruction” (p. 533). Moreover, Boyle states, “By positioning writing as a ‘way of being in the world,’ Johnson argues that the Framework isolates writing instruction to be an ideal site for shaping of ethical compartments through ‘ancient rhetoric and liberal arts’ (519) (p. 533). For Johnson, this means “that the Framework offers possibility for renewing ancient rhetorical training is especially apt, since, as noted, the report frames writing education as continuous and habitual, both key attributes of rhetorical training in antiquity” (p. 533). It is my belief that other autoethnographers will be able to bring and expand

on something new through their work in searching for bigger questions about themselves as ordinary people and as professionals. In my case, there is the need to know why the value of retention of both of my languages and culture has shaped the person I am today, and how this will help me in my future profession.

Ethnography

Whitehead (2005) defines ethnography here:

In the case of both ontological and epistemological perspectives, I argue, ethnography tends to share with other qualitative researchers the idea of ontological view of what they are studying varying based on environmental factors, and their findings as an intersubjective product of the researcher and the research. These ontological and epistemological orientations of ethnography provide the foundations for the various attributes of ethnography... (p. 4)

These include the following nine aspects of the method that are also incorporated in the present study:

- 1) “Ethnography is a holistic approach to the study of cultural systems” (Whitehead, 2005, p. 4).

The cultural systems that I am exploring in this thesis include

- a. my immediate family in the United States,
- b. the Mexican American orchard workers’ community in Mattawa,
- c. the school system in the surrounding area, the Catholic were that we were attending there, and
- d. Eastern Washington University’s Bachelor of Arts in Spanish Education Program and
- e. the Master of Arts in English—TESL Program.

- 2) “Ethnography is the study of the socio-cultural contexts, processes, and meanings within cultural systems” (p. 4). For me, my family is foundational to my understanding of the various contexts identified above and the meanings that have been passed on to me and my siblings. For example, I include the work ethic passed on to us by *mis padres*.

- 3) “Ethnography is the study of cultural systems from both emic and etic perspectives” (p. 4).

For me, as a bicultural and bilingual American, having both insider and outsider perspectives

- gives me advantages in all of the cultural contexts identified in number one above. For example, in the retrospective diary entry of my first weeks in kindergarten that appears in Chapter 3, I had an etic view of school expectations, but quickly gained an emic view. At first, I did not know I was supposed to speak up every day because *mis padres* had taught me to show respect by being quiet and listening to the teacher, which caused the teacher to think that I was socially unprepared for kindergarten. Other Spanish-speaking kindergartners seemed to have no trouble fitting into the school system because they were more outgoing, but I was reserved. Soon, however, I gained an emic perspective of kindergarten and began to fit in well once the teacher spoke to my parents about my silence.
- 4) “Ethnography is a process of discovery, making inferences, and continuing inquiries in an attempt to achieve emic validity. Ethnography is an iterative process of learning episodes” (p. 4). This episode in kindergarten is an example of how I discovered how to act in school—in part by inferring what to do by watching the other children and by intuiting how I could both obey my parents by being respectful and answer the teacher’s questions from time to time. I also discovered that I am a shy person, and that is acceptable as well. My research process is also ethnographic in that it “iterative”—meaning that in writing this narrative, I looked at the orchard community again and again through different eyes over time. This will be discussed in greater depth in Chapters 3, 4, and 5.
 - 5) “Ethnography is an open-ended emergent learning process, and not a rigid investigator controlled experiment” (p. 4). This open-endedness seems to be true for autoethnography as well, and so throughout the research process, I have considered many different ways of representing and interpreting life events through written artifacts, keeping an open mind and learning about myself, my family, and my communities along the way. Admittedly, I did not attempt to control the process of what Soliday calls “self-translation” (1994, p. 511).
 - 6) “Ethnography is a highly flexible and creative process” (p. 4). This method made it possible for me to create the orchard community through my own eyes and lived experiences and to

bring outsiders to a new understanding of our lives in the orchards and in our homes. The daily writing I have included in Chapter 3 helped me share my life stories with my students, my peers, and my professors.

- 7) “Ethnography is an interpretive, reflexive, and constructivist process” (p. 4). At times, I revisited the cherry orchards in my mind and thought about how hard the work was for those who had been doing it for decades, though I picked cherries for just a few hours for a few days in high school.
- 8) “Ethnography requires the daily and continuous recording of fieldnotes” (p. 4). Though I have included only 44 written artifacts, I did write almost daily throughout the two-year graduate program, and that writing contributed to the “self-translation” (p. 511) Soliday considers a major part of a literacy narrative.
- 9) “Ethnography presents the world of its host population in human contexts of thickly described case studies” (p. 4-5). What gives this autoethnography “thick” descriptions is the writings that, for example, revolve around *quinceañera*—the coming of age celebration for 15-year-old Mexican American girls— the subject of more than one journal entry which was expanded into a professional conference paper I gave at the The Washington Association for the Education of Speakers of Other Languages (WAESOL).

A more detailed discussion of autoethnography (Canagarajah, 2012; Trahar, 2009) appears in Chapter 2.

Assumptions

As required in TESOL guidelines for qualitative research (TESOL.org, 2016, web), I have compiled and disclosed any assumptions I had when I began this project. In Chapter 5, I will reflect on these assumptions within the context of the findings in the review of literature and the 44 artifacts presented in Chapter 3.

1. This is my own personal experience, and what I write cannot be generalized to others who are of Mexican American descent.
2. I am a bilingual Mexican American who is still in the process of shaping my own identity.
3. My parents have a major influence in my life.
4. My beliefs and values may be in conflict with other *Chicanas'* values as well as those of other cultural groups represented in Washington beyond the orchard workers' community.
5. Remembering some of my life experiences might cause me some discomfort, but I believe examining these threshold moments will be beneficial to me and to others.
6. Being shy and reserved may make it difficult for me to write this autoethnography.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions I attempted to answer as I reviewed the literature in Chapter 2 and the 44 artifacts I offer in Chapter 3.

1. As a bilingual woman, what were my struggles in learning two languages?
2. What major influences did my parents have on my education?
3. In what ways are my parents my cultural brokers?
4. As a bilingual and bicultural Chicana, what experiences have helped shape me as a future teacher?
5. What have I learned about myself that has helped me understand the retention of heritage language and culture?
6. How has my identity been shaped in family, community, and school?
7. Why is the retention of language and culture significant?

In Chapter 5, I will address each question and report findings.

Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature about (1) the meaning of autoethnography compared to ethnography; (2) the value of autoethnography; (3) the reasons for having more bilingual minorities reflect on their past; and (4) lessons we can learn

from autoethnography. Chapter 3 is the research methodology, data collection—44 written artifacts, commentary on the artifacts and settings in which they were written, and a brief analysis of the findings. Chapter 4 is the discussion of the findings and reflections on both the findings and the lessons learned by the researcher and her mentor. Chapter 5 is the conclusion of the thesis with discussion of the assumptions, answers to the research questions, identification of limitations of the present study, recommendations for future research, and final reflections on how the project changed the researcher for the better.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

Chapter 2 is a review of literature about 1) the meaning of autoethnography compared to ethnography, 2) the value of autoethnography, 3) the reasons for having more bilingual minorities reflect about their past, and 4) the lessons we can learn from auto-ethnography. Auto-ethnography has become my focus of interest to further expand on my research project for this thesis in the Master's program. This is not a detached academic review, but an engaged, interactive telling of what is said by others and how this is connected to my literacy narratives and life.

Autoethnography compared to ethnography

Many scholars have come to do research, searching for an answer as to how we can better understand ourselves. In other words, it is the transformational learning outcome of one's growth as a person and what it tells us. More specifically, there is value in acquiring information from the written reflection described from the person's detailed experience. What is it that makes us who we are? What is learned from reflecting on our lived experience? What is this research method called? Most scholars' answer would be, autoethnography.

Autoethnography has been emphasized in many studies coming from a variety of scholars from different disciplines who use it for different purposes such as telling their experiences as educators, as future educators, as educational psychologists, as bilingual(s)/minorities, as researchers, and so forth (Lee, 2012; Reyes and Curry Rodriguez, 2012; Trahar, 2009; Cord & Clements, 2010; Quicke, 2010). This thesis focuses on scholars from recent years to validate this research centering on a new spectrum of the process of language learning as a bilingual Chicana/Latina. "There is agency in the fact that one can articulate one's own experiences, rather than letting others represent them" (Canagarajah, 2012, p. 262). Nonetheless, there are also people who challenge the idea of autoethnography by implying the use of ethnography as the best method for research study, such as Hunter (2012) and Stöckl (2006). This will give insight to the

reader clarifying any confusion between the two methods that are used in the field of study. The questions now are: What exactly is autoethnography? And how is this different from ethnography?

In order to understand autoethnography, let us break down the word into: *auto*, *ethno*, and *graphy*. A. Suresh Canagarajah (2012, 2016), an award-winning author and a well-known professor (Shelton, 2007), clearly defines autoethnography in his article, “Teacher Development in a Global Profession: An Autoethnography” (2012). The *auto*— “is the point of view of the self, whether it is from one’s own experiences or those of the community”. Next, we have *ethno*— “which tells how culture forms as well as how it is formed by the individual.” Lastly, is *graphy* which concerns the writing for “generating, recording and analyzing data” (Canagarajah 2012, p. 260). Autoethnography, for Mary Louise Pratt (1991) is

a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made them. Thus if ethnographic texts are those in which European metropolitan subjects represent to themselves their others (usually their conquered others), autoethnographic texts are representations that so defined others construct in response to or in dialogue with those texts. (p. 35)

Again, the individuals are the ones to express their own experience/s as opposed to someone else writing about them. What are the many forms of written artifacts that can be collected and analyzed? As Lee indicates, “Autoethnography often includes a variety of genres and written artifacts— letters, essays, journals, travelogues, notes, reflections, and reader responses” (2012, p. 16). Adrienne Viramontes defines autoethnography as the “study of lived experience within a larger cultural context. It is a kind of academic writing and performance that depends upon deep reflection, reflexivity, and narrative construction...” (2012, p. 3). Overall, it is a way to reflect about the past events that occurred at a particular time by using it in theoretical ways to find new answers. This is why it would serve my study well to find out about my personal self as a bilingual and bicultural Chicana to reflect on how my language learning began and continues up to where I am now as a graduate student at Eastern Washington University.

Looking back at the “TESOL Guidelines for Critical Ethnography”, I will follow their requirements as stated here:

A critical approach questions the traditional separation of theory and method, interpretation and data, subjective and objective, and ethics and science, and particularly the treatment of the second term in each pair as constituting valid research...Ethnography (and critical ethnography in particular) adopts a complex theoretical orientation toward culture. Culture--in collectives of differing magnitude, whether educational institutions, student communities, classrooms, or activity groups--is treated as heterogeneous, conflictual, negotiated, and evolving, as distinct from unified, cohesive, fixed, and static. (tesol.org)

This means, *ethnography* is a type of research method that is used to observe various cultures to find further information about the culture group or customs of individual peoples in regards to how they live. In Hunter's article, "Towards a Cultural Analysis: The Need for Ethnography in Interpretation Research," he defines ethnography as a way to "describe and interpret shared and learned patterns of behaviors, values, beliefs, knowledge, and language of a social group (2012, p. 49)." Moreover, ethnography is not just about the self, it is more about using it as a lens in which you place yourself through the perspective of the life of the people in the culture (Stöckl, 2006, web). In the article, "For ethnography," author Geoffrey Walford (2009) strongly acknowledges ethnography as something with higher significance. "What matters is not the identity of the individual involved in the study, yet more about having better comprehension about how a certain culture works, how it is able to sustain itself and how it is able to adapt to changes in their surroundings" (Walford, 2009, p.____). This is of special interest to ESL teachers and to other educators.

Value of autoethnography

Even though ethnography is considered a relatively new research method in TESOL, I was more fascinated with autoethnography because of the value of what is being learned from it. It leads us to new ideas and new answers that have not yet been answered in the field of study. Annmarie Preston notes that "autoethnographers attempt to learn something about themselves through their research: they attempt to look inwards to discover things about themselves as researchers that perhaps were unknown or unexplained until examined" (2011, p. 116). In addition, there is more implication to autoethnographic research than just writing to reflect about

one's own past experience. "Autoethnographies place personal experience within social and cultural settings and invite provoking questions about social agency and socio-cultural restrictions" (Naidu, 2014, Web). As part of the bigger research project, it goes deeper into how I felt about my language process and the language I would use in the K-12 setting, the language at home, and the target language being learned. The point is to bring into light the truth (Preston, 2011). Through reflecting on one's past experience the 'reality' of what actually occurred as opposed to a made-up story of events. Another way to express it is through the Spanish word Kathryn Blackmer Reyes and Julia E. Curry Rodriguez specified in their article *testimonios* (2012). In the article, "*Testimonio: Origins, terms, and resources*", 'testimonios' is the eyewitness who states exactly what took place during that significant event. In other words, the person gives enough details to describe what occurred in that life during a specific time. The biggest central point for me is to reflect on the events of my past, providing the actual details without any hidden or embedded messages. It is not to gain the empathy of others, but to make the point that through the voice, one is able to show the obstacles faced and how one overcomes them. This also allows the individual to find insight into him or herself by analyzing and comparing the written work. Moreover, "to use autoethnography it will bring forth how the research acknowledges and validates my Chicana presence as well as draw attention to my marginal position inside the dominant structures of education" (Chávez, 2013, p. 335). For this reason, it is highly valuable to have bilingual minorities coming from different places to reflect on their past and tell their stories.

Having more bilingual minorities reflect about their past

Borderlands

One of the first and most important persons to include here would be the well-known writer, Gloria E. Anzaldúa. She is well recognized by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), who states,

In the legacy of her work as a writer, Anzaldúa reminds us that we have a duty to strike out oppression, build alliances, and fundamentally transform cultures. She underscores

that we may achieve these goals through the act of writing.
(www.ncte.org/cccc/awards/anzaldua)

The National Women's Studies Association also honors her through the Gloria E. Anzaldúa Book Prize as a valued and long-active member. Even in the LGBT community, Gloria E. Anzaldúa is received for having "helped build a multicultural feminist movement and called for people of different races to move forward together" (2015, Web). Anzaldúa then reminds us to use writing as a way to voice our realities and to not be afraid to speak the truth.

She was born on September 26, 1942 in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and was found dead inside her home in May 2004. It is said that she was ill but had no health insurance to cover treatment as stated by a friend at the National Women's Studies Association memorial service. At an early age, she knew about struggles of having to work, and after her father died when she was fourteen years old, she was obligated to financially continue to work throughout high school. Anzaldúa received her B.A. in English, Art, and Secondary Education at the University of Texas-Pan American. Then she completed her Master of Arts in English and Education at the University of Texas at Austin. Later, she earned the doctoral degree, enrolling in the American Literature program at the University of California, Santa Cruz. As a teacher, she worked at a bilingual preschool program, at a Special Education Program for mentally and emotionally handicapped students, and at colleges, focusing on feminism, Chicano studies, and creative writing at a number of universities. Gloria Anzaldúa is well known as a theorist, a poet, a lesbian feminist, a Chicana and a mestiza. Her main focus was on Chicana/ cultural theory, feminist theory, and queer theory with work dealt in sex/gender, race and culture.

Anzaldúa's biggest contribution was her book, *Borderlands* (1987), where she explores her past growing up and her identity as a Chicana lesbian feminist. She highlights the notion of the new *mestiza* (1987, p. 99-113) and what *mestizaje* implies. As a *mestiza* herself, Anzaldúa finds the complexity of where she belongs:

El choque de un alma atrapado entre el mundo del espíritu y el mundo de la técnica a veces la deja entullada. Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures,

straddling all three cultures and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war. Like all people, we perceive the version of reality that our culture communicates. Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.78)

It causes a clash which Anzaldúa calls “*un choque*, a cultural collision” (1987, p.78). For her, it is problematic to belong anywhere. This is why she is getting away from where she is not accepted and finding a place she can claim as her own. The new *mestiza* then manages to deal with ambiguities. “She learns to juggle cultures” (1987, p.101). In other words, the individual is aware of the conflicting and meshing identities, where there is a new vision of how to challenge the binary thinking. *Mestizaje* then implies creating a new movement, a combination and transformation, which is beyond the binary of male v. female or Mexican v. American. Soliday (1994) would call this hybridization (p.518). For example, Anzaldúa is a writer, a poet, a lesbian feminist, a *mestiza*, a theorist, bilingual, bicultural, and a Chicana. There is no forced label, but the identity of the person is of different aspects.

Why *borderlands*? The title, *Borderlands*, evokes two meanings—the old and the new. The old definition would mean the separation, which produces racism, discrimination and exclusion. It is a place where people are excluded, and there is no acceptance from the community for stepping outside of the norm. However, the new definition of borderlands for Anzaldúa is accepting who we are, the constant molding and shaping of our identity, creating a place of opportunities. A good example is one of her poems in the book where she describes what it means to live in the *Borderlands*:

To live in the *Borderlands* means you
 are neither *hispana india negra espanola*
ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed
 caught in the crossfire between camps
 while carrying all fives races on your back
 not knowing which side to turn to, run from;

To live in the *Borderlands* means knowing
 that the *india* in you, betrayed for 500 years,
 is no longer speaking to you,
 that *mexicanas* call you *rajetas*

that denying the Anglo inside you
is as bad as having denied the indian or Black

Cuando vives in la frontera

people walk through you, the wind steals your voice,
you're a *burra*, *buey*, scapegoat,
forerunner of a new race,
half and half—both woman and man, neither— a new gender;

To live in the Borderlands means to

put chile in the borscht,
eat whole wheat tortillas,
speak Tex-Mex with a Brooklyn accent;
be stopped by la migra at the border checkpoints;

Living in the Borderlands means you fight hard to

resist the gold elixir beckoning from the bottle,
the pull of the gun barrel,
the rope crushing the hollow of your throat;

In the Borderlands

you are the battleground
where enemies are kin to each other;
you are at home, a stranger,
the border disputes have been settled
the volley of shots have shattered the truce
you are wounded, lost in action
dead, fighting back;

To live in the Borderlands means

the mill with the razor white teeth wants to shred off
your olive-red skin, crush out the kernel, your heart
pound you pinch you roll you out
smelling like white bread but dead;

To survive the Borderlands

you must live *sin fronteras*
be a crossroads.

gabacha— a Chicano term for a white woman

rajetas— literally, “split,” that is, having betrayed your word

burra— donkey

buey— oxen

sin fronteras— without borders (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 216-17)

Borderlands, is then the only place where a person can experience all of the cultures without completely assimilating to any certain one. It is the place where people can be free to be who they are and a place where people can feel safe.

As she describes her life throughout her book, growing up was not easy for Anzaldúa, and she says, “At a very early age I had a strong sense of who I was about and what was fair” (Anzaldúa, p. 16). She saw the ways women in the culture were portrayed as submissive, while the men are to be served by them. For example, it was said by the mother, “*La mujer tiene que hacer lo que le diga el hombre*” (1987, p. 18). In other words, “The woman has to do what the man tells her,” where the woman has no voice. However, there is also the protective side of the mother who would defend her children at all cost. In some ways, there is this mixed message being brought up within the culture, which questions where the position of the woman stands. There is this feeling toward the culture, she describes, “... *conozco el malestar de mi cultura*. I abhor some of my culture’s ways, how it cripples its women, *como burras*, our strengths used against us, lowly *burras* bearing humility with dignity” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.21). Here she equates woman with donkeys (*burras*) or work animals to convey the way women are seen as incapable of doing anything on their own. She picked up really quickly on the old thinking her culture was establishing—something she could not tolerate. As an individual, Anzaldúa saw the world differently, a place where she felt women should be respected, and she saw that women could make a greater difference than what the Mexican culture portrayed.

Now, this didn’t mean Anzaldúa hated her culture enough to leave it behind. When it came to standing up to her culture, she would, but there was also something about her culture she still came back to. She states, “...I did not lose touch with my origins because *lo mexicano* is in my system. I am a turtle, wherever I go I carry “home” on my back” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 18). It is the presence of her Mexican roots she can connect to such as the smell of Mexican food and Mexican music. She states, “For me food and certain smells are tied to my identity, to my

homeland” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.61). These are the small memories that connect her back to her culture, most importantly her home.

Another central focus in the book, *Borderlands*: the idea of identity. Anzaldúa already knows she stands out in her family; she is different where she is a strong woman who has her own principles, and she is lesbian. She belongs in a place only she can create of her own and proves this by saying:

What I want is an accounting with all three cultures—white, Mexican, Indian. I want the freedom to carved chisel my own face, to staunch the bleeding ashes, to fashion my own god out on my entrails. And if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture—*una cultura mestiza*—with my lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture. (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.22)

In other words, Anzaldúa wants people to find their own voice, their own hybrid identity, and to claim their own space: to create one’s own place only she or he can be part of if others have excluded them. There are no labels to bear, and being ashamed is not the answer. As Anzaldúa believed, “I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my voice: Indian, Spanish, White. I will have my serpent’s tongue—my woman’s voice, my sexual voice, my poet’s voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 59). She is an example, a strong woman who values who she is, and she would agree that many diverse writers should see the change they can make in this world.

Moreover, Anzaldúa valued language, where she was able to write about her life in both Spanish and English including other variations through her book. As Prieto and Villenas (2012) would highlight, “Here our individual *testimonios* [testimony/proof] about language are part of a collective experience shared by many Latina/o bilingual children growing up in the United States” (p. 417). In other words, many Latina/o children have different experiences of how language played in their lives. For this reason, students should voice their experiences true to them. Anzaldúa would further state, “A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves—a language with terms that are neither *español ni inglés*, but both” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 55). The reason Anzaldúa values

language is due to her experience with using Spanish in school and what the Spanish language meant to teachers and professors during her time. One time, she remembers being hit with a ruler on her knuckles for being caught speaking Spanish at recess. There is another moment where she confesses: “I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for ‘talking back’ to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name” (1987, p. 75). It was harsh for her to hear how she was told to go back to *México* if she didn’t want to speak American or be American. When Anzaldúa went to Pan American University, she recalls, “I and all Chicano students were required to take two speech classes. Their purpose: to get rid of our accents” (1987, p. 76). For her it felt as if her own language was being taken away from her and for that reason she valued all the spoken languages.

Lastly, there are many Latinos and Latinas in the United States who speak different variations of Spanish. A Spanish language, Anzaldúa would explain as “a border tongue, which developed naturally. Change, *evolución, enriquecimiento, de palabras nuevas por invención o adopción* have created variants of Chicano Spanish, *un nuevo lenguaje*” (1987, p.77). Anzaldúa’s book itself is a great example where she uses two variations of English and six variations of Spanish. To acknowledge and appreciate ones own languages by weaving them into our writing to express and reflect what we learned from the past.

Richard Rodriguez: *Hunger of memory: The education of Richard Rodriguez*

Richard Rodriguez is another example, a Mexican American and well known for his autobiographical book, *Hunger of memory: the education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982). In the book, Rodriguez talks about the hard work and changes he went through making it up to middle class. It brings to light the significance of language, parents and culture as he recalls his past. He also talks about his childhood and when he first started school in Sacramento, California, knowing some fifty words of English. Being the third of four children, he noticed a lot especially in the Roman Catholic school he attended where majority of the students were white, and children of doctors, lawyers and business executives. He says, “I was a bilingual child, a certain kind-

socially disadvantage- the song of working-class parents, both Mexican immigrants” (1987, p.

12). Rodriguez expresses his feeling towards the *español* language saying:

But then there was Spanish. *Español*: my family’s language. *Español*: the language that seemed to me a private language. I’d hear strangers on the radio and in the Mexican Catholic church across town speaking in Spanish, but I couldn’t really believe that Spanish was a public language, like English. Spanish speakers, rather, seemed related to me, for I sensed that we shared-through our language- the experience of feeling apart from *los gringos*. (Rodriguez, p. 16)

This feeling he had as a young boy says a lot about his experience being a quiet boy at school, yet the comfortable feeling at home to use *español*, the language most familiar to him a special language he only used with his parents and what connected him to them. Rodriguez emphasizes being a happy child at home to be able to communicate and listen to his family speak in Spanish. It was not until three nuns arrived at his home and asked Richard’s parents if they could encourage their children to speak English. This made a big change in his life where he would constantly hear, “Speak to us *en inglés*” (Rodriguez, p. 22). As this became constant for him to have to listen he eventually gave up and devoted himself in learning the English language. Rodriguez explains, “As I grew fluent in English, I no longer could speak Spanish with confidence”(Rodriguez, p. 28). When Rodriguez’s parents noticed him come in, they would switch to English, and eventually he stopped paying attention. This slowly created a disconnection with his parents, and soon he felt there was not much to say to them. He describes, “The silence at home, however, was finally more than a little silence. Fewer words passed between parent and child, but more profound was the silence that resulted from my inattention to sounds” (Rodriguez, p. 25). This silence is what helped him think about himself and about his family throughout the years. It would follow him even after his success as a writer where at the end of the book he talks about visiting his family and is only able to gather at his parents’ house during Easter, Mother’s Day, and Christmas. It is worth noting at one of the last Christmas family gatherings he attends where he notices something:

My mother stands waving toward no one in particular. She seems sad to me. How sad? Why? (Sad that we all are going home? Sad that it was not quite, can never be, the

Christmas one remembers having had once?) I am tempted to ask her quietly if there is anything wrong (But these are questions of paradise, Mama.). (Rodriguez, p. 195, 1987)

Rodriguez notices or at least is trying to figure out what his mother is thinking. The feeling of having been successful and the success of his siblings he realizes how much has changed between the family interactions. They have money to buy their parents any gifts for Christmas, but realizes they are old and don't need them. There is another scene at the end where Rodriguez notices how his dad is just looking back and forth at the people having a conversation. His father does not say anything unless they ask him something. At the very end, Rodriguez notices all his father had said that evening was if Richard was going home.

Now, Richard Rodriguez also remembers feeling detached from his relatives, and he noticed he could not express what he wanted to say. He experiences this multiple times and feels bad for not being able to produce what he wanted to say. There is one occasion when Rodriguez noticed his uncle's anger towards him: "After listening to me, he looked away and said what a disgrace it was that I couldn't speak Spanish, '*su propio idioma*'" (Rodriguez, p. 29). The idea of not speaking his own language created a barrier with his relatives. He did not hate his Spanish language or where he came from, but he could not express the words in Spanish anymore. The one person who Rodriguez felt a connection was his grandmother, the one person who did not show any anger towards him. He was his grandson after all, and in his memory he recalls the times she would tell him stories about her past life. The last time he saw his grandma was when he was nine as he stood by her bed. Laughing and holding Rodriguez hands he depicts,

Her voice illumined disjointed memories as it passed them again. She remembered her husband, his green eyes, the magic name of Narciso. His early death. She remembered the farm in Mexico. The eucalyptus nearby. (Its scent, she remembered, like incense.) She remembered the family cow, the bell round its neck heard miles away. A dog. She remembered working as a seamstress. How she'd leave her daughters and son for long hours to go into Guadalajara to work. And how my mother would come running toward her in the sun – her bright yellow dress – to see her return. '*Mmmaaammmáááá*' the old lady mimicked her daughter (my mother) to her son. She laughed. (Rodriguez, p. 39)

This was the last time Rodriguez would ever get to talk to his grandma. She died soon after and what he remembers about her the most is the things she did when she was alive. He remembers

the public face of his grandma when she couldn't respond to the clerk at Safeway and it was him who would have to respond. It was the things his grandma did when she was alive and not the face that "appeared calm – but distant and unyielding to love" (Rodriguez, p. 40). Even though Rodriguez had forgotten how to make words with the Spanish language to communicate with his grandma, he still values her. It is the memory of his grandma that tells he never forgot his family or most of his language because he was able to understand his grandmother's stories.

More specifically, in Chapter 2 "Achievement of Desire," he talks about his academic development. Rodriguez distinguishes, "I was a 'scholarship boy,' a certain kind of scholarship boy... I became the prized student— anxious and eager to learn" (p. 44). Except, he was also losing the connection with his family. He states, "Here is a child who cannot forget that his academic success distances him from a life he loved, even his own memory of himself" (p. 47). If there is someone who has been present in his education and shown support is Rodriguez's mother. She would tell his siblings and him, 'Get all the education you can; with an education you can do anything' (p. 55). Unlike Rodriguez's mother, his father did not have much to say about education. His mother "encouraged his children's academic success" and often had to remind her husband to 'say something' about their academic success (p. 55). It was what helped Rodriguez accept that this assimilation into the "public society" made it possible for "the achievement of *public* individuality (p. 26). He reveals,

My awkward childhood does not prove the necessity of bilingual education. My story discloses instead an essential myth of childhood— inevitable pain. If I rehearse here the changes in my private life after my Americanization, it is finally to emphasize the public gain. (p. 27)

Even if he his family were disappointed and had lost his language, it did not mean he was upset. He started out by only knowing 50 words in English and having to work hard by practicing the English language. After all, it was the nuns who encouraged him to learn for his future success.

The book, *Hunger of memory: the education of Richard Rodriguez* is just one of his books, but there are two videos of him that are more current. Rodriguez was a guest speaker at the

“Richard Rodriguez: 2014 National Book Festival” and was in the “Interview with writer/journalist Richard Rodriguez, April 2011”. In both videos, he shares his thoughts of what he believes and how his experiences have shaped him.

As the guest speaker documented in a YouTube video, “Richard Rodriguez: 2014 National Book Festival,” Rodriguez makes an important point about how fewer people are at the library reading books these days compared to when he was young. He states young people are more focused on their technology devices, and they do not notice their surroundings. Rodriguez argues, “Sometimes you can use loneliness for very creative purposes—you can make it a very interesting companion” (2014, Web). By this, he means being able to have alone time helps writers to use reflection as a way to get through certain situations or clear the mind. Another part is what writing tells us where Rodriguez asserts “we need writers to tell us about the madness of what is going around” (Web). As he says there is a need for more writers telling us what is happening around the world where there is such much going on, yet needs to be written and described. It brings the whole idea on writing essays, which he comments, “An essay is the process of thinking that’s what essays teach us, how to respond our experience” (Web). In fact, there is a moment when he is criticized by Mexican Americans in response to his autobiography *Hunger of Memory*, when Rodriguez

...you’re suppose to be a role model to other Mexican Americans. I think writers are never role models, I mean what kind of language is that role model... the nuns were never role models they were morally samples about how you behave. A role model, I never became a nun; I never put a rock in my sweater like Virginia Wolf and walked into a lake, but she was an example of bravery and the linguistic freedom to walk through the darkness... (2014, Web)

Rodriguez makes a point when he states one can only be a good example for others. A good example can be someone who shares those written experiences that are worth noting about the world. It is more engaging to hear about what is going on as opposed to what the news wants people to see and believe. There are other voices not being heard around the world and those voices are the ones people need to hear.

In “Interview with writer/journalist Richard Rodriguez, April 2011”, Rodriguez is asked about heritage and identity and his thoughts. Both heritage and identity is an important aspect for everyone, and Rodriguez explains both very well.

When I hear the word heritage, I think not of me but of them, family, the tribe, the nation, the tradition of my blood. A heritage is much larger than the individual it is responsible for my birth, it's the character and the heritage I come from, the inheritance I bring. When I think of identity I think of the eye... How I negotiate with heritage and identity is really the subject with what I've done as a writer. (2011, Web)

Heritage is the retention of what we have kept with us, where we are from, who we come from, while identity there seems to be more complex. Nonetheless, as a writer Rodriguez finds his writing has been the reason he has developed as a person. He is not afraid of who he is he states in confidence, “I am part Indian and part Spaniard” (web.) Moreover, he brings another point about the idea on identifying who we are. As he expressed “who we are” is becoming more complex as Rodriguez states, “we are becoming so complicated to ourselves, we have no way of naming ourselves. There are no names for these things. I mean, what do you call a child who is part Cambodian, part Mexican, and part German? What is that name?” (Web). Rodriguez is not only a great Mexican American writer, but also an example for sharing his life experiences and raising the issues that should concern society.

Conocimiento y Testimonio: ...Children Learning Within Cherry Orchards (Morales, 2015)

Maria Isabel Morales’s doctoral dissertation includes interviews with Mexican American children—ages seven to nine—who go to the cherry orchards to help their parents and learn valuable lessons about social class and work. Her arrival scene is almost poetic and expresses the beauty of the place and the people:

After obtaining permission from the orchard owners, I finally make my way to the orchard. I walk between the trees and down the lanes. I recognize many of the people I am able to see through the leaves of the cherry trees. The faint sound of music and voices fill the space along with the accompanying fading sound of a tractor that just passed by. (2015, p. 125)

A child of an orchard worker herself, Morales brings an etic view as a doctoral student at Washington State University as well as an emic view she gained from being a child in the

orchards earlier in life. She continues to bring readers into the orchard, now returning as a highly educated adult to interview children there:

I am now at the end of the lane, on the other side of the orchard. I turn to my right and am immediately drawn to the three children walking in my direction. They stop in their place, sit on the grass, and continue laughing and playing. The sight of children sitting in the middle of a grassy field captures my attention in a way I cannot quite explain. All I know is that it is an image I do not often see. I approach them and my learning from seven-year-old Noely, eight-year-old Celina, and nine-year-old Ivan begins. (Field note, July 8, 2014) (2015, p. 126)

Here Morales makes readers feel as if we are there too in the orchard and are also eager to hear what the children have to say, telling “the stories of people in cherry orchards [which] are much more complex than dominant narratives illustrate” (p. 126). The author now suddenly disrupts this peaceful scene to remind readers: “As Alicia’s Testimonio elucidates, children’s understanding of the orchard and the people within are rooted in counter-hegemonic narratives of family, culture, community, and children’s play with each other” (p. 126). Hegemony is defined as “the processes by which dominant culture maintains its dominant position: for example, the use of institutions to formalize power; the employment of a bureaucracy to make power seem abstract (and, therefore, not attached to any one individual); the inculcation of the populace in the ideals of the hegemonic group through education, advertising, publication” (CLA.Purdue.edu, 2016).

What makes their stories “counter-hegemonic” is that their perspectives will not be the master narratives written in history books, for example.

In Chapter 5, *Abriendo Caminos y Constiando Puentes (Opening New Paths and Building Bridges)*, Morales states her goal which now becomes politicized within a capitalist framework:

In this chapter, I seek to honor the experiences children shared with me throughout my time with them. I begin with an discussion of the ways children understand, internalize, and are resistant to capitalist values examined in the previous chapter—particularly with the ways children demonstrate an internalization of the ‘good’ worker discourse. (p. 126)

Next, she identifies “the resistant practices children engage with(in) to disrupt dominant narratives of Mexican (im)migrant” (p. 126), explaining that “children (re)create a

counternarrative of autonomy (as situated in relationship with(in) self and others) through four domains” (p. 126)

- 1) “independence and caring for self” and as they “seek independence as whole beings, they are not seeking to be seen as adults—they are still children and as children tell and believe tales.
- 2) “care for community and family” (p. 126-127)
- 3) “appreciation for ‘space to play’ in the orchard” and
- 4) “understanding of a relationship between school and work”.

In her analysis, she attempts to show how the themes relate “to a sense of and desire for autonomy and suggest that this form of autonomy is not only a disruption to majoritarian narratives of Mexican children of (im)migrants, but resistance to the always already presence of capitalism and neoliberal logics” (p. 127). She also aimed to show the “disruptions to hegemonic narratives of Mexican parents as strict and simultaneously as non-involved in children’s education” (p. 127). This is where we find Morales taking the reader into the orchard to hear what the children have learned and have to say.

In section “So I can get a good job: Children’s internalization dominant narratives,” Morales starts with Osvaldo’s statement, ‘My least favorite is the work. It’s hard and never stops’ (p. 127). She explains, “children in the orchards learn the rules and expectations for being good workers,” and for that reason, “Having a job and making money is a goal that children understand well” (p. 127). Even though Morales states the “orchards serve as a motivation to do well in school,” but she also recognizes that the work in the orchards is not easy, and “It is physically draining...for children” (p. 127). She further states, “Nevertheless, children believe it is good to learn about the processes now ‘to know what it’s going to be like when [they] are older’ (Interview with Gabriel). The internalization of this ‘good worker’ discourse is both classed as well as racialized” (p. 127). In other words, students have their own thoughts about what they learn about the orchard.

Morales focus was to “examine the ways that it plays out in the lives of (im)migrant children in orchards” (p. 127). She raised the question: ‘What do you learn in the orchard?’ aimed at having the “children [share] their learning in terms of work and rules of the job” (p. 127). A particular aspect she notices is how rarely the students spoke “about having ‘careers;’ the majority of the time, they referenced the importance of having ‘good jobs’ (p.127-128). Morales accentuates there is a “distinction between ‘career’ and job”—“situated [on] intersectional constructions of class and race” (p. 128). Morales references Bettie (2014) who says, ”for some Mexican communities, class involves engaged performances inextricably linked to sexuality, gender, and ethnicity” (p. 128). Furthermore, Morales points out “Rather than examining the structural factors that influence children of color to internalize the beliefs that they cannot obtain careers, deficit theories blame these students and their culture” (p. 128). What this means, is finding ways to help children understand of their capabilities of obtaining a career instead of looking at the children and their culture as something bad.

Now, the children were able to observe and explain why their parents were working in the orchards instead of having a good job. As Morales states, “ Children in the orchard demonstrated an understanding of a relationship between their parents' classed and racialized positions and the educational opportunities (or lack of) that they were offered” (p. 128). One of the reasons is not all parents have the necessary resources to pay for their education. Gabriel explains to Morales “ that his family did not have the money to study and thus they are stuck in the orchard,” but for Anahí, the reason is ‘because we didn't get the chance to study and have a good career’ (p. 128). Through the children’s answers, Morales found “Mexican people at a binary with ‘American’ people at the other end” (p. 128). Keeping in mind the same question Morales had asked before, Celina answers “Um well my dad says cause American people don’t like to get dirty and that they are not good cherries pickers” (p. 128). Nonetheless, the nine-year old Ivan has a different perception. His response to Morales is “Mexican people are in the orchards because others don’t know about these places” (p. 129). As the reader, we get to see

different perspectives the children have at a young age.

Morales then expands on how “the racialization of the orchard space is and internalization of the discourse of Mexican people as ‘good workers’ (p. 129). The seven-year old Noely explains ‘My dad likes to work and my mom she works night-shift’ (p. 129). Certainly, the children repeatedly answered “in terms of the work parents did” when asked “tell me about your families” (p. 129). This can be seen in Estrella’s statement saying “Mexicans ‘are into picking cherries’ and that unlike other ‘lazy people, Mexicans ‘are not that much lazy’” (p. 129). Once more, Morales finds in the children’s responses the “comparisons of their own communities to white people”, such as when Itzel says she is convinced “that ‘some [people] work more than others’. Others, like Gabriel, believed that Mexican people ‘liked picking cherries’” (p. 129). Looking at the responses Morales received, one can see the children have a lot to say from what they are told and from what they observe.

In view of “Critical Race Theory,” the ‘internalization of the majoritarian narrative’ (as cited by Luna & Revilla, 2013), Morales is able to connect this idea to one of the children’s thought about Americans and their job positions. For instance, Celina is swayed by the idea “that ‘Americans’ were not in the orchard because unlike Mexicans, they ‘only work in offices or [are] teachers’” (p. 129). Celina’s explanation allows the reader to comprehend that this form of “racism is normal and that ‘Americanness’ is a privilege exclusively for white people” (p. 129). In short, one has to examine “the structural and historical factors that constitute oppression,” instead of condemning the “communities of color for the experienced oppression” (p. 129). In all, we cannot generalize what the children have stated to be the same for everyone. Morales only interviewed a few children, so it is important to consider that not all will have the same understanding of what it means to be good worker.

Looking back at Chapter Two, it is worth reflecting on how the role of culture impacts the way children are shaped. Specially, “Studies that examine the multidimensionality of children’s lives need to consider the prominent role of culture” (Morales, p. 17). From Matute-

Bianchi's (1991) perspective, she clarifies, "the more immigrants know their culture and their language, the better they are able to adjust to American schooling" (p. 17). In Morales's work, she cross-examines "the connection between culture, identity, and academic achievement" through the work of Sonia Nieto (2004). The case study of Nieto, Morales discovers how the 'students pick up competing messages about language and culture from teachers, schools, and society' (p. 17). The message one has to recognize is the value of culture, as Nieto confirms, 'culture is important, something that most of the students are proud of and maintain. But, 18 students also learn that culture is unimportant in the school environment' (p. 17-18). This low self-image Morales states it "is not created 'out of the blue,' but rather it is shaped in great part as a result of "policies and practices of school and a society that respects and affirms some groups while devaluing and rejecting others (p.321)" (as cited by Nieto p. 18). As inferred in Suarez-Orozco (2001) work, Morales says, "Identities are formed by the way students are perceived in [the] dominant culture (p. 18). An example she gives is the use of media that portray the Mexican immigrants through "the xenophobia and negative stereotypes," which shape "the identities of Mexican American students in schools" (p. 18). There is a need of change to get rid of these negative views of Mexican American students by hearing from their experiences. Morales states,

Some scholars seek student voice through narratives (as in testimonios, or counternarratives) in order to learn directly from children and youth who are most affected by structural systems of inequality" For example, Pamela A. Quiroz (2001) illuminates the ways written narratives addressing the question 'Who am I' give voice to youth from Puerto Rico and México. Lilia Fernández (2002) explains that students' narratives should be used not as "accessories to research but as the centerpiece of qualitative studies (p. 45). (p. 18)

The narratives of the students used in qualitative studies helps "to reduce the opportunity gap in schools through more culturally responsive pedagogies" (p. 18). Thus, Morales finds "the achievement level of Mexican students (in comparison to the rest of the Latina/o population), as well as the historical and political ties with the United States" to be critical for this community (p. 18). Regardless of the studies being focused on "youth and the school settings," an analysis of "young children in orchards would be useful for a more culturally responsive understanding of

this communities' experience and for the benefit of the early schooling experiences of these particular children as well as those of the majority" (p. 18).

In brief, the stories on "the daily lives of the children, their knowledge, and their understanding of the world to bridge the gap between school structures and their cultural/historical being in the world" (p. 19). The intention Morales had for this study was to analyze "the experiences of children of immigrants" to "provide powerful insights to our work for social and educational justice of children, particularly within the Mexican American community" (p. 19). Furthermore, if the Mexican American children are having some kind of trouble then it must mean they need someone to listen with what Valdes (1996) describes, "*con cariño* y respeto [with care and respect] (as cited by Morales, p. 19). By sharing the children's "lived experiences and relationships with and in the world," as Morales inferred from Freire (2007), she has given voice to these children in the study.

The communal diary, " 나적이" (Naljeogi), transformative education, and writing through migrations: A Korean novice ESL teacher's diary and autoethnography

Sang Ho Lee's (2012), is a Korean student who finished his thesis at Eastern Washington University. In his work, "The communal diary, " 나적이" (Naljeogi), transformative education, and writing through migrations: A Korean novice ESL teacher's diary and autoethnography", he used both retrospective diary and autoethnography to talk about his education in Korea and in the United States. For the retrospective diary the author talks about his education in Korea from age 7 up to when he was 27 years of age. He used autoethnography to talk about his graduate studies in the United States both as language learner student and as an ESL Novice teacher. There is a piece of his thesis he wrote in Yonsei University Korea, where he had to write daily for his sociology department called, communal diary or "날적이" (Naljeogi in Korean).

Always shackled in school like prisoners, we need some space to be different from others. Sameness has imposed upon us, but we need something by which we can make our voices heard and our true selves discovered. Our individuality has to be rediscovered as we try to escape total conformity. We just want to be ourselves (Anonymous, *The Communal Diary*, c. 1994, 2012).

Lee reminisces back when he was first aware of the existence of written diaries from students from the sociology department. These written diaries known “날적이” (Naljeogi) was “...it reflected like a mirror the communal campus lives of students of those days” (p. 3). It was the sense of the students surrounding they were writing about. As Lee illustrates, the space provided for them to write captured the feelings of,

생활의공동체, 학생회(Community and student union), 공교육-글쓰기없어(In public education, writing practice in class has been ignored.), 이중의 대안 문화 글쓰기를 통한공동체, 자기표현의장(Alternative space where students show something about themselves), 문화자본이 적나라하게 드러남, 집단주의 적인문화를보여주는 것이기도함 (Writing is a cultural capital, and diary itself shows our cultural collectivism).” (Lee, p.5)

For this reason there is a high stress on the value of self-reflection and creating spaces for students to write about their experiences. To use past written artifacts in order to go back to ones writing and find deeper meaning. For Lee it was to have a better understanding about himself and his generation at that time.

Now going back to his education in Korea from age 7 to 27, he used retrospective diary. As a young boy, Lee remembers moving to different schools and having to introduce himself to new faces all the time. Even though his grandfather named him Sangho “in the hope he would become successful in school or academic world” (Lee, p. 25), he had many bad recollections about his school days. One of his first bad experiences was when Lee was in first grade and during those times there were regular hygiene inspections by a teacher. He recalls,

“One day in winter, she saw my hands whose skins are hardened and some bloody with cold. I was hit three times in the hands by the rod she was carrying on the spot. After class, I was called to step onto the podium in front of students to be castigated by the teacher for my bad hygiene status. It was such a humiliation made in public that I thought to myself that there was no one in the class except the teacher and me.” (Lee, pg.27)

Lee felt embarrassed and alone with the feeling of no one being there to show any concern for his well-being. There was another unforgettable occasion when he was in third grade and was treated bad by one of the teachers. Lee sadly recollects, “...my teacher grabbed my ear and hair to pull in different directions randomly. She found fault with my negligence of not participating in cleaning

of the classroom. In our culture, students were grouped to clean their own classroom” (2012, p. 27). It was true he didn't take any participation in cleaning, but he had a reason, which was thinking about his father coming back home from his business trip in Japan. Even if he did try to talk to his teacher, Lee knew the teacher would think it was just an excuse to justify what he did. He remained silent. Moreover, in class the teacher paid no attention to the students' progress to help everyone succeed, “In most cases, the class proceeded like a talk show with one leader and five to six panelists. They were always given priority to talk and were called on by the teacher, who constantly tried to confirm their superior or privileged status in the class. They were stars, and the rest of us were silent spectators” (Lee, 2012, p. 30). Lee himself at a young age noticed how unfair the teachers' were towards the students.

In addition, Lee manifests his interest in reading books, those of interest to him. His professor of anthropology/ sociology, Cho-Han Haejung, wrote the book, “탈식민지 시대 지식인의 글읽기와 삶읽기 1 (*Intellectuals' reading and reading their lives in the postcolonial period*)”, a field study she had done with her students. What made this book engaging for him was being able “to sympathize with other students quoted and interpreted by the author and be able to reflect” (Lee, 2012, p. 37) upon his life, his reading and writing experiences. Today as Lee states, “students are asked to engage in reader-response writing in order to build a writers' community, to reinforce learning, and to increase comprehension of key parts of a text” (Lee, 2012, p. 37). This is true in the sense that we are writing for a purpose where there is real authentic meaning. Writing is connected to our reactions towards certain themes—loss, happiness, family, culture, language, education, and values.

In fact, there are important written papers and journals Lee did in class, and in them he describes his feelings about his parents, mother, and his brother. In Lee's essay, “Parents' Influence,” he states:

I feel I was fortunate to be born into the parents who overcame all the economic adversities and finally could be successful, which made my family do not need to worry

much about the economic problem and help and support all of their sons be able to study abroad. Because they know what the poverty and deprivation is like and they do not want to leave those negative things to their sons, they made every effort for their sons not to repeat same things as their generation. I remember when I was in the army service, my mother wrote me a letter, saying she and my father are willing to do whatever is helpful to their sons for their own future. I understand that it is apt to feel like my parents are too lenient from the perspective of someone in other culture, but it shows their sacrifice and devotion to their children enough, which I am greatly thankful to them. (Lee, p. 59-60)

The sacrifice and devotion Lee's parents did for their children shows Lee's appreciation towards his parents. Specifically, for the parents to experience the economic problems, and the feeling of poverty made them recognize that it was not something they wanted for their children to ever experience. To overcome the adversities is an example of what Pipher (2002) considers as resilience—getting through the obstacles by working hard and staying positive. In order for his brothers and him to have a better future, his parents supported them to be able to study abroad. Lee also describes

My mother often told me or other people that I resemble my father most among her three sons. But I thought differently from her. Overall, I resemble her more than my father both in appearance and personality. I am similar to my mother in that I am more likely to be concerned with others' opinion and feeling than myself. I am often a little surprised to find myself do something similar. I remember I had complaints to her about such as not keeping the promise with intimate people and changing the words haphazardly depending on the situations. Both she and I prefer language and literature to math and science, which my father excelled at. Contrary to my father, I lacked the tenacity, diligence, consistency to the things I decided to do or I promised to do. (Lee, p. 60)

Lee values both of his parents, but finds similarities between him and his mother. He resembles his mother in appearance and persona, where he is a person who puts others before him. In other words, he cares what others view and their feelings. This leads to Lee's guilt for not asking his younger brother for forgiveness. He depicts in his journal "Forgiving and Being Forgiven,"

One feeling that often haunts me with guilty feeling is related to my younger brother. In our childhood, we often had squabbles and were judged afterward by my mother to determine who was wrong. One day, my younger brother and I were brought to my mother after a fight, and each tried to win the case. As was often the case, older and more cunning, I won the heart and judgment of my mother with much more talks, even fabricating the facts to my advantage. Suddenly, my younger brother trembled and fainted to the ground. He must have felt unjustly treated and betrayed by other family members, mainly me. (Lee, p. 83)

Clearly, Lee still feels guilty for not being honest. Lee needs to be forgiven by his brother in order for him to find himself at ease. To see his younger brother faint to the ground, Lee must have felt regret, but didn't know how to apologize to him. He must have thought that his brother might not have forgiven him for being unfairly treated. Family to Lee has a lot more meaning to him than he realized.

Overall, the writing passages Lee wrote deal with many themes that deal with his feelings towards school, his parents, and his English language learning in the United States. Lee's attention on using retrospective diary and autoethnography shows how he was able to find new answers about himself. As explained previously, he did not have a good memory about his teachers where through writing he was able to face his negative mindset he had about teachers. It was important for him to understand himself better to make him a teacher that can accept the students "and become more open to their personalities and more empathetic to their own experiences" (Lee, 2012, p. 97). In this sense, minorities' experiences can empower others to bring in their voices in order for people to comprehend them and empathize with their struggles and strengths in life (include Sanchez article).

***A Double Case Study of Latino College Presidents:
What Younger Generations Can Learn From Them***

Sara Aymerich Leiva, a graduate student at Eastern Washington University, did a double case study where she examined the academic journeys of a Latino university president and a Latina college president of Mexican descent. Leiva's purpose was to discover "how the two presidents overcame obstacles and become successful in a career where only 3.8% are Latino/a presidents" (2014). In order to learn about their lives and career paths, she interviewed each face-to-face, asking 26 open-ended questions related to their experiences growing up and being educated in bilingual families. Her approach was critical ethnography, where the researcher presents both emic and etic perspectives while uncovering and deciphering themes in the data. This then allowed Leiva to look back and reflect on her own languages, family, education, and

migrations. In her research, she found that through “resilience, optimism, parental support, and future planning, the presidents achieved their distinguished positions” (p. iv).

Leiva is a good example who also strived to become a successful person and who serves as a good role model in Pasco, Washington, where she teaches English as a Second Language in a public high school where the majority of the students are Mexican Americans. At an early age, she had to adapt to the United States, coming from Costa Rica when she was sixteen and enrolling as a sophomore in high school. She remembers her paternal grandmother, Josefa, teaching her the value of hard work and higher education. Leiva’s grandmother would say, “*Es mejor andar sola que mal acompañada* (It is better to be alone than in bad company)” (2014), something my mother would also remind me to do when it came to choosing the people I would hang out. In some ways, we can be reminded that not all “friends” will be good to us and so one must be careful.

When she started high school in North Idaho, Leiva had many feelings and thoughts about her new experiences in a different place. She talks about there not being any Spanish speakers in her school, putting her in a “sink or swim” situation. Her voice is important, and there is a need to present her experiences using her words:

To make matters worse, I had to go to a school with prejudiced teens that made me feel unwelcome. I quickly realized that this move was going to test my bravery and my faith. During my two years at that high school, I lost a part of me. I lost the sense of safety, pride, and valor. Suddenly, I did not have people believing in me and rooting for me as my grandmother had [in Costa Rica]. I was just the girl who did not speak English—the girl who dressed in home-made clothes and had a funny hairdo. I was an outcast. I was the one most teachers did not want to deal with in class because I required individual support in order to understand. I must say, the first two years after arriving in the United States were the worst years of my life; I had never felt so lonely and misunderstood. (Leiva, 2014, p. 1)

When Leiva revisited those memories, it was faith, courage, and the support of her family and a few friends that kept her going. She was able to get through high school, community college, and a four-year university where she wanted to complete her education. Her dedication to reach her goals is very powerful, and quitting was not an option for her. She says, “My main drive was

always that I wanted to make my family proud and I wanted to be able to help them” (2014). This is the same feeling most could relate, the motivation to make the family proud and give back for all the sacrifices they have made.

Success in Latinos is what Leiva wanted to research to help her learn more about the topic, and through the help of a coworker, she was able to find two Latino college presidents within the local area. She first contacted them through email, explaining the thesis project and asking both if they would be willing to grant her an interview. She got an IRB consent form, which they both signed since they would be participants in the case study. The 26 open-ended questions for the interview were related to family and growing up, language learning, academic life, and cultural, financial, and social issues in middle and high school. Some questions were also related to their academic, social, financial experiences in college, related to motivation, accomplishments, and pride. The final questions were about what the participants expressed their final advice to students.

Now, to talk about the two presidents interview and the findings Leiva found. The president who was first interviewed was Dr. Sanchez. He starts by saying his parents were originally from *México*, around the San Luis Potosí area, northern part of *México*. His parents settled in Texas where they would do farm labor and would go as far as Washington, going through California, Oregon, Washington and then back to Texas. He remembers there being a lot of road trips as he recalls driving down the highway and all of a sudden there being a mountain in front of him.

Both of Dr. Sanchez’s parents spoke Spanish, but he always wondered how his father was able to get by when he didn't speak any English in the beginning. Dr. Sanchez being the youngest of seven children and a gap of 20 years in between, he can imagine his older brothers and sisters having to interpret. He says all of the kids were born in the United States and recalls his dad eventually getting his green card. This allowed his dad to stay in the country, but had to go to

Immigration every year to renew his green card. His mother became a citizen when she was in her early 60's.

As for school, he remembers thinking his parents putting emphasis on making sure they went to school or else they would have never graduated. To some extent moving around helped him adjust to new environments. He says,

“...it has helped me being able to accept and integrate myself into different communities. When I finished undergraduate school, I wanted to go to grad school and ended up going to the University of Michigan, from Texas. I didn't see any problem getting in my car by myself and driving to Michigan not knowing anybody and starting school and here we go...” (Leiva, p. 41).

Dr. Sanchez does remember having trouble with his high school counselor who did not want to help him. The counselor thought he did not need to worry about going to college. He states, “If you were Hispanic or Mexican in that community, you just didn't go to college. You just went to work” (Leiva, p. 44). Leiva then connects her sister's experience in wanting to attend a good college like Stanford, but the counselor said, “Well, why don't you try the community college instead” (2014, p. 44). Something Leiva feels is that students should be respected with their decision when it comes to making the choice of what university or college they want to attend.

What made Dr. Sanchez so successful? Dr. Sanchez emphasizes being self-motivated. It was the self-motivation that “had to do with his parents instilling in him that he had to grow and become better” (Leiva, 2014, p. 53). It was the willingness to do what needed to be done, to explore and learn new things. Future planning is another key point, which means asking questions about the career path you want to take. What does the job require? What skills does it involve? What do I need to learn? In the end, Dr. Sanchez wants others to know that education is the way in to get to places.

As for the second interview, Leiva had the opportunity to question a female college president, Dr. Baldwin. Dr. Baldwin's mother was an immigrant from *México* who came to the United States when her mom was a teenager. Her mother's native tongue was Spanish, and she spoke English with a heavy accent, but she never became a United States citizen. She did,

however, have a green card to be allowed in the U.S. Dr. Baldwin's father was Anglo with Canadian roots. Dr. Baldwin's parents moved to Maine and then ended up in New *México* where she grew up in a bilingual home. Her mother had an elementary school education, and she explains that girls of her mother's generation did not go to secondary school in Mexico, but her Canadian father had finished high school and had an accounting degree.

Growing up, Dr. Baldwin remembers learning a lot from her parents, making her the person she is. One of the lessons Dr. Baldwin remembers learning from her mother was their faith being Catholic, a big part of their culture. She says, "I learned all the prayers in Spanish because she was the one that taught us the prayers. First I thought, isn't that interesting, I mean, I learned all those prayers. I know them but I learned them in Spanish first" (Leiva, 2014, p. 59). Having those memories tells a lot about her keeping not only her faith, but also her connections to her culture. Through *español*, Dr. Baldwin is able to communicate with her mother and her family. It is the language she is not ashamed of, but cherishes through the memory of her mother. Now both of her parents wanted the best for their children and they expected them to be successful and go to school. She recalls, "My mom always said she was happy that I had educational options she had not had them and she said she loved that I was a good student and so going to school was an important part of the message I grew up with" (Leiva, 2014, p. 59). Clearly, some Mexican parents have not had the same opportunity, so they hope their children will become successful. Parents become the supporters and helpers in the hope their child/children will get a higher education as well as find a good job.

As for Dr. Baldwin's success, she has come quite a long way, and she is the only one who has a doctorate degree. She does state her brothers being successful too but they followed their own path. Being the only girl in the family, she felt there were more expectations for her. Dr. Baldwin was always reminded of how smart she was and growing up she reminisces,

'...we had a house and we sit up at the table and we would do our homework every night all together. And when you think of wow...six kids around the table doing homework and because she did not know English or like Algebra, some of the older kids, you know,

would help the younger kids but they would make sure after we had dinner and played a while. They would say, 'ok time to do your homework.' And we all sit at the table and do homework. And we kind of help each other. So, [it was] a very supportive environment for education even though, they themselves had not gotten that.' (Leiva, 2014, p. 60)

Dr. Baldwin did not have any kind of major challenge or obstacle due to the strong sense of family and having such support. They helped one another and respected one another. As she stated, "...I think a part of our family and parents had always encourages us that, you know, you are Catholic, we are good to other people, and so religion was a good part of our lives, and also that you treat others with respect, then you expected to be respected. My mom had a phrase, '*darse a respetar*'" (Leiva, 2014, p. 64). Dr. Baldwin's grandma also warned her that "when a girl got pregnant that was a bad thing" (Leiva, 2014, p. 65). She had an idea of what she had to do, and she was very focused on succeeding. Her motivation was to get a degree and not let anything distract her, and she received her master's in curriculum and development and her doctorate in educational administration. It is worth mentioning what Dr. Baldwin said,

'Latinos are intelligent, smart, hard working people, show it, you know, don't let peer pressure get distracted to not do well in school. We are intellectual too. We can do a lot and there is pride in it. I don't care if someone is carpenter or...but for people who choose to be intellectuals, we are capable of that too, so don't let someone else define what you should be. Don't let someone else tell you where you belong.' (Leiva, 2014, p.78)

It is about working hard and accomplishing those goals students want to reach, and to not let teachers or society tell you what to do. If one wants to go to university, then one must do it. Dr. Baldwin knows that any individuals, no matter who they are, can strive to find their profession they always wanted to do. "We define ourselves" (Leiva, 2014, p. 79) is what Dr. Baldwin would remind as she encourages them to continue their education. For Leiva, this was also true in that she was the first in her Costa Rican family to earn a bachelor's degree and also a master's degree in English. Her success her eagerness to make her family proud motivated her to achieve even more.

Deracination, Language Learning, and Auto-Ethnography

Dr. LaVona Reeves—my mentor, my professor, my thesis chair, and my motivator to keep going—is one person who has taught me to value my experiences and to remember where I come from. In the article she wrote, “Deracination, Language Learning, and Auto-Ethnography,” she recalls going to the international TESOL Conference in New Orleans in 2011 and attending Sandra Silberstein’s session about teachers’ narratives. It was there that they had a conversation about “the value of telling our stories to one another and to our students” (Reeves, 2012, web). Further, Dr. Reeves’ mentor at Columbia, Maxine Greene, stressed “teachers’ duty to create spaces in the classrooms for language learners to tell their stories as well” (Reeves, 2012, web).

For this purpose, Dr. LaVona Reeves has been a great professor and a believer in having her students from freshmen to graduate thesis writers to write autoethnographies. It is an approach to research and writing where the author is at the center of the research and the story. It allows the autoethnographer to reflect and look back at his/her past and to question and find out something new about himself/herself through the research. As she states, it is important to share “both our victories and our defeats” (Reeves, 2012, web). During that particular moment she was teaching she remembers looking around her classroom and she describes her students: “a woman in full hijab who teaches English in Saudi Arabia, a Korean man who will return to teach in Seoul, a Japanese woman who will teach in Kobe, an American who taught in Spain, and others who will leave overseas for teaching jobs” (Reeves, 2012, web). It is the diversity in her classroom that helps everyone understand they are coming from different cultures, different heritage languages, and different experiences.

Now, in the same way Dr. LaVona Reeves has asked the graduate classes to write about moments in our language learning or about our experiences connecting it to the lesson activities. For example, she has had the class write about learning a new language, learning to read and write, experiencing other cultures, and many other moments of deep understanding where we learned important lessons. As a professor, she has been a great example in creating spaces for the

whole class in order for all of us to feel comfortable in sharing our stories. Like Dr. LaVona Reeves, I agree with “the multivocality that TESOL asks of us in its guidelines for qualitative research, the weaving of voice upon voice” (Reeves, 2012, web). To allow space as a way to represent the researcher’s self through the merging of voices provides time to reflect on one’s writing to see what can be learned.

What is that we can learn from autoethnography?

Autoethnographic research has many positive outcomes on what we can learn from ourselves and those themes involved. As Maguire would agree, allowing autoethnography creates an opportunity for the researcher to “to claim voice and authorise personal acts writing about self and others” (cited by Thirusa Naidu, 2014, web). For this reason, it opens a new perception, and a new person, and new person of what we do. As Adrienne Viramontes learned in her experience as teacher, autoethnographic writing explores reasons for our existence:

In my classrooms, I see many students who are confused and have not only a limited worldview, but also no understanding of the significance of their existence. I know that autoethnography has the power to affect the way they think about communication concepts and themselves. Exploring lived experience opens up new ways of thinking, being, and doing that I believe will better prepare them for their professional and personal lives. After all, I am living proof of it. (2012, p. 9)

It gives today’s teachers and future teachers time to think about how autoethnography can be used in the classroom where the teacher and students would be able to learn more about one another. It is about bringing in the voice of all students. To get an understanding of how we can help students succeed by creating a safe environment and establishing a community of writers in order to hear their experiences. There struggles. There journeys.

Most importantly, it helps the classroom and it helps educators better understand the students. Both Viramontes (2012) and Chavez (2012) bring to attention how many students don’t look at the wide perspective of the world and do not understand the significance of their presence. Chavez (2012) would point out that in order to make a difference in the educational institutions one must look into the experiences the diverse students go through inside the classroom. This also

allows educators to look at their teaching, “an important process to go through to gain new insights and to reflect personally on our own teaching and learning philosophies” (Cord & Clement, 2010, p. 15) As future English teachers who are planning to either teach English as a Second Language or English as a Foreign Language, it’s important for schools to acknowledge different voices from all the students whom are coming into our classrooms.

In the same way, to bring awareness to students about autoethnography will create an understanding about the importance of sharing written work about one’s past lived experience. The crucial part is self-reflection where the autoethnographer is able to find new insights about himself/herself and be capable of analyzing those aspects or themes. Cord and Clement (2010) would agree that the use of autoethnography has led us to ask ourselves, “Why do I do what I do?” It is good to look at it closely and learn about those shifts of identity as well as the impact it has culturally or ethically. Voice here then plays a big factor because we are able to bring forth into our writing the value of our languages and how culture plays in our lives. Furthermore, the person will be continuously becoming someone new, as Preston (2012) would highlight.

Summary

Autoethnography then makes an impact on learning about bilingual minorities in education. Furthermore, those people looking into self-reflection writing to learn about oneself. “This transformative learning highlights the power of autoethnography as a reflexive means” (Preston, 2012, p. 115). To express the ups and downs bilingual minorities encountered as well as the positive contributions they bring into the education classrooms. Bilingual minorities or anyone else can use autoethnography as a way to discover things they did not know about themselves until studied. To come to learn how building a community of writers helps clear misunderstandings and provides awareness by using self-reflection to find approaches to better communicate with people. Moreover, we can get a sense of what I like to say in Spanish, *respeto*. To put it another way, when we use autoethnography we gain respect since we are using our

voice to self-reflect about our past lived experiences. In brief, more bilingual minorities need to be heard in order for awareness to be increased—both locally in schools and nationally in all areas.

Chapter 3

Research Methods and Case Study

Chapter 3 is a discussion of the research methods used for this project and a presentation of the retrospective diary and autoethnography. Retrospective diary was chosen as a method to trace my education, looking back at my k-12 years as well as my personal development. Broadly speaking, this is a literacy narrative which highlights the “liminal” or threshold experiences discussed by Soliday (1994). I also employ autoethnography as defined by Canagarajah, “This form of research is conducted and represented from the point of view of the self, whether studying one’s own experiences or those of one’s community” (2012, p. 260). How do we decide what artifacts to include in an autoethnography? There were many to choose from, such as diaries, photographs, papers from high school in Spanish and English classes as a freshman at EWU, as well as materials I created and taught in graduate courses and internships. I have selected # photos and 44 writings to include here. This chapter is organized into periods of my life: (1) infancy; (2) kindergarten; (3) elementary grades 1 and 2; (4) grades 3-5; (5) grades 6- 8; (6) grades 9-12; (7) my undergraduate years at EWU; and (8) my graduate years at EWU.

Autoethnographies situate “personal experience within social and cultural contexts and invite provocative questions about social agency and socio-cultural constraints” (Naidu, 2014, web). This present study, therefore, also includes my various speech communities, whether at school, church, the work place and at home. However, as a woman who has grown up as a bilingual, my speech communities cross languages, dialects and regional language varieties—both in English and Spanish. I think that this border crossing, as Anzaldúa put it, means that we are very adaptable to different situations, and we claim these border crossings as our own. Perhaps Gloria Anzaldúa, a feminist compositionist, might agree with the sentiment, “*No soy de aquí ni de allá.*” In other words, “I’m not from here nor from there.” But those who are two

generations younger, say, “*Soy de aqui y tambien soy de aya.*” This means, “I’m from here, and I’m from there.” I’m here to claim my heritages—both heritages. I was able to retain both of my languages and my Mexican and American cultures through my parents, school, hometown community, and observations of my surroundings. In these speech communities I had to face many challenges along the way. Being the first girl in the family, I had considerable pressure to be successful from both my parents and myself. These high expectations, however, have contributed to my overall success.

Infancy

This section covers my birth in Othello, Washington in 1990 (Figure 1) through my preschool years (Figure 2). It is primarily my reflections on what my parents have told me about our life at that time in Washington while they were working in the orchards and took my younger brother and me with them to work when we were a little older, especially in the summertime. When I was born, *mi madre* would be the one to take care of me, and she did the same when my younger brother came along the following. As is the custom in *México*, *my mother* stayed home with her newborn babies for forty days each. Then she decided to have either *Doña Chavela* or *Doña Cuca* babysit both of us, while *mi madre* went off to work in the fields. It was convenient for *mis padres* to take us somewhere that was close to our home, so they could go straight to work.



Figure 2. Me as baby, perhaps the only picture I have.

As far back as I can recall, *mis padres* worked all the time when my brother and I were small. However, when I was four or five years old, sometimes *mi madre* would take us to work while she picked apples. Arriving at the orchards around 4A.M., my brother and I would sleep inside the car, and when we woke up, she would have us sit inside the apple bins. I remember that we wanted to help my mom pick some of the apples from the branches that were easier to reach, but our small hands were not much help. When there were snakes around the orchard, *mi madre* would have us stay inside the apple bins, so we were not bitten or hurt. My brother and I were obedient, so *mi madre* hardly had any trouble with us being noisy or disrespectful. It wasn't long when having us at work was too risky, so they would leave us in our small mobile home in Desert Aire, a small community a mile away from Mattawa. Desert Aire was my first home before I

moved to a different neighborhood in Mattawa in 2001. When we were left at home, *nuestra madre* would always prepare food in *un termo para comida* (a thermal container for food) early in the morning at about 4:00 A.M. or 5:00 A.M.

I remember her telling my younger brother and me, “*No vayan abrir la puerta si alguien viene a tocar y quédense sentaditos en la sala mirando la tele*” (Do not open the door if someone comes to knock and stay seated in the living room watching the television). We listened, making sure we never opened the door to anyone and would sit in the living room with the TV turned on low volume. *Mi madre* did this to keep us away from getting near the stove and burning ourselves. For *mi madre*, it was painful to leave us alone, but she still trusted us to take care of one another as early as age 7 or 8. To this day, I recall those moments and their concern for us, and it is clear *mis padres* had to do this in order to provide food and shelter. They would say, “*Mijos* (A shorter term for *mis hijos*), *ustedes entenderán algún día que trabajar en el campo es muy difícil. Es por eso que ustedes deben echarle ganas a sus estudios* (My children, you will understand one day that working in the orchards is very difficult. It is why you both need to do your best in your studies).” When I was a little older, I would contemplate and tell myself, “One day I will help my parents just as they helped me.”



Figure 3. My brother and I on a four-wheeler with our parents at the orchard.

Life, as I was growing up, was full of learning experiences—many of which I would later recognize had helped me grow as a person. Spanish was the first language I learned in order to communicate with *mis padres*, yet I had very limited writing skills in Spanish. Having *mis padres* speak to us in Spanish, I was able to use the language with more fluidity, but they were not able to read and write well in either language, and certainly not Castilian Spanish. Nonetheless, I am still thankful for being able to learn about the Mexican holidays and other cultural values from *mis padres'* country, *México*. *Mis padres* also instilled their values in us. Through communication and by example, *mi madre* was the one to teach us about respect and generosity to others. She was the one who would say, “*No vayan a seguir malos pasos*. (Do not follow the wrong path).”

“*Mijos, se comportan bien.* (My children, be on your best behavior).” It was my mother who was always there to guide my younger brother and me through school, despite her limited literacy, and to become the strong people we are today. Yes, I will admit *mis padres* were strict with us, their children, but that did not mean they did not love us. For them, it meant being examples for us, so we would not make the same mistakes as they did when they left 6th grade. It is why they always reminded my brother and me to be respectful of others if we wanted to be respected.

At an early age, I remember my parents teaching me a lesson, which was speaking only when I was asked. They would tell me to never get involved in the conversation my parents and other grown-ups had. As a girl, I did not really understand why it was such a bad idea, especially, if I had something to say or ask. However, I learned the moment I got in trouble at a family gathering when I decided to join the conversation: children should be seen but not heard. *Mi padre* asked *mi madre* to pull me aside and explain to me how I was never to repeat the same mistake. It was at this point I began to keep any thoughts or feelings to myself. *Mi madre* also told me it was bad to laugh or giggle around other people, indicating, “*la gente va pensar que estas loca y estas coqueteando* (the people will think that you’re crazy and flirting).” Whenever I was with my friends or my cousins, she would remind me about how a girl should present herself in front of others. It was her way of protecting me from bad people out there. It was always about being “*una buena niña*” (a good girl) and not being like the other girls. I grew up following everything my parents would tell me, and I would not disobey them. It was important for me to do what I was told because it was something passed down to them by their parents. It was the value of *respeto* (respect), and I thank my parents for reminding me to never forget.

The presence of *mis padres* was very significant in my life, but I must say *mi madre* was the one who was there for my siblings and me. *Mi padre* spent most of his time working, where his priority was to take care of the irrigation around the orchard. I understand work was a priority, yet I still wanted him to be at home with us. As a young girl, I wanted to have both parents present and involved in our lives. However, my dad’s lack of involvement with the family made a

big difference in my life because the interaction I had with *mi padre* was not the same conversation I would have with my mother. When I would talk with *mi madre*, it was more natural, and I could easily talk with her about anything. Talking to *mi padre* was more complicated, making it difficult to keep a conversation going. There was always silence, and if we did exchange words, it was always, “Hi, dad. How was work? That is great.” I appreciate his dedication to work for the same orchard company for several years, yet I also wished he could have been present at home. Fortunately, my mother made sure we were never upset.

Kindergarten

As I was growing, I knew there would be a time where I would have to leave home because I would be starting kindergarten. There was a feeling of nervousness and fear of the day that would come. I was not sure what to expect. All I knew was I had to be on my best behavior. Being able to communicate in the English language was not the problem since I knew a few words in English, yet I was more worried about my surroundings. To be in a different place from home made me wonder whether or not I would feel safe. The only way to find out was to wait until that day arrived.

The first day of kindergarten began, and I was filled with fear. As I had thought, I did not know what I was doing when I stepped into the building. I do remember going to the cafeteria in the morning as breakfast was being served. Everything was different from what I was used to at home. It felt strange to be around so many other students whom I did not know. From those I saw at breakfast every morning, the students were mostly Mexican American, but there were a few Anglo students as well. The students had their own personalities: you had students who were more outgoing, and you had others who were reserved. Personally, I was the one child who was shy and quiet, and I never interacted with anyone. The only time I would talk was when my homeroom teacher asked a question. It was important for me to show my teacher respect and not cause any trouble, so I kept quiet.

Nevertheless, my teacher, Mrs. Thomas, did not see it that way. Even though I was quiet, I would still work on the in-class activities and assignments. In her mind, there was something wrong with me, or she assumed, I did not understand what was going on in class, but I did. It also worried her that I did not have any friends in class to talk to, and soon enough she had my parents come in. During those times there were not many interpreters who could assist Spanish-speaking families, but in my case they found at least someone who could explain to my parents what was going on. Once we arrived home, *mi madre* suggested I make friends at school, but it took awhile until I met a girl named Angelica, who became one of my closest friends for the rest of the school year and would remain my friend. Even though Angelica could speak Spanish, we always spoke English at school, and sometimes we would take the attendance sheet to the office. Soon, Mrs. Thomas realized there was nothing wrong with me.

What did I learn in kindergarten? The first part of the day I would have Mrs. Thomas, and then we would all go to a different classroom with a different teacher for the remainder of the time. The beginning portion of the class was an early morning introduction where we would participate together. For instance, we would have to tell the day, month, time, and weather each day. The teacher would read a short story to us, and sometimes we would work on a short assignment such as penmanship. After lunch, we would go to the next class where we would have an hour nap and then work on an activity.



Figure 4: Me going to read a book.

At the end, the class would have free time where there were a couple of stations with various activities to do. There was a station to play with pattern blocks, a coloring station, reading station, an office station, and a dress up station. The top figure is a photograph I have of when I was in kindergarten. On Fridays, there would be times where the teacher would let us watch a Disney movie, such as *The Lion King*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Cinderella*, *Bambi*, including many others. What caught my attention in kindergarten the most was learning how to write the alphabet in print and in cursive. Writing in cursive was very engaging for me, since it was new to me. Unfortunately, cursive writing was taken out of the curriculum the following year. Cursive writing today is not a requirement in Washington State, and people rarely use it since not everyone can read it.

Through the years, reading and writing became very important, and teachers had us create short sentences in English. As a young girl, I also found these years most memorable because there were many small projects I enjoyed working on. A particular moment was when I

created a colorful butterfly out of construction paper. It followed a lesson on the metamorphosis of a caterpillar, which also included a reading called, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. Reading books was my favorite activity when I had the chance in class. During reading time, I enjoyed reading on my own and books on tape *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie* by Laura Joffe Numeroff, *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister, *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr., and John Archambault, *Love You Forever* by Robert Munsch, *The Berenstain Bears* series by Stan and Jan Berenstain, *Little Critter Stories* by Mercer Mayer, *Where The Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak, *The Magic School Bus* series by Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen, *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein, and several others. In all, kindergarten for me was a classroom full of creative activities, especially when it came close to a holiday when we did coloring, drawing, and writing appreciative messages.

Elementary Grades 1 and 2

By the time first and second grade came around, I was already used to the school environment and the daily routine. The one change I noticed was the friendship I was building with other students. No longer did I have just one friend, but I was able to talk to other students without having to be afraid of anyone. First grade and second grade involved more reading, writing, vocabulary, and a little information about the United States' history. We were learning a lot of vocabulary to increase our lexicon and improve our usage. I recall having a quiz every week. Now learning math was so engaging for me because we would use these cubes to do simple addition and subtraction problems. My favorite books I remember reading were the *Arthur* series by Marc Brown, *Junie B. Jones* series by Barbara Park, *Wayside School* series by Louis Sachar, *Magic Tree House* series by Mary Pope Osborne, *The Adventures of The Bailey School Kids* by Debbie Dadey and Marcia Thornton Jones, *Amelia Bedelia* Collection by Peggy Parish, *Dr. Seuss* book collection by Dr. Seuss, and various others. The Accelerated reading program required is to take a comprehension test on each book that we read. Having to take this reading comprehension test was not a problem for me because it allowed me to read various books from different levels.

Although, my parents could not buy me books from the Scholastic Book Fair newsprint handed out in class, I had the school library to check out a few books and read at home.

Artifact 1

During the month of December in second grade, I remember going to *México* with my parents. We went to *México* to visit our grandparents, relatives, and most importantly the brother we never knew about. As a young girl, I did not understand, but all I knew is that we were going on a trip. The following journal was written in 2014 reflecting and tells of the time I went to *México*. At that time, I was thinking about writing a literacy narrative for the thesis and preparing to write a paper to present with my peers at WAESOL.

Meeting My Long Lost Brother

Years ago, when I was about seven years old, my brother and I got the news that we were traveling to *México*. I don't know exactly how I felt about the whole situation. All I remember is finding out how we had an older brother we never knew about. As a little girl, I did not know how to react to the news or how to feel about it. It took me awhile to process this until the idea settled in. The day finally arrived; it was during the winter in December. The first time I was introduced to my older brother, it felt awkward, but I was happy to know who he was. When my younger brother and I would talk to our older brother, we made sure to speak in Spanish. My older brother (Ismael) at that time only knew Spanish since the school he would go to in *México* did not have any English classes. I grew up with my parents who only spoke to us in Spanish so speaking to my brother was not too difficult. During our time in *México* it was a given that we would be bringing our older brother home with us. My mom wanted her son with her and she did not want to be away from *Ismael* again. He would no longer have to stay with our Grandparents in *México*. Even when we returned home, we always spoke to our brother in Spanish until he had some vocabulary in English. My older brother started school right away so then it was easier for my younger brother and I to start talking in English to *Ismael* so he could pick up the language. I really did my best to help him, but eventually things started going the wrong way since my older brother started acting aggressive towards us. My thoughts are that he must have felt displaced after being away from his parents for many years, and not knowing anything about us. Today, he speaks mostly Spanish due to the people he interacts with back in our hometown, Mattawa. *Ismael* is working in agricultural fields where the area is full of apple orchards. Most men in the orchards have different positions, from those in charge of a group of workers, those who drive the tractors, and those who ride a four wheeler to make sure the pipes that water the trees are working properly. My brother has been working on using the forklift making sure they get bins in the field lines or will be doing other work he is told to do. After he worked in the orchard field, he never really tried to continue getting a higher education. My parents tried to persuade him to go to college many times, but he would always tell them that school was not in his interest. My parents always gave him advice for his best and even to this day, they still do; yet, my older brother does not seem to understand our parents' good intentions. The way he thinks is the traditional way, which he could have picked up from our grandparents. Most people are surprised when I mention how I have an older brother. The only time I will ever speak to my

older brother is when I go home and visit my parents. When he does talk to me he will try to speak both English and Spanish, but most of the time it will be just Spanish. My hope is we will talk to each other one day without any problem.

The journal was written to remember my experience in *México* and how it was when I returned to Mattawa with my new brother. It was also important for me to trace those memories, and discuss the thoughts I had when I first met my older brother and my relatives in *México*. Again, when I found out about my older brother, *Ismael*, I did not know how to react. It was not until later when I wanted to know who he was and what he was like. The moment we met, all I was able to do was introduce myself to him in Spanish. In *México*, the people in the small towns only speak *español*, and those who know how to speak English are the ones who have money to pay for their education. There is something I forgot to mention about *Ismael*, which I believe is worth clarifying. My brother was born in *México*, but when my parents decided to move to the United States, it was my paternal grandparents who decided my brother would be staying with them. The reason why they left him with my grandparents was because he was only a baby, and it would be too risky for my parents to take him with them on their journey. It was later I heard this from my mom, who would describe the pain she felt for leaving him. She regretted the choice she had made, and even to this day she feels at fault. She believes my brother would not have felt distant from us. I understand my mother, but I think she was too young at that time, had no input, and had to obey her in-laws. Furthermore, it was the idea of my brother dying along the way my grandparents instilled in my parents that created this fear in them.

In this journal, I also describe how it was when *Ismael* came back home with us about ten years later. I try to position myself in his place, and I look back at how he must have felt when he first arrived at Desert Aire, Washington at the age of 10. Everything must have been all of a sudden to just leave my grandparents back in *México*—a place he must have considered his home for the longest time. Being so young, I did not understand since the only brother I had was my younger brother, *Federico*. I wish we could have understood each other better since we hardly

communicated with each other. Even after we were older, it became harder to get along and have a decent conversation with Ismael. When we did speak, Federico and I made sure to speak in Spanish so our older brother would not feel out of place and confused with the English language. *Ismael* is my older brother, and I know he has a good heart, but I think being away from us might have caused him to feel some resentment. Today, we are closer as a family than before. We communicate with one another, and I always try to show my affection and support to all my family members. After all, we have come a long way through all the ups and downs and have become a strong family, and we continue to speak Spanish and English on some occasions.

Intermediate School: Grades 3-5

The feeling of anxiety came over me once again when I was going to start third grade in a different building at the same school. I was so used to the elementary school building that looking at the intermediate school building appeared to me very intimidating. The intermediate school included third, fourth and fifth grades, and each classroom had about 20-25 students. Most students again were Mexican American or students who had recently come from *México*, and once in a while we had students come from other towns in Washington or from other states such as California who were there briefly. Through my intermediate school years, I remained a respectful person and had more friends to talk to, but I was still very reserved in class. The only time for me to interact with my friends was outside of class, but I made sure I was polite and focused when class started. Again, respect was a value I carried with me, and it would never change.

It was also during this year, 1997, when my mom would be giving birth to my younger sister, Crystal, that I recall being very worried because a relative had told us my mom was close to giving birth at the hospital. The reason why we had to stay at home was to be ready to go to school the next day. All I wanted to do when they got back was talk to my mother and get a chance to carry my baby sister. However, my mom was not in good condition to talk or do anything, so I did my best to help her in any way possible. This included, bringing her water,

cleaning the house, and helping her take care of my baby sister. At a young age, I realized the huge responsibility it was to raise a baby. At seven, I was in charge of making my sister's baby formula, changing her diaper, and putting her to sleep. I remember staying up late at night going back and forth with the baby stroller so my sister would fall asleep. Usually, I would wake up the next morning looking very tired at school. As always, I managed to get through school and be back home to assist my mother.

At school, the curriculum was different from what I had been learning in first and second grade. In the intermediate school, we were now beginning to get more in depth studying about the solar system, about United States history, and science. Nevertheless, reading, writing, and math were heavily focused on the third and fourth grades as they were trying to prepare us for fifth grade. I remember having to do workbooks that included reading passages and learning vocabulary. The workbooks were to test reading comprehension and to be able to infer information from the passages. For the vocabulary portion, we would have to define each word by referring back to the context to see how the word was used. Sometimes, I was pulled out of class where they had me read a passage while I was timed to see how many words I would read per minute. I remember being nervous because I disliked being timed. I had one question I was always curious about: why were only a few students pulled out of class to work with a special teacher? To a certain degree, it made me feel upset thinking I was doing something wrong to have me pulled out of the classroom. At the end of the day, it was in my mind to improve, and I was never pulled out of class again.

Once I reached fifth grade, the teacher, Mr. Weberling, was a person who challenged his students. The rules in class were very strict because he highly valued respect and hard work. The teacher really challenged the students to work on finding our own solutions to the problems. The focus was to improve the students' reading, writing and math skills. In math, I remember we would join another class, and we were paired in groups to solve a given math problem. The intense learning in all subjects areas was to prepare us for the standardized state test. The test was

better known as the Washington Assessment of Student Learning or the WASL. The WASL was a high school graduation requirement that had to be passed in order to graduate. Fifth grade was only to get us prepared, since the actual WASL would be taken in middle school.

Middle School Grades 6-8

Morris Schott Middle School included sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. In sixth grade, there were many concerns about how the class of 2008 was the first class required to pass the WASL in order to graduate. For me, this meant to study twice as hard in order for me to be well prepared for the test. It meant focusing on all the main subjects: mathematics, reading, writing, and science. In most of the classes, the teachers gave direct instruction, while the students listened. In sixth grade, I recall how Ms. Thornton would read to us in class while the students listened and followed along. She always asked us questions to assess our comprehension and to make sure we were listening because the WASL tested students' ability to listen and answer questions about what they heard. Two of the books I remember reading in class were, *Holes* by Louis Sachar and *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. The most memorable part of being in her class was the opportunity to read to the young children at the elementary school. Each person would be paired up with one or two children and pick a book they wanted us to read to them. There were also times to play games and have conversations with them. I enjoyed reading to the children, and it made me happy to see them so excited. When I was in elementary school, I never had middle school students come to read to us or play games. I find this very engaging for children when they have older students come to read to them or be pen pals. I believe it would be a great idea for schools to allow this and have a short mini-lesson to teach young children. It would allow students to have the experience of being a teacher/mentor and to develop as helpful, caring people.

When I was in seventh grade, I had different teachers for each class, and in each class I had different classmates. I recall learning about different kinds of poems, and I did struggle with creating one on my own. The types of poetry I remember writing included a free verse, a sonnet, and a haiku. Then there was a transition where the class started learning about writing essays and

how to pass the essay part of the WASL. Basically, we had to recognize the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. Soon after, we had to distinguish between writing and reading an expository and argumentative paper. The information processing and workload were more than I expected. It was at this point when I became more stressed out, and I was not sure how to handle my anxiety. I was a student who worried about every little thing. There was an embarrassing time when I was called upon by my teacher to answer what a thesis was. It wasn't that I did not know the answer, but that everyone was staring at me that made me really nervous. I did answer my teacher's question and made sure to repeat myself since my teacher had asked me to. The thought of people not caring about hearing my answer always scared me. I always believed that I was never good enough, and I was certain no one cared about my thoughts or my feelings. According to Dr. Reeves, it is not uncommon for poor women to suffer from self-doubt (Cook & Reeves, 2006).

When I was in eighth grade, I became really worried about the WASL. It was the school year that we would take the WASL as a practice test before we took it again in high school. There were so many standards to follow, and I became disinterested in what I was learning since there was no real meaning behind the lesson. I wanted my learning to connect to my experiences and to be meaningful, so I could have a purpose to read and write. Instead, all of the learning was about how to pass the WASL along with making sure that we would be satisfactory as a whole in our school since newspapers would publish the averages by school by grade. The WASL produced too much pressure, and the only place I felt peace was when I would read books from the school library. Within each page I read, I felt as I was getting away from all the worry at school and my future. Some of the books I read varied from what I found in the library, for example, I recall reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (Chronicles of Narnia)* by C.S. Lewis, *Where The Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein, *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen, *The Bad Beginning* by Lemony Snicket, *Meet Samantha: An American Girl* by Susan S. Adler, *Goosebumps* Collection by R.L. Stine, *The Boxcar Children* Collection by Gertrude Chandler Warner, and others. At the end of

the school year, I kept thinking to myself about how I would be a freshman the following school year.

High School: Grades 9-12

Once the school year started, I came to recognize that I would have a bigger responsibility once I started high school. It was a big change in my life when I would be around different crowds of people. If I thought I had things to worry about, there were many more struggles I would face at school and at home. The classrooms were a mix of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. The first year of school started with semesters, but for the rest of the years the school went by trimesters.

As a freshman, in my first year of high school, I remember having to adapt to the mixed classrooms where we had students from different grades. Being around different people made me feel I was on my own. Normally, I would find myself sitting alone and quiet when I didn't know anyone in the classroom. It took me a while to have a conversation with someone I didn't know, but I managed to develop a few friendships with other Spanish speakers. Once I knew the person, then I would easily open up and talk about just anything. As a person, I made sure to be a good listener, and gave my advice whenever they needed it. Most of my friends were Mexican Americans since my some of my Anglo friends from elementary school were homeschooled at this point. At times, I would wonder if I would ever see them again. Friendships to me were about creating bonds and understanding one another. I disliked the whole idea of only being in one particular group while excluding other people. It took me a while to get used to the people around me, until I decided to take the initiative to meet other friends instead of being around the same group of people. I understand high school can be full of peer pressure, but I wanted to break free and follow my own path. It was my belief to stay away from people who were not a good influence in my life and from those who have negative thoughts.

As far as my classes went, I had literature, math, art, science, history, and an agriculture class. From the beginning, they reminded us again about the meaning of passing the WASL in

order to graduate. I put my biggest effort into English since it was the one subject I struggled with the most. In 9th grade, I remember a specific English teacher who really cared about every student in the class keeping everyone in check. I remember her saying, “ I could give you free time, but I really want you to pass the WASL, so we will continue working on the essay assignment.” The hard work in her class paid off, since when the WASL came around the next year, I passed the real test.

When sophomore year came, classes were deeply focused on getting the students ready for the WASL. The lessons were never about learning something of value that the students could connect to their lives. It would have been great to include some type a media we could write about in class to make learning more engaging, but multimodal literacy did not seem to be a goal in our school yet. What really bothered me the most about the WASL was that friends who recently arrived from *México* had to take the WASL. I thought this was unfair to them because of the language barrier. The WASL was all in English, and I felt it was not appropriate for the students who were at different levels. For me, the WASL did not reflect the students’ ability since the students were at different levels and had different styles of learning.

Now, reading books and spending time with my friends came to be my savior from all the stress I was going through. When I read, I made sure my homework was finished. Some of the books I found myself reading included *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, *The Nancy Drew Collection* by Carolyn Keene, and many of the books from Lurlene McDaniel. The books I found myself engaged with the most were the Lurlene McDaniel books about grief, survival, hope, family, and friendship. Her books made me think about how much my family and friends meant to me. The idea of losing them and for those I had already lost made me feel there was so much for me to do. Not everyone has the same opportunity to live a long life. To read books I could relate to made me believe that I was not the only person with the same feeling. Books allowed me to find a place when I needed them, which is why I continued reading whenever I had the chance.

Through, my junior and senior years in high school, I recall having to take Spanish to count as my foreign language school requirement. Spanish was the only class offered, so I had no choice but to take Spanish class for two years. My expectation of my Spanish class was the excitement of using the language I was familiar with, but I was wrong. My teacher, Mr. M, was new to the school and Spanish was his second language. For Spanish to be his second language and teach a class full of heritage Spanish speaker was a great challenge for him. I understood, and for that reason I don't consider him a bad teacher. I only want to share my recollections of the Spanish class. The class was taught primarily in English with no opportunity to use the Spanish language through a communicative approach. I would have wanted to learn about other Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America. It would have also been helpful to look closely at the different variations of Spanish in Latin America in first-year Spanish since not every word will have the same meaning. For instance, *la guagua* may be referred to as a bus in Cuba and a baby in Chile. There are many other Spanish words that will have different meanings, and that is the reason why words must be used carefully. Another valuable lesson would have been to compare the values of the people in Latin America to the Spanish-speaking people living in the United States. The instruction was mostly teacher-oriented where the teacher used direct instruction, with little or no interaction among students. It would have been helpful if the teacher had had someone to give him advice on how to adjust the lessons according to the students' different learning styles and backgrounds. Furthermore, it would have been beneficial to use the language from the very beginning to improve our speaking proficiency since most of us already knew how to speak Mexican Spanish. In other words, allowing partner and group discussion opportunities for the students to use the language could have been beneficial. I'm certain if we had learned to write expository and argumentative papers, we would have improved our academic writing abilities in Spanish.

The Spanish Department did not have a particular class for heritage speakers or advanced Spanish classes. As long as everyone had two years of Spanish and passed, then we would be all

set. I appreciated my teacher, but there were many challenges with some of the other students. I did not understand whether they did have trouble or just wanted to give the teacher a hard time for being new to the school. It bothered me a lot when some of the students were disrespectful and made me think about how it would be if they taught the class. I always thought that teaching is hard and if students taught a class they would notice how hard it is to manage a class. So even though I have my own thoughts about how the class could have been, Mr. M was still a great teacher.

The one part I did enjoy was the 5-minute journal writing we did at the beginning of the class. Mr. M would give us the choice of writing either in Spanish or in English. However, it was my choice to write in Spanish since I really wanted to practice, and I believed I could write in my language. The prompt depended on what the teacher wanted us to write about. We would write on certain issues from the news on TV or in the newspaper or about a holiday, or the class would be asked to do a free-write. The following are three journals I wrote when I was in 11th grade, and because they are in Spanish, I have also included the translation for each journal.

Artifact 2

This second artifact was written during the year where there were dangerous fires in California. It was a big topic, and our Spanish teacher had us read the printed news he had found online. After reading it, he had us write our thoughts about it for five minutes.

Brenda Aguilar
October 30, 2007
3rd Period

Acera de los fuegos en California y lo que pasa allí a causado muertos en una semana. Los bomberos están haciendo lo mejor que pueden para controlar estos ardientes fuegos. Los bomberos son los héroes que arriesgan sus vidas para ayudar a las personas y animales que corren en peligro. Hay como 9 enciendos y las personas que son como un millón de personas se verán obligadas entonces a huir de sus casas en siete condados. Son las cosas que serán perdidas en el enciende y las personas quedarán sin nada. Especialmente el viento es el que está causando que el fuego se regue a otras partes del estado de California.

Translation

About the fires in California and what's going on has caused many deaths in one week. The firefighters are doing the best they can to keep under control these burning fires. The firefighters

are the heroes who risk their lives to help the people and animals who run at risk. There are about 9 fires and the people that are about a million will have to be forced to flee from their houses in seven counties. They're the belongings that will be lost in the fire and the people will be left with nothing. Especially the wind is what's causing the fire to spread to other parts in the state of California.

Looking back at this particular journal, I noticed a couple of aspects about my writing. Even though I was not proficient in writing and reading well in Spanish, I was still able to recognize words when I was in high school. The one aspect I had trouble with was getting most of my accents in place. In this case, *alli*, *veran*, and *seran* should be *allí*, *verán*, and *serán* with an accent on the last syllable. In other words, if the stress on the last syllable and the word ends in vowel, *n*, or *s*, then it must have a tilde. In other cases, I used the wrong usage of the word, such as in *enciendo/s* and *regue*. The correct word should be *fuego* (fire) and *extendiera* (spread). The word *extendiera* is the correct way to say the fire spread out as opposed to *regue*. *Regue* (*regué*) should have an accent on the *e*, and it means to water or pass through. I find it interesting to analyze my own writing and wonder how I was able to write in Spanish. The reason I was able to write slightly in Spanish was because I was familiar with the sounds in Spanish, and the words are written exactly the way they sound. Moreover, I was familiar with topics of fires in California since my parents always listened to the news on “*Primer Impacto*.” It is one of the news channels on the Univision network, where my parents found out about the issues going on around the world. This is how they were able to know if there is anything going on in *México* and were assured that there was no danger to family there.

Artifact 3

The following journal was written when we had to write about an important holiday we knew in Spanish class my freshman year. It came to my mind at this moment about an important celebration happening that particular week, November 1 and 2. I decided to write about *Día de los muertos*, an important and familiar celebration in the community. In my journal, I wrote a short description of what I could remember in those five minutes I had.

Brenda Aguilar

November 1, 2007
3rd Period

El Día de los Muertos se celebra en México y también en ciertas partes de los Estados Unidos, América del sur, y América central. El Día de los muertos se celebra de diferentes maneras dependiendo el lugar. Muchos celebran haciéndoles una ofrenda y les ponen las pertenencias del ser querido que les gustaba. También hacen pan de muerto, mole, atole, calaveritas y muchos más en esta día. Para los niños les hacen o se llama angelitos. Para la ofrenda usan una foto y la ponen en un altar para el difunto. Es para recordar a los seres queridos que ya no están en este mundo y para dejarles saber que siguen en nuestra memoria.

Translation

The Day of the Dead is celebrated in *México* and also in certain places in the United States, South America, and Central America. Day of the Dead is celebrated in different ways depending of the place. Many celebrate it by making an offering and placing the loved one's favorite belongings on the altar. They also make day of the dead bread, mole, atole (cornflour drink), skulls (meant to say sugar skulls), and many more on this day. For the children, they will make them little angels. For the offering they will use a photo and they place it on the altar for the deceased. It is to remember the loved ones who are no longer in this world and to let them know that they remain in our memory.

Once more, I found myself making the same mistake in not putting down the accents.

Regarding the topic I wrote about, it made sense to me how important *Día de los muertos* was for me. Throughout the years, I had lost many relatives, my grandparents, family friends, and classmates who had passed away due to health problems and car accidents. It is a tradition to keep our loved ones close to us by creating an altar at home and attending mass at church. It is a time where everyone can all come together and share the happy moments with their loved ones. *Día de los muertos* has become a yearly celebration and something I want to keep alive.

Artifact 4

The last written journal was when there was a discussion on immigration reform. I remember it was a huge topic, and I would hear people remark about this at home with *mi familia* and at school with friends. I understood the fear of illegal drugs being brought to the United States from *México*, but I felt immigration reform also caused this separation among the people. Through the following journal, I want to share my personal thoughts during that time. It is not edited for correct grammar in *español* or English, but it reflects my command of both languages at the time.

Brenda Aguilar
 November 6, 2007 [age 15]
 3rd Period

La reforma migratoria es un tema de campaña electoral importante. Muchas personas define a los inmigrantes como criminales, inherentemente malas personas. Mitt Romney se opone ala inmigración ilegal y que no merecen un trato especial . Lo que el autor opina es que los Americanos no ocupan los puestos de trabajo que aceptan los inmigrantes, no porque no quieran hacer tales trabajo sino porque no los harian por salarios tan bajos. Mi opinion sobe esto es que las personas que tratan de cruzar la frontera vienen para una vida mejor para trabajar. Pero no todos, he visto en la television que unos Cruzan para vender drugas y a ellos si los tendrian que arrestar pero también personas de los U.S. son malos y no toman la oportunidad de hacer algo con sus vidas pero la echan a perder. Yo diría que el gobierno o el presidente que les de a las personas el derecho que realizen sus sueños.

Translation

The immigration reform is a topic important for the election campaign. Many people define immigrants as criminals or as bad people. Mitt Romney is against illegal immigration and that don't deserve special treatment. What the author thinks is that Americans don't occupy work positions of those of immigrants, and not because they don't want to do such work but because they wouldn't do it for low wages. My opinion about this is that the people...try to cross the border come to [the U.S.] for a better life and better job. But not everyone, I have seen on television...crosses to sell drugs [but] they should be arrested [if they do], but [some] people from the United States are also bad and don't take the opportunity to do something with their lives—throwing their lives to waste. I would [ask] the government or the president to give the people the right to make their dreams come true. (Aguilar, 2007)

Similar to the two previous journals, I found trouble with placing accents on the words that needed them. In this case, *harian*, *opinion*, *television*, and *tendrian* should be *harían* (would do), *opinión* (opinion), and *tendrían* (would have to). Both words *drugas* and *realizen* are incorrect it should be *drogas* (drugs) and *realicen* (achieve). Now, when I wrote this journal, there were also hateful comments towards the people from *México* and the uncomfortable feelings it caused them, including myself. I am not the type of person to discriminate against other people, and it is not appropriate. Every time there was an issue about this in the media, it made me think back to my parents and other relatives who came to the United States many years ago. I have seen them work really hard *en el manzanal y en el cerezal* (the apple and cherry orchards), and I must say it is not an easy job. People will sacrifice anything to work and earn the money they need. I also had the occasion to work in both the apple and cherry orchards, and I did

not enjoy it at all. This is why when I thought about the immigration reform, I thought about how there are many Mexican Americans who are not bad people. Growing up, I learned through the media that anybody in this world could do illegal things, which is not fair when they target a certain race. But I also learned from my parents that we must try to respect all people and not judge them too harshly since we do not know their circumstances.

In Spanish class, we were also reading from a textbook adopted by the school district, but it was not at the reading level for the students who were heritage speakers. The reading had no real meaning or background story the students could relate to. Each passage had questions about the characters in the passage, what would happen next, and what our opinions were. Some of the questions were to assess our reading comprehension. This was a routine each week, and it became disengaging and not challenging enough for me to feel the real purpose of the reading. Spanish class soon became my focus as I would picture my own class, thinking I wanted to teach *Español* as my future career.

When my junior and senior years were rolling by, I realized I had to think about my future. I thought to myself multiple times, “What am I going to do with my life? What college or university will I attend?” Of course, there were many other questions I had, and most importantly, I wondered if I could really make it that far. I spent my time doing research at school about different universities and colleges I wanted to attend. Then I began looking and applying for different scholarships to have some kind of financial help. I didn't want to have my parents feel obligated to pay for everything when they had other bills to worry about. During my last two school years in high school, I would meet with my advisor because the students were assigned to work on a portfolio, which included our best works and all of the completed requirements needed to graduate. At the end of my senior year, I had a presentation to do in front of 3-5 judges where I discussed my biggest achievements in school, most memorable moments, and career goals, as well as any last words of encouragement for other students. After I completed all of my high school graduation requirements, I only had to worry about leaving my family behind and starting

on my own as a student at Eastern Washington University at 18. This was a time when I questioned my future, and I worried about my preparation for college. Was I ready?

Eastern Washington University

Undergraduate Student

The moment I walked through the pillars at Eastern Washington University (EWU), I knew I was now beginning a new path. I was no longer a high school student, and I was no longer coming home to *mis padres* and waiting to have dinner together. I was on my own now, which in my mind, meant the responsibilities and the choices I would have to make. My freshman year at EWU was the first time for me to see a whole different world and noticed how different it was compared to my hometown in Mattawa. The population of students and the community was mostly Caucasian. There were just a few students who were from China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, France, Russia, Ukraine and many other places. For me, this was very surprising because my hometown was a community of mostly of Mexican American and other Latinos coming from South America as well as Central America. During my first year, I had to get used to living on my own with my cousin who had already been taking classes at EWU. She helped me along the way and told me about possible organizations to participate in at EWU. It was not a bad experience; however, I still missed home. The feeling about being away from *la familia* made me feel so alone without being able to *hablar en español* with them the way I was used to when I was back home. I'm glad my cousin was there to encourage me along the way when I felt I was alone. We would communicate in both English and Spanish, so I was able to express to her what I was feeling. There were times where I would forget a word in one language, so I would have to use the other language and vice versa.

Classes in college were also very different for me because I had to put forth more effort and stay up most of the time to study. Most all the classes I was taking required many readings and writing reports and essays requiring research outside of class time. I was learning so much academically, and we had to use proper citation, making sure not to plagiarize. I also learned

about using academic resources from EWU's JKF Library instead of sources from random websites from the Internet. My papers were not quite satisfactory since I had to take one extra class and learn about writing academic papers. It was a tough time for me because I thought I had learned everything in high school, but there was much more expected in the English courses at EWU. I was very upset at myself because I thought I was not good enough if I was enrolled in English 100, but I worked hard to pass my class. Finally, I went from English 100 to English 101, and to English 201, where I noticed my slow improvement. To this day, there are two in-class journals from English 101 that both deal with the idea of identity. The following journal, I wrote in regards to the italicized statement given by my teacher. This, again, is what Wittman (2016) calls "the clumsy tale" (p. 678) of becoming academically literate when you are a first-generation college student.

Artifact 5

Brenda Aguilar
 Graduate Instructor: Jamie Wood
 January 7, 2009 [age 18]
 English 101
 Journal: Identity

I am not who I think I am
I am not who you think I am
I am who I think you think I am

Identity is important to know and understand. Many people judge people by what they see, but not know who they really are. For example, many people might think I'm reserved, stuck up, or unfriendly but truth is I'm nice, caring, loving, and friendly. That is the reason why we need to know the person first before making any judgment or negative comment. While this might be one case there are other cases where people try to be someone else they're not. Most teenagers experience this usually because they want attention from people; they want to have the perfect body just like the models they see in advertisements. Sometimes it can also be an influence from their favorite celebrity on television. When this happens most people see the outside and not see what's inside because they only want to see what they want to see. At the end of the day, I think it is important to be who you are and not be someone you are not. Also, one should never let people label you or pressure you to be someone you are not. Every individual is unique in his or her own way and what sets us apart from the rest.

In the journal, I conveyed my feelings based on everything from what I had been told in high school and during that school year. Most people who did not know who I was had a different

perception about my persona. In most peoples mind, I was a stuck up and unfriendly. If only people could have understood me better by talking to me more, then they would have found out I was truly a friendly person. When I wrote this journal, there was also in my mind how most people try to fit into a certain group of people. They wanted to be like the people who were in style, who had the attention, and who were able to distinguish themselves from the rest of the students. For me, it was important to get to know one another first in order to understand where we are all coming from. This would have created a better bond amongst the students and a positive environment at school. This is why I love meeting new people by getting to know them first without making any judgments. There are so many things one is able to share in common with others, such as hobbies, sports, music, family, and the goal of becoming successful. There are also our experiences in life, whether we had losses or obstacles, that helped us grow as people who are able to connect and be of support to one another.

Artifact 6

The next journal was still relating to identity by writing about the things we carried in our backpacks. In this journal, I had to think about what belonging in my backpack identified me.

This journal was written when I was a freshman at EWU, so many things have changed since then.

Brenda Aguilar
 Instructor: Jamie Wood
 English 101
 January 9, 2009

My backpack and me

All the things I have in my backpack represent and identify myself as a university student. The contents you will always see me carrying with me besides my textbooks are my shimmering chocolate lip-gloss, my Victoria Secret lotion and body spray, my Maybelline New York black eyeliner, my cosmetic compact mirror, my Samsung Glyde cell phone, candy, money, and most importantly my IPOD. These are some of the things I can't live without that represent my life and identity. My backpack is myself and represents my personality. As a person, I love to smell good and look presentable. It shows I like to take care of my hygiene and it shows my responsibility as a student who carries her textbooks. I think as a student, textbooks are important since they are pricey, and as a student one has to manage one's spending. Now, as for my IPOD it means everything to me. Music has always been my life because it helps me concentrate when working on my homework, and it helps me feel happy whenever I have a bad day. Now tell me, what do you see? Most people would say otherwise, they might think I am too girly, a show off, etc.

However, they would miss a lot of who I am if they only saw what was in my backpack. What I carry in my backpack only represents one portion of who I am.

As I reread this journal, I think about how I saw myself in the past. I must say it was significant for me to say I was a university student. I am no longer a high school student, but a university student who is working her way up to be successful. In my backpack, I carried my makeup and other beauty products. For me at that time meant looking presentable wherever I went. The textbooks were also something I had to carry in my backpack throughout the day. The textbooks were important since each one was quite expensive. As an undergraduate student, I understood budgeting my money was crucial in order to survive each quarter. Most people carry their IPODs just as I did all of the time as a student. Music was a way for me to relax and not feel anxious every time I walked through campus or when I studied. With music, I focus on my homework, on what I am working on, and me from feeling tired. After experiencing my first stressful quarter of finals and the time I needed to study, I knew what I would be expecting the following years at EWU. It was my understanding I would be developing as a person along the way, and I would have different thoughts about myself.

In each English class, I was occupied writing various essays from expository to persuasive papers. It took time to organize my thoughts and get help from someone at the writing center at EWU. They would have me read my draft to hear and see my mistakes. It was a big help to receive feedback from them to have my second draft ready to turn in to my professor. The library had many resources from books, scholarly articles, newspapers, and books to help me support my topic. The English classes were one portion of the classes I took at EWU in order to finish the prerequisites before declaring my major.

As the years progressed during my time at EWU, I was receiving help from my advisors and soon enough it came to declaring my major. It was then when I decided to go for education with the major in Spanish and a minor in ESL. It was during my junior year when everything became tough with my Spanish and education courses. They really required a lot of my time, and

I was taking late classes at night, plus I was working for the theater department on campus. Aside from classes and work, I was also volunteering in AUAP classes and as a Campus friend with AUAP students. In AUAP classes, I was there for the students to practice their English conversation. Even though I was had a lot to do, education classes had the highest priority.

The first education course I took, EDUC 200, the professor was there to insure us of the expectations of the program. The professor indicated we had to be certain education was the career path we wanted to take. I figured teaching was what I wanted to do, so I pushed through regardless of the stress I would be facing. As future educators we had to recognize, differentiate and apply the Washington State K-12 Learning Standards and regulations within teaching in a public school. One of the parts of teaching was being able to tell what the students would be doing class and the process of how the teacher would assess the students. It was about following the curriculum and policies. There was also responsibility of paying attention to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), — “a Federal Law that protects the privacy of student education records” and “gives parents certain rights with respect to their children’s education records” (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>). The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) was used to look at the Common Core State Standards, as well as using it as a guide to create a proper lesson plan. Creating a lesson was not an easy progress I automatically learned the first time. It took a couple of times before I earned a satisfactory grade on my lesson plan paper. The challenge I had with creating a lesson plan was because I had learned a different format called the Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA). The format had changed and was called the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA). What made the TPA format so much better was the portion where I, as the teacher, did self-reflection where I wrote about how the lesson went and what I could possibly do differently. It was very important as an intern to look back at my lesson plan in order to help me grow as a future teacher.

By the time I began my student teaching, I was familiar with the state standards, had completed my class requirements, and had found a place where the school was willing to allow

me to do my student field teaching experience. Before being allowed to teach at Medial Lake High School, I had to get a background check and fingerprints done. Now responsibility and work ethic were very important in the public education field, especially when it came to working with the teachers inside the public school. As a student teacher, I was always careful in everything I did while working with my master teacher and the faculty in the school. If there was something I learned in my education classes, it was to be careful and never get involved in talking about any student or other teacher. Professionalism meant setting those boundaries in how one should act in order to show one's ability as a potential teacher. Moreover, teaching involves showing you care about students' success, the same way I expected from my teachers as a high school student. I disliked the favoritism; I believe it is not fair for the rest of the students who notice.

My minor was English as a Second Language (ESLG), and it was where I learned more about working with English learners. One of my favorite textbooks I read when I first started the minor was *The Tapestry of language learning: The individual in the communicative classroom* by Robin C. Scarcella and Rebecca L. Oxford. This book really helped me get an insight about the role of the teacher and the learners with the use of the Tapestry Approach. Through this approach "teaching is a dynamic process involving teachers and students in meaningful, collaborative efforts" (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p. 3). Scarcella and Oxford bring important facets about teaching English learners, such as taking into consideration learners' language proficiency, learning styles and strategies, cultures, their needs, and motivation. There is also making sure the learning of materials is authentic for the students to attain the language in natural ways. By motivating the learners one must take into consideration their "interest, needs and goals" (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p. 9). These were a few details I learned at the beginning of the course and it was later when I learned about various theorists.

Two main theories I enjoyed learning about were Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis. Vygotsky's idea of the ZPD consists of three stages, where in the first stage, the "learners are only able to communicate

with assistance” (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p.25). In the second stage, the “ESL learners are able to use the English without the assistance of others” (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p. 25). In the final stage, the students’ speech becomes automatic, meaning the “learner can convey their message in English fluently and smoothly” (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p. 26). Krashen’s Comprehensible Input Hypothesis proposed the idea that the learners acquire language by providing “language that is just a little beyond the learner’s current level of English language proficiency” (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p. 41). It is also known as the “*i+1*”. However, I also learned how there is only so much the learners can process or intake. In other words, it is impossible for the students to take in everything they have heard due to the heavy cognitive load of language learning.

It was through the ESLG courses that I became more interested in working with students who are learning English as a Second Language. Through the courses, I had the opportunity to work with Saudi students in the English Language Institute (ELI) department and the Asia University America Program (AUAP). In ELI, I had the chance to observe a class and interact with the students, but I was most involved with AUAP, which had more opportunities to volunteer in classrooms. I enjoyed practicing and helping AUAP students with their speaking and listening skills in English. It was what most AUAP students really wanted to practice so I would help them by having various conversations on different topics whenever we could meet. The ESLG courses had me take into the consideration the possibility of learning more about teaching students who are learning English.

In my final quarter at EWU, I was dedicated to finishing my student teaching where I would be teaching the whole time in a high school classroom in Richland, Washington. The teaching experience there helped me gain extra practice with teaching and working with my master teacher. I worked with students of different levels of Spanish proficiency. It might have been difficult in the beginning as I mentioned in the preface, but with the help of my master teacher I was able to seek for advice. Along with my teaching, I kept a journal with me at school where I wrote my reflections about the day’s lesson and what I had observed. The reflections in

my journal aided me in my lesson for the next day. I would observe what activities worked well for each class and what did not. The journal is not in my possession since it had to be turned in with the rest of my work to the education department. I enjoyed teaching Spanish, but my health was not doing well. Not only was my anemia interfering with my health there was also my depression disorder I was dealing with. My depression disorder was a combination of stress and anxiety so having to deal with all of this was making me concerned. After having the doctor prescribe medicine it took a while before I my health improved. At the end, I managed to get through my student teaching and completing all the work I was to submit to EWU's education department, plus submitting it to the edTPA website to be graded. After all the hard effort it was now time for me to apply for the MATESL at EWU. It was in the process of filling out paper work, I was very nervous as to whether I would be accepted, and I waited to receive a letter about my acceptance.

Graduate Student

Winter 2014

When I heard about my acceptance into the MATESL program, it was the quarter of Winter 2014. It was a new journey for me, yet in my mind I knew what I wanted to do. My goal was and still is to teach English as a Second Language either here in the U.S. or in a different country. Ever since I was in the ELSG courses as an undergraduate student, I knew I wanted to continue working towards that path. However, there was no major with ESL except a Master Program with Teaching English as a Second Language. It was then my decision to apply for the graduate MATESL program in hope that I would be accepted. Soon enough, there was an acceptance letter letting me know I was in the program. I remember the joy and excitement I felt when I heard the news and I was ready for the new path.

English 695c Intern: Teaching English as a Second Language (English 112)

During my first quarter into the program, I was taking three classes. In the first class, I was an Intern in English 112 Composition for Multilingual Students, where I assisted Dr. LaVona

Reeves. Right from the start, I felt welcomed in class and excited to help the best way I can. The role as an intern was being able to take a position of a student teacher helping the students in the class. For me this was very significant as a way to help me grow as a future ESL teacher and learn from each student. Every day at the beginning of the class the students had to write for five minutes on a prompt connecting to a quote from Russell Freedman's book. It was a photobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt and a required textbook for the class. When I created my journals I made sure it was on an important quote students would be able to relate to. Along with a prompt for the students to write about, I included my own journal talking about my lived experiences. Bringing my own stories helped the students understand where I was coming from, and it provided a space for the students to share their journals with the rest of the class. They each brought something to the class whether it was learning about their culture, their language, values and their individual self as a person. We were also able to find some similarities such as with the celebration of coming of age in other countries with a *quinceañera* (Sweet 15) in the Mexican culture, which I learned through the students' responses in their journal.

Artifact 7

There were a total of five journals I created with the help of Dr. Reeves. Each journal is about a different topic, but follow the same format. It begins with a quote from Freedman's book, and followed by an interpretation of the quote in my own words. Then a prompt on what the students need to write about, and ended with my journal. The first journal is about a friend (Angelica) who I have known since kindergarten. She was a person who I had looked up to for being a great friend and a great writer. The change and path she took encouraged me to reflect back to the time I was in high school and our friendship.

Brenda L. Aguilar
Dr. LaVona Reeves
March 19, 2014

JOURNAL 1: MY FRIEND

Name _____ Date _____

My Friend Journal 3.3 English 112

Quote from Freedman

Marie Souvestre worried about her young friend. In New York, Souvestre feared, Eleanor would be swept up in the social whirl of debutante dances and parties, and her special gifts of sympathy and intelligence would be wasted. (Freedman 29)

Interpretation

Souvestre's concern was that Eleanor would change if she went back to the world of well-known people and forgot everything she had accomplished. This meant her kindness to others as well as what she had learned about thinking for herself.

Prompt

Think about a time where you worried about a friend. Where did this happen? Why were you worried about them? What did you do about it? Did you learn anything from this?

Brenda's Journal

In high school, I had a friend who I was concerned about her not taking advantage of her writing skill and not going on to college to continue her education. She had a good sense of expressing her ideas and she was someone who was willing to help others when they needed it. I recall asking her for guidance when I had a paper due in my English class on school uniform. She assisted me along the way always letting me know to stay on topic and to be careful not to use the word "like" and "that" repeatedly. I remember asking her about her future career and she excitedly said, "Someday I'll be a reporter!" To hear this from her made me very happy. I knew she needed to take the opportunity to use her skill and be someone in life, but later something about her changed. From what she told me, she was going through many issues at home and other personal issues she had. I always talked to her so she would let out her troubles and I would give her advice to keep moving forward. Our community is small with a large number of Mexicans and there was this pressure all the time where girls had to keep a good reputation. I'm not sure if this was too much or what exactly it was, but she ended up running away from home with her boyfriend. The only thing I could do was give her my support no matter what choice she had made. I learned from my friend's situation to strive for success no matter what challenge there was to face by making sure to go against any pressure or norm and continue with my education.
279 words

Looking back at my journal, I observed how much I have missed the friend I knew from kindergarten. As I described earlier, Angelica was the only friend I had made in kindergarten when my teacher got concerned about my quietness and no friends. It meant a lot for me to make the first step to talk to someone and maintain a friendship. She was a friend who I remember the most because we would tell each other everything, so for me to see a different side of her when we were in high school it took me by surprise. Particularly, to find out she had left with her boyfriend and was no longer pursuing her goal of becoming a reporter. I had no reason to say

anything since I figured she had her own reason. However, I knew I did not want the same thing to happen to me. It was in my mind to continue my education and be a successful person to help out my parents. I did not want to be the girl who left home with her boyfriend and got pregnant. Even if I felt lost about my own future, I knew there was more to achieve.

Artifact 8

In “My Happiest Moment” journal, I describe my happiest moment in life. It is about my *quinceañera* also known as a Sweet 15. This journal explains why my *quinceañera* was important and still is. (Add more)

Journal 2: My Happiest Moment

Quote from Freedman

“Everything is changed for me now. I am so happy. Oh! So happy & I love you so dearly.” Eleanor Roosevelt

Interpretation

From the moment Eleanor encounters Franklin Roosevelt again her life takes a completely new path of happiness. A path, where after a couple meetings they both end up having feelings for each other, and soon enough are secretly engaged. The engagement that would test out how much they cared for one another since Franklin’s mother thought they were still too young. For Eleanor to have this happen in her life would be the most memorable moment.

Prompt

Describe your happiest moment in life. Who was there? Where did this take place? What was it that made you so happy? Why do you consider this moment the happiest moment you remember?

When I was young, turning 15 years old was something I needed to think about since most girls have a special tradition called a *quinceañera*. One is no longer a child, but is transitioning from childhood to adulthood. At that time, I did not know what it meant to have a *quinceañera* and I did not see a point in having one until my mom talked to me. My mom is a very kindhearted person who has been working all her life. She gets up early to prepare lunch for work, working from 5 A.M. to 4 P.M. in the afternoon. Growing up, she was never around but I knew how much she cared for her family. My mom never had a *quinceañera* because her parents did not have the money and she was always working to help her family out. Nonetheless, she always told me it was important to value this tradition as a memorable event that happens once in a lifetime. After speaking to my mom and listening to *quinceañera* stories some of my aunts had, I decided to plan my *quinceañera*. Usually a *quinceañera* is supposed to take place close to or on your birthday, but since my birthday is during the winter season, I chose to wait and have my *quinceañera* during the spring season. A *quinceañera* includes both a religious and social ceremony as a way to give thanks for getting this far in life. Moreover, it’s a new beginning to adulthood where one is responsible for her duties at home, is mature, and is ready to make good choices from wrong. The big day arrived, April 30, 2005. After mass, the ceremony transitioned at the Quincy Community Center. The venue was decorated according to the color of my dress, sky blue. Everything was nicely arranged with balloons, stage lights, table decorations, and flower-paper ornaments. Most importantly, was to have the food prepared as the guests arrived. Then came the time for the

waltz and father-daughter waltz, respectively, which plays a major role to introduce the beginning of the young adult to the people who are celebrating with her. I recall having to practice constantly to learn the complicated steps the choreographer wanted me to acquire. It drove me crazy. I was thankful for the many gifts I received, but I was more grateful to everyone who was there with me to share this happy moment. I consider my quinceañera, as one of the happiest moments in my life because I learned there was more meaning to this tradition. A quinceañera we can share down to other Mexican-American young girls as a way to remind us of our heritage and whom we can identify within the community. 450 words. (Read at Tri-TESOL Presentation)

There is a reason why it was significant to write about my quinceañera when I thought about my happiest moment. As a teen, I never saw the meaning behind a quinceañera and thought of it as non-important. A quinceañera is a transitioning from childhood to adulthood. In other words, one is no longer a little girl, but now has responsibilities and choices to make. I learned this when *mi madre* talked to me about how I should value this tradition that only happens once in a lifetime. She described to me how she never had a quinceañera because her *padres* did not have the money, and her priority was to work to help her *padres*. Not only was I glad to talk to *mi madre*, but was also thankful to my aunts who gave me more insights about their quinceañera. This beautiful celebration is not just a big party or a moment to spend a lot of money. It is a tradition many teens should consider as an important step to adulthood, and acknowledge that not many people have the opportunity to celebrate a quinceañera.

Artifact 9

This next journal “My Biggest Loss” is about my cousin, Eduardo, who passed away in a car accident. I was able to relate to Eleanor Roosevelt’s grief after the death of her baby who came down with the flu and died. For that reason, I was able to share my journal with the students in class who perhaps could relate to my loss.

JOURNAL 3: MY BIGGEST LOSS

Name _____ Date _____

My Biggest Loss Journal 5.3 English 112

Block quote

“Eleanor could not accept the baby’s loss, and in her grief she blamed herself: ‘I felt he had been left too much to the nurse, and I knew too little about him and that in some way I must be to blame. I even felt like I had not cared enough about him and I made myself and all those around

me most unhappy during that winter. I was even a little bitter against my poor young husband who occasionally tried to make me see how idiotically I was behaving.” (Freedman 50)

Interpretation:

During 1909, Eleanor’s third child Franklin Jr. came down with the flu and eventually died. For Eleanor to have her son die at only seven months affected her very much. As the reader we can imagine she would want to be alone from everyone and keep that pain of loss to herself. We can infer this to the way she described how she felt during this moment as well as how she made the people around her worry.

Prompt:

Describe a moment when you lost something or someone that was very important to you. What happened? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Who was there? Why is the loss so important?

Brenda’s Journal

Back in 2002, in the month of September, my family decided to move to a bigger home where we would be close to school. I remember moving in our new home on September 10, 2002. I was so happy, yet so tired from loading and unloading our furniture and the rest of our belongings. Later that night before I went to bed I kept thinking, “Oh no! Not tomorrow, I don’t want to wake up early.” Early the next morning, I heard the phone go off and as I became fully aware of my surrounding I heard my mom’s voice coming from the living room. In her voice, I quickly noticed something was not right, so I immediately went to see what was wrong. She slowly looked up at me and as her tears streamed down her cheeks she said, “Your cousin Eduardo is dead.” As soon as I heard this, my world went upside down. My mom’s brother Antonio told us that his wife, my baby cousin, my cousin Mari, and my cousin Eduardo had gone to Wal-Mart to buy milk for my baby cousin. On their way there, a big semi hit them with impact, which caused the van to flip over.

To me it’s sad to hear my aunt talk about it since she was the one to hear his last cry before he died. I always ask myself why he had to die in such a tragic way. Why, why, why, was all that ever played in my head. My cousin Eduardo was like an older brother who loved to joke all the time, yet he was very respectful and easy to talk to. To recall all these great memories I had of him would always cause such pain. Through sometime I would always be locked in my room crying myself to sleep thinking why life was cruel. It took a while for me to realize how much pain I was causing others and to find out it wasn’t going to change anything. It was up to me to cherish those memories and to always live each day happily. I learned that life is too short and I want to accomplish my dream to teach (English as a Second Language or English as a Foreign Language) in another country. (Brenda Aguilar, 2014,) 385 words

When I wrote this journal, I had no idea how much pain the death of my cousin had caused me.

The news of my relatives in a car accident was hard to believe in the beginning, and all I could think about was the memories of when we would go visit them. As I described Eduardo, he was a respectful person and whom everyone would talk to. To me he was like an older brother who I looked up to for being a kind and sociable person. I can only imagine how tragic it must have been for my aunt to hear his last cry before he passed away. There is only so much one can do, but show the support we can to those who are in greater pain. We must appreciate those around us since we will never know when someone close to us will pass away.

Artifact 10

The following journal was in response to Franklin's polio where he had trouble standing up and movement with his legs. For this reason, I decided to create a prompt about a situation where one has only five months to live. I wanted to hear not only my response, but also the response from the students in the class as to what they would do in such situation.

JOURNAL 4: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Name _____

Date _____

Journal 6.3 English 112: What would you do? By Brenda Aguilar, English 112 Intern 2014

Block quote

At the time, there was no vaccine for polio and no effective cure. Franklin lay in his sickroom with the shades drawn, uncertain whether he would ever walk again. For nearly three weeks, until a trained nurse could be brought up from New York, Eleanor slept on a couch in his room, nursing him and comforting him day and night, spelled only by Louis Howe. Together they bathed Franklin, massaged his back and legs, and attended to his every need. (Freedman 71)

Interpretation:

During 1921, Franklin became ill, and the specialist later discovered he had polio. Franklin had a hard time being able to stand up or move his legs. At that time there was still not an appropriate vaccine to cure polio, so Franklin wouldn't be able to fully recover. Eleanor was by her husband's side, taking good care of him as well as Louis Howe, whom was Franklin's friend and political advisor.

Prompt:

What would you do if you only had five months to live? Describe how you would feel? Who would know? Where would you go? Why would you choose that path?

Brenda's Journal

To have only five months to live would be terrifying. Who would actually know how to deal with such news? I would be shocked and I would ask myself, "Why is this happening to me?" To have to die at a young age is unfair, but I know life goes on. However, instead of letting it bring me down, I would live life to the fullest by creating a bucket list. This bucket list would contain the goals I would want to accomplish before I died. These goals would include traveling the places I always wanted to visit, eating all my favorite dishes, meeting all my favorite artist, spending time with all my closest friends, and most importantly, to make my family smile every day. Now, the one person I would spend the most time with would be my younger sister. She has been by my side through the bad and the good moments that have happened to me, and will always find a way to make me happy. Certainly, I would keep this a secret and never let anyone know until the day I died. Death is scary and if I told everyone, they would only worry. In addition, everybody would treat me differently. It may sound harsh, but I don't want anybody to pity me. Finally, as a last gift for my family, I would create a memory book of all my happiest moments as a child up to my last moments. (Brenda Aguilar, 2014) 244 words

I will say this journal was one I had trouble thinking about, since it is difficult for any of us to hear that we have only five months to live. Even though I had to think about it, I know there are

people who have to deal with this reality. Looking back to my journal, I notice how much I value *mi familia*, and I would definitely devote my remaining months to *mi familia*, while keeping my coming death a secret. It would not want *mis padres* to be sad and worried about me all the time. If I were to have only a few months, then I would want to remember *mis padres* with a happy smile. I must also take into consideration what some of the students shared in class. For example, a few students explained how they would want their *padres* to know about their situation because it would cause them more pain if they had not. They said it would at least get their *padres* ready before the day came. It was helpful to have the students share their thoughts since I was able to see a new perspective about what others would do in such situation.

Artifact 11

The final artifact I have chosen to include from the internship is a journal on discrimination. This topic was going back to the 1930s, when racial discrimination was acceptable in many places of the United States. Many black Americans in the South were not allowed to go to a White school, eat at certain or stay in certain restaurants, stay at certain hotels. Today everyone has the right to go to any school, eat at any restaurant, and stay at any hotel. However, discrimination still exists and will continue until someone puts a stop to this.

JOURNAL 5 DISCRIMINATION

Name _____

Date _____

Journal 8.3 English 112: Discrimination By Brenda Aguilar, English 112 Intern 2014

Block quote

Discrimination against black Americans was widely accepted during the 1930s. In many parts of the country, including the nations capital, black were barred from schools, restaurants, and hotels. Even movie theaters were segregated. Throughout the South, most blacks were not permitted to vote. (Freedman 108)

Interpretation

In the 1930s, racial discrimination was implanted in American life and seen acceptable. It was a time where black Americans could not eat in the same restaurants, watch movies in the same theaters, or go to the same schools. Most blacks in the South were also prohibited to vote. Mrs. Roosevelt would soon become the one to advocate and fight for civil rights.

Prompt

Describe a time where you either experienced discrimination yourself or witnessed racial discrimination against someone. When did it happen? Where did it take place? What happened? How did you feel about it? And what did you do about it? Write **100** words.

Brenda's Journal

Growing up in a community of mostly Mexican Americans, discrimination never crossed my mind. To me, it was a time of building friendships and being happy. However, in high school and mostly through my college years I noticed discrimination a lot more. It was at this point when I understood how sickening it was to experience racial comments from ignorant people. A recent experience I want to talk about is one I witnessed this past year, during spring quarter. It was a day when a group of Japanese friends, the International Peer Advisors, and I decided to go eat at Teppanyaki for dinner in downtown Spokane. We were very excited to hangout with our Japanese friends for the last time before they left for Japan. Since it was a large group we thought it was better to meet at the bus stop and leave together. And we did. It was somewhat crowded, but we managed to stay together. Once on the bus, we were ready to go and while we waited, everyone was talking with his or her friend. I remember clearly, there was a group of four Caucasian Americans who suddenly started making racial comments about the Japanese student's physical appearance. I don't understand what they were thinking because even though the students were speaking in their native language, they actually understood what these individuals were saying. The IPAs and including myself were very shocked as well as angry about their comments. We looked at them with a serious look on our face to let them know that what they had just said was wrong. They literally could tell we were bothered with what they had just said that they remained silent the rest of the way. I honestly would have wanted to say much more, but in such limited space and in public I didn't want to make the situation worse. Through my many encounters with discrimination, I have learned that it will never go away. 330 words

When I wrote this journal, I could only remember the moment when a group of Japanese friends were told horrible things by certain individuals. It was a disappointment for me to witness this situation and saddening to have to hear the racial slurs. There was not much we could say to those people since we did not want to cause any trouble on the bus. At a young age, *mis padres* were there to instill in me the idea of respecting those around me and to never judge anyone. I never saw a person as someone who was better from a different person or group. So to experience discrimination, as I got older, I saw a whole different reality. What the students had shared in their journals made me realize how we all had experienced or knew someone who had faced discrimination too.

In essence, creating these journals helped me understand the importance of having writing be meaningful, where the students are sharing their own experiences with the class. It creates a space for the students to feel comfortable and safe to share their stories. In addition, they are able to learn from one another and where they are coming from. Specifically, the students learn about the importance of establishing good rapport with other students in groups.

The best part of the class was connecting the lessons to Russell Freedman's biography of Eleanor Roosevelt. Eleanor Roosevelt is an important figure who should be taught in English classes in high school and college. Even the English 112 students were able to take with them something from Eleanor Roosevelt. She is an example of someone who devoted her entire life to helping others as a teacher, a supporter of equal rights, and a social activist. One of my favorite quotes from Eleanor follows: "You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.... You must do the thing you think you cannot do" (as cited by Freedman, 1993). In other words, a person learns through the experiences one lives in order to grow and mature. One must also believe in oneself to do the impossible and make those goals real.

English 511 Composition Pedagogy

For English 511, I must point out it was the course where I struggled the most, especially interpreting the many articles we read about the paradigm shift in composition studies. It took me a few times to reread the articles in order to get a grasp of what the author was arguing. In class, I learned how after World War II the CUNY (Reeves, 2001) and the G.I. Bill allowed free admittance to all the young soldiers who returned back home. This also allowed a bigger population of students with various levels of education to go to college. Many were considered basic writers who were not prepared for college writing. Again it is important to understand how the field of composition has gone through a major paradigm shift to a process approach. At the end of the course, I wrote a paper on multilinguals and identity. It was a class where I learned a lot about writing research papers, and I appreciate the support Dr. Lynn Briggs did to help us look for possible academic sources to support our topics.

English 582 Modern Language Methodology

In the Modern Language Methodology class, I learned about various teaching methods for working with English language learners. What was very helpful in learning the different

teaching methods, the class was also learning a different language. Dr. LaVona Reeves showed us how it would look like. The various methods we learned in class were the communicative approach, the direct method, the Berlitz method, the grammar-translation method, the audiolingualism approach, the affective-humanistic approach, etc. The two methods I considered challenging were the Berlitz method and the silent way method. With the Berlitz method you could not help the student or stop and explain. As the teacher can only use the target language, and have the student repeat and then ask yes or no question, a no question, a what question, and then repeat the same process with the next new noun. It took a lot of practice for everyone in the class before we understood how the Berlitz method worked. Putting the Silent way method into practice was extremely difficult for the students in the class because the teacher or the person in charge couldn't talk. The only time the teacher spoke was when she pronounced words only once and then the class had to work together to help one another and repeat the word. There was pointing involved to colors in French, and the student had to repeat and know the word color in French. Both were difficult, but it gave us all an experience of how both of them work and their benefits to using them once in a while.

Two accomplishments I am proud of is the finish work of my travelogue and teaching a chapter from *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* textbook by Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Snow. I chose to write a travelogue for the reason how one day I would love to travel different places to experience the different cultures and living styles. At this time in my life I had never been to the places I talked in my travelogue. In the travelogue, I talk about one day deciding to go off on a journey with my younger sister to Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. This travelogue was to be used inside a classroom keeping in mind how a teacher could use it to teach and its purpose. My travelogue was for the purpose of teaching these specific regions for those students who don't know much about and help them understand where their classmates may be coming from. Even though I put a lot of effort into the story, I enjoyed sharing it at the end to my classmates.

With the chapter presentation I had to give to the class I also had to do a short mini lesson of what I would do to teach in the target language in my classroom. It was my responsibility to present on “Motivation in Second Language Learning” by Zoltán Dornyei from the Celce-Murcia textbook. Motivation is central to teaching effectiveness as I learned from the textbook, but when creating student motivation one must find ways to maintain it. Along with the PowerPoint I created, I was able to use a short clip from *Freedom Writers*—an inspirational story by Erin Gruwell who taught students who were considered ‘unteachable’ (2014, p.518) and who graduated high school. This film is a good example to give the class an example of what I meant about the importance of motivation. It is a significant aspect for many teachers to keep in mind when working with language learners since motivation is the drive for the students to learn the target language.

Spring 2014

English 520 Seminar in Research and Design

The Seminar in Research and Design class focused on researching to write a paper. More specifically, one geared towards the possible thesis we were working on. A major component of this class was to prepare myself in writing a literature review. A literature review defined as “a written argument that promotes a thesis position by building a case from credible evidence based on previous research” (Machi, & McEvoy, 2012 p. 3). It was a process in creating the literature review that consisted of many steps such as finding a topic, looking for research, the development of the argument, the findings of the topic, the critique, and finally writing the literature review.

Artifact 12

The final outcome of what I felt to complete the final literature I will demonstrate by sharing my Research Project Completion Report. This report was a final assignment we had to submit before the end of the course.

ENGL 520 Research Project Completion Report¹

Report Completed by:
2014

Brenda L. Aguilar

Date: June 5,

Introduction: Provide a brief summary of your goals and objectives for your course research project. Identify your personal objectives for this course.

The goals and objectives for my course research project were to have everything set and done on time. The biggest concern I had was to have a topic in order to know where to begin with my research, and to search for credible sources that would help support my topic. After I had all the articles I needed for my research, I had to prepare the main reasons for my research to start working on my annotated bibliography. Most importantly, the main purposes I wanted to get out of this course was to have something as a reference for my bigger project, which is my thesis for the Master in Arts in English with the emphasis in Teaching English as a Second Language program. In all, the class really helped me get a step forward to find many articles for my thesis on autoethnography.

Background: Briefly review your research experience and knowledge as they existed prior to writing your literature review and as they developed over the course of the project.

My experience in this class has been great. I enjoyed this class so much because I was able to see my growth as a writer. I started out with not knowing much since this past quarter was just the beginning, so I was worried about this class. The only time I had an experience with a literature review was last quarter, but it was brief. However, I enjoyed getting advice from my peers on my research topic I wanted, autoethnography. It was a struggle to get a lot of information, yet I managed to get through it and had it prepared for my annotated bibliography. The annotated bibliography made my work a lot easier for my literature review where I divided the information according to the main ideas of the article by putting them under specific sub headings. How I named the subheadings were such as the meaning of autoethnography, the molding of identity, the language learning as a bilingual Chicana, etc. To work on a literature review was quite a challenge for me since I'm used to creative writing. However, the whole process of taking it steps at a time helped me along the way up to the final project, the literature review.

¹ Your project completion report should be one to two pages. Complete all sections: Introduction, Background, Activities, Peer Review Workshops, Problems Encountered, Lessons Learned, and Overall Evaluation. **Note:** Text Boxes will expand as you add content.

Activities: Briefly describe your writing and research processes during the major course assignments: thesis analysis and team presentation, annotated bib, and literature review.

I had a terrible fear for my writing and research process during the major course assignments: thesis analysis and team presentation, annotated bib, and literature review. The biggest challenge came when I was working on my thesis analysis and the literature review. The thesis analysis I had to put a lot of thought to it because I had to start from a simple to a complex argument for my thesis. As for my literature review, I had a difficult time putting my work together. In other words I thought a lot about how I wanted to organize my information so it would smoothly transition. I also checked my paper constantly making sure that my sources supported my ideas and that they were cited when it needed to be. With the annotated bibliography I had to put careful attention on how to organize the information into categories with sub headings to make it easier when I needed to use my references for my literature. It helped a lot to know how there is more analysis to annotated bibliographies than just summarizing the information from the article. Now, for the team presentation it pretty well, it required of me to be well prepared know about the thesis I found. The only issue I encountered was not knowing someone else had also chosen the same thesis I was going to present, but we presented together by helping each other fill out some of the spaces one or the other didn't knew. In the end, I felt we were able to learn from each other and did great.

Peer Review Workshops: List key workshop comments. Discuss which workshop suggestions you used and which suggestions you rejected and **why**.

Two of the key workshop suggestions I used was the one where we looked at our annotated bibliography and the time we shared about the topics we had brained stormed. In the brain storming process of our topic we wanted to know my classmates were able to provide great feedback in regards to the specific topic I wanted to focus on. They also suggested many ideas that really got me thinking and my mind filled with clearer ideas of what I wanted to do. For the annotated bibliography I also received great feedback saying that my topic was something they would want to hear about since the information I provided helped to what I was going for my literature review. The workshop suggestion I rejected was the one where we worked on as pairs was the one where we had to share about our arguments exercise we had to form based on our topic. The reason why I rejected the suggestion had to do more because at the time my argument wasn't set in stone and figured that it might of changed since the research was only the beginning of the project.

Problems Encountered / Variance to Guidelines: List any problems you encountered or any variance to the research project objectives. Which, if any, objectives could not be fully achieved and why? What measures did you take to overcome problems? How effective were these strategies?

The problems I encountered were not that major for my research project objective. The only minor problems I had was staying on topic with what I was thinking for my research. Organization was another thing I had a minor problem, but that was all the challenge I had.

Lessons Learned: Summarize the main lessons you learned about writing and research. Indicate any unexpected outcomes or opportunities. What lessons you would pass on to future ENGL 520 students?

The lessons I learned about writing and research is starting with a topic of our research and creating an argument. Along with that is the search of credible sources and to synthesize all the articles to end with the main points. This meant finding the main point all articles had in common instead of spending so much time on each article finding each main point. The other was creating an annotated bibliography for all of our articles that would lead to our literature review. The annotated bibliography really helped organize my ideas of what I would have in my literature review included.

Overall Evaluation: Reflect on the success of research and the quality of the outcomes.

- How satisfied are you with your research project and your final literature review?
- Did you achieve your personal objectives? How?
- How might ENGL 520 skills/concepts transfer to your future academic or professional work?

My mind ponders on all the time no matter how hard I worked on my annotated bibliography or on my literature review. I always have the feeling of making my work better. I do feel great about it, but there is always that feeling of doubt. However, in my perspective I do feel like I accomplished my personal objective for my research project and literature review. The skills/concepts I learned will be something I use in my future academic work. Specifically, there will be future courses where it will require of me to write a research paper and literature review, and all I learned from ENGL 520 will be beneficial.

This “Research Project Completion Report” shows the growth of my learning in the course, how I felt about the course, the challenges of and my reflections on the research project. Looking back on my report, I have to say I was still having trouble with writing a thesis and I knew I would need advice from my professor at the time of our meeting together. I know in the beginning of the program I had no knowledge of the steps needed to do a literature review until we went over this as a class. It was helpful to have a model we could follow as an example because if the professor did not provide a format we would all be confused and lost. In all, I was glad to go through the whole process and be able to get feedback not only from the professor, but also the feedback from my classmates who were a big support. My classmates encouraged me to keep going with the topic I had chosen since they found out I would be using autoethnography as my research method. My topic focused on my identity being a bilingual and bicultural woman.

They had never heard of someone reflecting back to one's lived experiences, so when I explained to them the research I had found they were interested to see the final project.

English 564 Pedagogical Grammar and Composition

The Pedagogical Grammar and Composition course was a class dealing with many grammar lessons, and Dr. Reeves took a multimodal approach recommended by the NCTE. It was a challenging class for sure, but I managed to appreciate the class since, as ESL/EFL future educators there will be a time a particular grammar rule will need to be explained in order for the students to understand why the structure of a sentence is wrong or why punctuation is needed. What I learned in class how difficult it is to explain the grammar rule when as native speakers we automatically just know. Growing up in the public school, I don't ever remember there being a time where the class was focused on learning grammar. It was just picked up. For English learners this might not be the case since in most other countries such as South Korea and Japan are focused on learning the grammar rule. For example, while working with the AUAP students I learned how important it is for them to learn the rules as well as their listening and writing skills to prepare them for the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC).

There was also a presentation I had to do on a thesis from EWU's past graduates. I was very interested in one thesis in particular from Sang Ho Lee called, "The Communal Diary, "날적 이" (Naljeogi) Transformative Education, and Writing through Migrations: A Korean Novice ESL Teacher's Diary and Autoethnography." It was through his research in using autoethnography that I wanted to do something similar to his work. To expand and focus on my own language retention and heritage and see what I could find about myself that I did not know before. Lee's thesis discussed his learning not only in Korea, but also when he was a student at EWU. He talks about his experiences, in particular, his bad experiences with teachers. He describes being upset at the idea on how the teachers did not take a minute to understand the students. In other words, being considerate of what student might be going through or taking the

chance to know the students. The students need to feel safe in order to trust a teacher. However, even though Lee had these bad experiences as a young boy, he describes the healing of writing. Through his writing and his experiences at EWU he was able to have a different perception about teachers. He understood how not all the teachers are mean, but teachers will all have different beliefs about how to teach students and their needs. Through his reflections, he thought about providing a safe environment for his future classroom and assisting all students equally.

Along with how he felt about his teachers, there was something important I forgot to include when I presented Lee's thesis to the class. When I look back, I have to take into consideration the support of his *padres* and the forgiveness he needed from his younger brother. These were two important factors I would say are worth noting in his thesis. First of all, his *padres* had experienced what it was like to live in poverty and not be able to have enough money. It was the sacrifice the *padres* did to make sure their children had what they needed to be successful people. They did not want them to go through the same experience the generation before had. Now, the journal about Lee depicts about the time he lied to his mother, getting his younger brother in trouble. He reveals how guilty he felt since his brother had fainted to the ground, and thought his brother had felt betrayed. To look back at his writing helped me understand how much he valued his family. It was his thesis that helped me keep going with writing my own autoethnography through the use of literacy narratives.

Despite reading and presenting Lee's thesis in class, I also learned about other students' presentations on various topics, such as anomie, autoethnography as an ESL teacher, art analysis, intercultural interactions, and others. This opened many options for the class when it came to choosing a thesis as a possible resource. The class as a whole was very helpful in getting us prepared on what kind of research we were going with for our thesis.

Artifact 13

The following artifacts are a few I chose from the many other journals I wrote in class. At the beginning of the class, we would always have 5 minutes to write on the prompt we were asked. The journal “Yourself as a Writer” describes how I felt about myself as a writer.

Brenda Aguilar
Dr. LaVona Reeves
English 564
April 1, 2014

Journal 1.1 Yourself as a Writer

As a writer, I’m still trying to develop my skills. Writing has always been a challenge for me, especially, when it comes to big writing projects such as a research papers. Last quarter in Dr. Briggs’ class we were assigned a research paper I have never written before. I remember writing down some of my opinions in my first draft and I learned that for the research papers I had to be supported by data to prove what I wanted to say. My biggest challenge has always been organizing my ideas since they tend to be all over the space. This then causes the reader to be confused with what it is I’m trying to say. I will say, I am the type of person to look over the paper more than 5 times and change a few things because in my mind I feel it is not good enough. It is something I worry all the time when it comes to writing essays or a short thesis and in both languages—Spanish and English. My biggest strength is I never give up even if I learn slowly, but I will eventually improve on my writing skills. I do love writing, for example, I always carry a journal/ diary with me so I can write just about anything. The writings vary from my personal experiences in the past, from school, about how I am feeling, poems, as well as tiny stories dealing with life.

Looking back to this journal, I still believe there is much I need to improve as a writer. I enjoy writing, but there have always been challenges in writing academic papers. There are times my ideas are not clear or I do not give much context for my readers to understand what it is I am trying to convey. For that reason, I work hard enough to look over my paper many times, but I find myself making constant changes until I feel my paper is good enough. This is something I need to work on by allowing myself to read over the whole paper through without making any changes so I get an overall look of my written work. Thanks to Dr. Reeves, she has given me advice to read my paper out loud or have someone read it to me, so I can catch my mistakes. It does really help, and it is something I am working on to improve on my ability to write academic papers.

Artifact 14

Now the following journals I will use in this section are the important to me. This first journal was written in response to the video on “The Lost Boys.” This short clip about different men who share their experience from almost being killed as young boys in Sudan. We also see their transition from Kenya to the United States and what it was like for them to be in a new place.

Brenda Aguilar
 Dr. LaVona Reeves
 English 564
 April 3, 2014

Journal 1.2 The Lost Boys (60 minutes)

Throughout his whole video clip, I had many emotions rise up. It is a life changing perception on how we look at our lives and to appreciate what we have in life. Having to hear the part where the boys ran away to escape from being killed must have been a scary and very difficult experience at such a young age. The worst part was to hear about the dead bodies flowing in the river. One can only imagine the pain and the trauma about having to see that. However, the lost boys had a chance to go to the United States where they would experience what people know as culture shock. Everything around them was new and interesting such as the light, water, the vacuum, the food, and many other things. To notice how there were so many people from different backgrounds. This video itself is very powerful where I was able to learn from different people coming from a different culture and different country. The smiles they kept on their face was also empowering because even though they went through a lot they were still able to stay positive.

I would have to say there are so many students and future teachers can learn from watching short video clips and journaling about it for 5 minutes. The Lost Boys is a great example of refugees who struggle the moment they arrive to a new place. They experienced culture shock, and as cultural brokers they need a person to guide them. Of course they also show resilience in staying positive and working hard to be successful and providing the lost boys back in Kenya. As a future teacher, I want all of my students to feel safe in my classroom and help them in any way possible. It is my responsibility to understand where my students are coming from and bringing in their voices into the classroom.

Artifact 15

As I discussed previously, newcomers to a new place may bring with them their own culture and language. I find it important as a future teacher to be aware and to take the time to go out into the different communities for me to understand where the students are coming from. In

this journal, Dr. Reeves created the prompt by having us relate our teaching and professional roles to A. Suresh Canagarajah's quote from his article "Teacher Development in a Global Profession: An Autoethnography (2012)." She gave us about five minutes before we shared our ideas.

Brenda Aguilar
 Dr. LaVona Reeves
 English 564
 April 10, 2014

Quote#2

If there is one way in which I might have preferred that engagement to be different, it is the following: I would have expected the TESOL experts to step out of their air-conditioned hotels to walk around our markets, schools, and streets to see how we learn and communicate. If they had done that, the experts would have seen how English was changing in our community. English was mixed with our local languages, influenced by our values and codes, generating new communicative practices. They would have also seen the reality of codeswitching in our community and understood the rationale behind our teaching methods (275).

Prompt:

How can you relate this to your teaching and professional roles?

Canagarajah made a great point in his quote about having the experts go out into the community to experience how English was changing in their community. Nobody can expect to have someone only speak one language. In other words, Canagarajah is pointing out how many people who are learning English are also using their language. They are using both languages by code switching. As a professional, I would go out there in the community to see how language is used. Having this awareness helps out a lot and I can not expect my students to feel obligated to fully know how to speak the English way. Students can use English the way they speak it and not feel ashamed of messing up or mixing both languages.

For me, the thoughts I had about the language in the community remain the same. As a bilingual myself, I am comfortable using both Spanish and English. I have also had the experience of listening to other people mixing both of their languages too. Who am I to say what language someone should only use. Even within the orchard community, there will be people who use different dialects and Spanish. When Canagarajah used the term "codeswctching (p. 275)," I was able to relate the way I was using both languages with friends or people who were able to speak both Spanish and English. If there is one thing about learning how any language/s work within the community, it is paying attention to the way people communicate.

Artifact 16

This journal was created by Dr. Reeves and offered as an example of how to create multivocality in a postmodern, feminist curriculum. She not only created the journal prompt, but also shared an inspirational journal about her Aunt Dorothy. The journal was a great way for me to honor the students in my high school with a disability.



Journal 6.3. A Person With a Disability

Quote *"Illness gave him strength and courage he had not had before. He had to think out the fundamentals of living and learn the greatest of all lessons... Infinite patience and never-ending persistence"...Eleanor Roosevelt*

Prompt Describe a person you know who has a disability. Explain the challenges & successes this person has had. Follow the model. Give details and examples. Consider the photo of the statue of Franklin in the wheelchair above and the person visiting his memorial in Washington, D.C. How does he help all persons in wheelchairs?

Professor's Journal

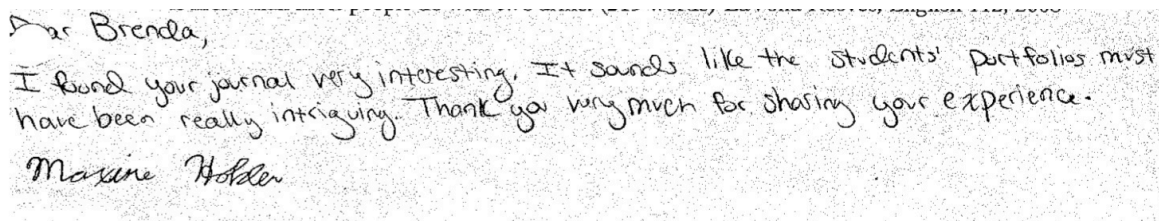
My Aunt Dorothy felt “lucky to be alive” after she was hit by a car when she was expecting her fourth child, and the man drove away, leaving her for dead. She lost her left arm as a result, yet she managed to be a good wife and mother by learning to use just her right arm. She even adopted three children and raised them. She never had the attitude that she was disabled but always used everything she had to take care of her children, do her housework, keep a lovely garden and be a good wife to my Uncle Warren. I often see her these days in a wheelchair, and she is always going off to do volunteer work and to help those people in the apartment building who are older and less able than she is. Where does she get her strength and courage from? From her desire to be a good example for her children and grandchildren. She never complains or boasts about anything, just keeps trying to give something to everyone around her every day of her life. Her youngest daughter had Down’s syndrome, but my aunt took her in—as an adopted child—and raised her to adulthood. What she does with one arm is more than most people do with two arms. (219 words) LaVona Reeves, English 112, 2008 (Cited in Reeves, 2006).

Brenda Aguilar

April 23, 2014

Journal 4.1 A Person With a Disability

When I was in high school, there was a particular classroom where the students with a disability would have their class. It was a class I never knew about or maybe it was because I never took the time to research myself. I will admit I would see them walk in the hallway, yet I thought they were in the regular classrooms like everyone else. It wasn’t until one day when our Spanish teacher gave us the opportunity to go into the special classroom and listen to their portfolio presentation. It was a wonderful experience for me to listen to their accomplishments, although I was a little nervous myself sense I didn't know what my role was. But after listening I realized so much more of how happy the students were in showing their best works and the volunteer work they had done. It made me see a different side as well as their dedication for their education. I also got to learn about the many field trips they had done out in the community and outside town to get an experience to see possible careers. It made me think what the teachers did to help the students with a disability. I even wonder where they are now, and what it is there doing. My only hope is that many children who have a disability should have equal opportunities in succeeding.



A handwritten note on lined paper, written in cursive. The text reads: "Dear Brenda, I found your journal very interesting. It sounds like the students' portfolios must have been really intriguing. Thank you very much for sharing your experience. Maxine Holder". The note is written on a piece of paper with horizontal lines and a dashed midline.

(Words 231)

This journal takes me back to the idea about every student having the same opportunity to an education. Any student with a disability has the courage to keep on going with their lives and motivation to learn. I agree with the response I received from my classmate, it was intriguing to listen to what the students had to share from their portfolio. I find the motivation students can

have to share their work they are proud of, and for me as a future teacher, I want to value their hard work they bring into the classroom. It is my belief every student should be treated equally.

Artifact 17

This next journal, Artifact 17 was in response to what written work has helped “shape” our lives. Dr. Reeves again makes sure to share her own model to help the students with possible ideas. She explains writing has helped her to discover what she was feeling and thinking. In this particular journal, she focuses on poem she wrote called “Rings of Growth.” Moreover, through writing the poem, she has learned about the lessons the older generations have taught us as she explains her parenting style in the interpretation of the poem. My paper is focused on two written works from two different classes. One written work was from a Chicana course, and the second paper came from my Spanish undergraduate thesis I had been working on.

Artifact 17

6.1A
564 2014 Writing History Journal 6.2Name Brenda Aguilar Date May 6, 2014Quote

"In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility."

~~Eleanor Roosevelt

Prompt

What have you written that has helped "shape" your life? Describe an important piece of writing you have done in your own language or in English or both, if time permits.

Explain how it helped you shape yourself into a better person or a different person.

Write 100 words on the back. Count your words. Exchange with a member of your group. Respond in 4 sentences. Sign. Return. Place in folders for a grade today.

Submit your folder. Print neatly. Do not use cursive writing.

Instructor's Journal

I write to figure out what I think and feel, even when doing academic writing. I also write to remember the lessons my parents and grandparents and great-grandparents taught me. By writing their words and stories, I keep them alive in my heart and share their lessons with my sons. But today I will write about poems I wrote in English with a Japanese influence—almost 100 poems in 100 days. This writing shaped my understanding of the loss of my father, and many of the poems were about my father—his youth, his life, his influence on me. I used the waka form which is a five-line poem with the syllables—5, 7, 5, 7, 7. Here is an example:

Rings of Growth

Small boy asks to see
Salmon's scales, count the rings as
Grandfather did, then
guess the age from the growth bands—
winter rings could tell the most.

Father looks at him,
says he's an old one for sure,
then sends up prayers
for him and sets him upright
facing upstream and lets go.

LaVona Reeves, 2010

This poem is about the generations—son, father, grandfather—all of whom know about the salmon life cycle and age. How did writing this poem shape my life? It helped me to remember that we have many lessons to learn from the older generations, and when I am the older generation, I have a great responsibility to teach the next generations about life—not just human life but also plant and animal life. I chose to live in the Northwest where I could teach my children about the rivers and the fish living in those rivers. I made the choice to be the kind of parent who tells my children many, many stories—to write the stories down for them to remember, to write poems about the salmon and the trout—the fish I know best. I have shaped my life by choosing to be a writer and a teacher of writers. Each day I continue to shape my spirit into a more free and more content person. When I take a few minutes to write every day, I am reminded of how our writing changes our mood and changes our view of life. Writing helps us focus on what really matters—people, life, and the planet.

Brenda Aguilar May 6, 2014
Writing History Journal 6.2

A piece of writing that has shaped my life would be an assignment I did in a Chicana feminist course and a thesis writing I did in my Spanish class. In the Chicana feminist class I took one quarter, I had to do a writing assignment where I was able to express my thoughts about gender roles in my home. This also included the gender roles I saw within my community where it was mostly a population of Mexicans. This paper was important for me because I was able to interweave my Spanish language to explain some those experiences and observations. They were personal since I come from a Mexican family where it is very traditional. A traditional mindset where the man is in charge of the household while the woman (wife) is suppose to take care of the children, make food for the man, and abide to the man without questioning him. Now, in my Spanish capstone class, I had to write a thesis I would defend at the end of the quarter. This paper was about an author named Carlos Ruiz Zafón who wrote many books such as *El juego del angel (The Angel's Game)*, *La sombra del viento (The Shadow of the Wind)*, y *Prisionero del cielo (The Prisoner of Heaven)* and many others. This thesis paper was my first big assignment in Spanish I had to do as an undergraduate student. For this reason I am proud of it because it really took so much effort for me to do a well written academic paper. As a person both of these writing assignments have made me think about myself as a writer and where I learned to share my experience about them, It really has helped me build up as a person and showed my accomplishments for making it far at a university. (Word 308)

I agree with Dr. Reeves (1997, 2006, 2012) in that writing serves as a means of shaping who we are by teaching us valuable lessons. For example, the paper I wrote in my Chicana class with Dr. Cristina Torres, I was able to see how much the traditional values of Mexican culture impacted women in the past. It was my understanding that the man was the person in charge of the household and the woman had no say. What I wrote then about the Mexican traditional views is not what I see now. Most of the views have changed, and women today seem to have a voice. Mexican women today can be seen as the most hard-working people in the orchards and in the home. The Spanish thesis paper I wrote as a last requirement for the capstone class has also shaped me into the person I am today. Writing the paper was a struggle throughout the process, but I found myself always trying my best no matter how many red marks I saw on my paper. Looking back at my journal, I want to clarify that there are people who would consider me to be proficient in my Spanish writing skills. However, growing up, I never learned to write in Spanish. I had to learn on my own through the way the words sounded in Spanish. I am proud to say my writing always helps me understand lessons about never giving up even when I might see red

marks on my paper. Instead, I learn to develop as a writer, and hope to use both of my languages to demonstrate my bilingualism.

Artifact 18

Artifact 18 was an in-class assignment for the purpose of creating sentences without leaving any fragments and correcting any errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling. This assignment was created by Dr. Reeves who used the song “A House is a Home,” crediting the songwriters, mother and son—Ellen Harper and Ben Harper. After making sure it was all complete, we were asked to write a letter, a song, a poem, or a memoir about what a house is to us or a specific house we have lived in or want to live in one day. I decided to try writing a poem describing what I my house means to me.

7.1. A →

"A House Is A Home"

Credits: Ben Harper

Original Artist: Ben & Ellen Harper

Name Brenda Aguilar date 05/13/14got to
have to

Objective: Punctuate this song. Create sentences & capitalize. Don't leave any fragments. Correct any errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Leave the reductions/vernacular, but write the full form above each reduction.

a house is a home, even when it's dark,

even when the grass is overgrown in the yard,

even when the dog is too old to bark,

and when you're sitting at the table trying not to starve.

a house is a home, even when there's ghosts,

even when you ^{have to} gotta run from the ones who love you most.

The screen door's broken, paint's peeling from the wood

locals whisper, when they ^{are} gonna ^{going to} leave the neighborhood.

a house is a home, where the chores are never done,

where you spend your whole life running to and from,

and if the life that you live is not the life you choose,

make your child a home and start anew

a house is a home even when we've up and gone, and

even when you're there alone

a house is a home.

Journal 7.1. a. On the back, write a letter, a song, a poem, or memoir about what a house is to you or about a specific house you have lived in or want to live in someday. (Listen to the world premiere of "A House Is a Home" at Rolling Stone.)

Brenda Aguilar May 13, 2014 “A House is a Home”
 Poem: My House is a Home of Memories

A house is a home full of memories
 The memories where all are stored
 It is the home where I share all the experiences I had growing up
 It was a home that was filled with many emotions
 It is a place where I am at peace
 It was a place where I shared my happiness and sadness with my family
 It is my house that witnessed every step I took
 The place where there was the smell of Mexican food my mom cooked each day
 A home filled with Spanish music from Los Bukis, Los Temerarios, Selena, Banda Machos, Los Angeles Azules and many more
 The home I cherish where I appreciate the Mexican traditions I hold dear to me
 From *Día de los muertos* (Day of the Dead), *Las Posadas* (“The Inns” also known as the nine days before Christmas), and la *Independencia de México* (*Mexico’s Independence Day*)
 I love my home
 Wherever I go, I know home will always be there
 My home with all the memories

This poem called “My House is a Home of Memories” means a lot to who I am. It is a poem describing my home, the place where I belong. For me, I honor my Mexican American heritage and languages. Through this poem, I am also honoring my parents by talking about the music, food, and celebrations they have taught me. I find it important for those who read my written work to get a sense of where I am coming from and hope others will do the same.

Artifact 19

This lesson was created by Dr. Reeves to demonstrate how teachers must supplement texts they are teaching and include the postmodern concept of multivocality—many voices that tell stories not often heard. This written letter to Fumiko was to describe our feelings towards the Japanese internment camps. The video was from History.com and was about the relocation of Japanese Americans into internment camps. It was a shocking and learning experience to understand what was going on in the United States after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. This is a simulated—one not really sent to Fumiko—but one that sets a personal connection to this woman who was evacuated from Bainbridge Island, explaining my thoughts about the whole situation.

English 564

Dr. Reeves

Response to a video we watched in class about Japanese internment camps.

Dear Fumiko,

Watching the video of what happened in the spring of 1942 was very shocking to me. The reason is that in school we don't hear much of the internment camps where Japanese people were taken. It was shocking and sad for me to see how many Japanese Americans were moved away from their homes after the bombing on Pearl Harbor and relocated into internment camps. The reason for it was of "National Security". This makes me very upset because that should have never happened it was a bad move in part of the United States President. I feel empowered by the way you bring your experience into light because as people everyone should know what happened, so it doesn't occur again. This is what I would want more high school history classes to teach. I don't want to just hear the United State's version of history, but it is also important to know about what others thought about the events that occurred between the U.S. and other countries. For example, I always heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, yet I never heard about the many Japanese Americans who were taken to internment camps and the conditions of it. Allowing students to hear about other events that are never mentioned in history classes makes it more engaging and new. I'm happy you shared your story, and I am sorry for what happened. Hope such unfairness does not happen again in the future to anyone.

Sincerely,

Brenda Aguilar

The letter I wrote for this class is beneficial as a type of writing to use in class. I find there is a closer connection and the feelings are meaningful. Reading through my letter, I thought back to when I learned from Dr. Reeves about the master narratives such as those we are taught through American history books. It is also essential to hear other voices that can tell us about those events by using different resources out there. This would include videos, audios, or even photographs as ways of getting an idea of what happened in the past. Perhaps history can show us to not make the same mistake again.

Artifact 20

The following was written after watching a short video from CBS News about David who meets his mother from the Yanomama village for the first time after many years being raised by a single father in the United States. His mother Yurima had lived in the United States before she decided to go back to her village, leaving her son David and never came back for him. Through my journal I explain my thoughts about the situation and explain how this story is very inspirational.

Brenda Aguilar
 May 27, 2014
 English 564 5-minute, in-class journal

Journal 9.1: From –amazon-to-garden-state-a-mother-and-sons-extraordinary-journey
 By Steve Hartman CBS News *May 9, 2014*

It was a fascinating and powerful story about David meeting his mother who had left him behind long ago because she just couldn't live in the United States anymore. For David's mother it was totally different than what she was used to in the Yanomama village. This caused a lot of anger in David thinking his mom just abandoned him without coming back. I can imagine how David must have felt at a young age, yet at the same time it must not have been easy for David's mom Yurima to leave him behind. The mother might of thought it would be to risky if she took David as a boy. There might have been many reasons for her to have left and never come back to see him. However, I'm glad that in the end David was able to overcome his hatred and to understand more about the Yanomama village. Watching and reading about David's experience was very shocking, especially, the reaction to the Jeep car the mom had thinking it was an animal. Overall, the message was powerful and made me think of my mother. As David said," A mom's a mom, no matter what" (CBS News, 2014, p.2). For me, my mother has been there all the time when I needed her help or someone to talk too. I'm glad I was able to find a connection to David's message. (Words 234)

At first when I wrote this journal, I kept positioning myself in David's place and I thought about the idea of my mother abandoning me. For me, it would have been really hard at the beginning, but I would come to understand my mother's reasons. I am sure David's mother, Yurima, had her reasons, and it must have been painful to leave him behind. I compare this situation to my mother who had to leave *mi hermano Ismael* in *México* when she was coming to *el Norte*. *Mi madre* did not want *mi hermano* to be in danger since my paternal grandparents had told her it would be her fault if anything happened to him. When *mi madre* was in Washington, she recalls the pain she felt for leaving *Ismael* behind. It was after when *mi hermano* came with us to *el Norte* where it was difficult for him to adjust at the beginning, but soon enough adapted to his surrounding. In all, I would have to agree with David's statement about a mother being a mother in regardless of anything. I appreciate the love and care *mi madre* has given all of us in the family. A *madre* is someone who will always love her children no matter where she is. Watching this video and writing about it helped me gain insight about my own mother and increase my empathy for her as a parent who also had to leave a child behind for years.

Artifact 21

This journal was in response to Kayla's question on stereotypes. She was a classmate who asked as to write about five minutes on a time we were labeled due to our behavior or who we were. For my response, I wanted to write about how even within the Mexican American community labels exist. My focus was to describe how Mexican American teens are looked upon, making it seem as if being a girl is the worst. I grew up during a time where there was a belief that girls would end up pregnant and school dropouts. It created the norm of girls ending up with no career, and would it end up working in the apple orchards. It was my response to talk about what this meant to me and to break free from the negative perception of young girls.

Brenda Aguilar
 Dr. Reeves
 May 29, 2014
 English 564

Journal 9.2B Kayla's Question Response: Stereotypes

I have faced and still face time-to-time common stereotypes about Mexican girls. As a Mexican American girl, I would be told or be warned that I should not be like the rest of the many Mexican American girls who get pregnant at such a young age. There was the idea that after a girl got pregnant the boyfriend would leave her with the child and never take any responsibility as the father. This created such a big stereotypical norm for young Mexican American girls where they couldn't dream on getting a higher education or finding a well-paid job. What it meant is the young girl would drop out of school and take care of her child and work in the apple orchard fields. To see this and hear this quite often made me very upset and at the same time motivated. Perhaps the people in my community had no bad intention, yet the perception they had was not nice. To me this meant breaking those stereotypes. It meant to strive and go on to a university to follow my dreams. I wanted to be an example to many other young Mexican girls that we can become someone in life. To have the option of becoming a teacher, a nurse, dental hygienist, lawyer, etc. It is important to not fall and not allow people's perceptions to bring young Mexican American girls down. (Words 232)

When I wrote this journal, it was going back to the perceptions the Mexican American community had on high school girls. Today these perceptions are not there anymore, where most teens are going of to college and looking for better jobs. I find the *padres* support of their children's' education as a motivation for them to want to succeed. Especially, to see the hard work parent's do in the orchards to provide them with what they need. For me, not only did I want to break free from the stereotypes, but also it was my determination to be successful is

thanks to *mis padres* hard work. People should never conform to the stereotypes, but to follow our own path.

Artifact 22

The purpose of this journal was to explain how we write most of the time. For instance, I write both in print and cursive depending who I am writing to. However, this journal was in regards to my cursive writing after watching a short video clip. The video was about whether or not cursive writing is important and if it should be something students should learn. The following is my experience learning cursive in kindergarten and how it helped me with my writing.

Brenda Aguilar
June 3, 2014
Journal 10.1. A Cursive Writing

Prompt: Write a 100- word + journal explaining

1. How you write most of the time—on what occasions you use cursive if any
2. How well you read cursive—any challenges
3. Why anyone might need to be able to read cursive
4. What you think about the teaching of cursive or some other option/snot mentioned in the broadcast

Writing in cursive will depend on the class and for what purpose. I pay a lot of attention on who will be reading my paper now. Growing up, I remember writing in cursive and print both at the same time. It made writing down notes easier in class where I wouldn't miss any important information. Especially, in my history and government class I was always taking down notes as fast as I could because the teacher didn't write the notes up on the white board. The teacher had us listen carefully and write it down so when he called on someone the student would know the answer/s. Now as a graduate student, I remember learning how not all students could read cursive and I became aware that I needed to make sure to write in print when there was someone who was going to read my journal. I realized not everyone was taught cursive and I feel it's important to let students be aware about cursive writing. To have cursive writing as different style students can use to help them with their signature when signing papers or to write down notes fast and efficiently. Personally, I love writing in cursive when I can since it defines a little about who I am. It brings back memories of when I first started to learn cursive in kindergarten and I was so thrilled and excited to learn how to write both in print and cursive. It is a written skill I don't want to stop using. (Words 254)

As my journal explains, I enjoy writing cursive when I can, but I also learned to be careful when I use it. When I was in high school and as a graduate student, I used cursive writing since it was easier to write down notes. It is also great to have since there are times when we are asked to write our signature on a document. For that reason more students should be taught to write in

cursive, so they have some awareness. However, I also learned in one of my graduate courses that not everyone knows how to read cursive. It was then when I had to consider the students who are coming from a different country who might not understand cursive writing. All I want though is for students to be proud of their style of writing because I know everyone has their own unique way of writing words.

Artifact 23

In class, we read a Krio proverb where I related it to my family back home. The proverb has deep a valuable lesson about the family unity. During this time when I wrote my journal, I kept thinking about my family I hardly visit. I did talk to them over the phone, but it was not the same as when I am at home speaking to them. Moreover, I know not everything might be perfect in the family, but we value one another. The proverb inspired me to share those particular moments when we may have misunderstanding and how we overcome them.

Brenda Aguilar

June 5, 2014

Journal 10.2 Proverb Tree

“The family tree may bend, but it never breaks. (*Krio proverb – Sierra Leone*)

This proverb stood out for me the most since I miss my family back home. What the proverb means to me is that even though we might have problems with our family we always stick together. This relates a lot to me because when I go home there is always something we discuss about and at times some situations go the wrong way. For example, both of my parents work and hardly have time to rest at home and I feel because they both work they forget about how they both have different issues to deal with at work. Somehow when they try to communicate with each other their can be a misunderstanding and I try my best to let them understand how the problems at work should be let at work and not brought up at home. This allows both of them to realize how much more damage it can cause to the rest of the family members. If they need to talk then we all talk and have our input in how to deal with the situations because as a family we help each other. We can't always be angry or let little things bother us because at the end of the day we still love each other. I guess that is how life works. Things happen. (Words 219)

I believe there are certain situations that will come up in the family where we must face together.

I have experienced them in the family where I found *mis padres* get home frustrated, yet we cannot let those issues be brought at home. As a family I have come to learn we must seek for

advice or support if issues at work are bothering us. The best way is to talk it through in such a manner where no one ends being misunderstood. Family to me is not about falling apart; it is about being able to work out our problems together. After all, *mis padres* told my siblings and me about never letting ourselves be full of anger. Sometimes we will have our ups and down, but we must get past them through peaceful discussion and cooperation.

Fall 2014

English 581 Second Language Curriculum Design and Assessment

During the fall quarter of 2014, I took two courses, but I want to focus on only the Second Language Curriculum Design and Assessment class. I find this class very significant to me due to the fact that we had to design a ten-week curriculum for EWU's English 112: Composition for Multilingual Writers. The curriculum had many requirements and a certain format to follow, which I took hours of dedication to complete. The literature focus unit on the biography I chose was *Marian Wright Edelman: The Making of a Crusader* by Beatrice Siegel. The book is about Marian's lifetime from 1939-1990, including the days of the Civil Rights Movement. The themes presented in the book are education, segregation, equal rights, poverty, hunger/starvation, children rights, courage, strength and violence/racism. Through the course, we were always learning about different ways to engage students in classroom activities. The in-class activities were examples I could use as ideas for my curriculum.

Artifact 24

The following, is an example of the handout I created as a study guide for chapter one and two from the book *Marian Wright Edelman: The Making of a Crusader*. In the process of coming up with the possible questions, I made sure they were relative to what the students would be learning about Marian Wright.

The student will be handed the Study Guide as a resource for the chapter overview.

Chapter 1 & 2 Study Guide: A Call to Action, & Childhood
ENGL112/564 Aguilar

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Put the page numbers where you found the answers in MLA style. Answers must all be in complete sentences. Do not just copy from the book. Place this sheet on the top of your typed assignment. Late work will not be accepted. This is due on Thursday of this week.

This is the kind of question you will see on the exam, so study and think as you write these answers. Don't just copy. Read the questions carefully. If time permits, go over these questions with your intern in your group today or with your professor.

1. Who is Marian Wright Edelman? What is she known for?
2. Explain what Marian meant by this statement:

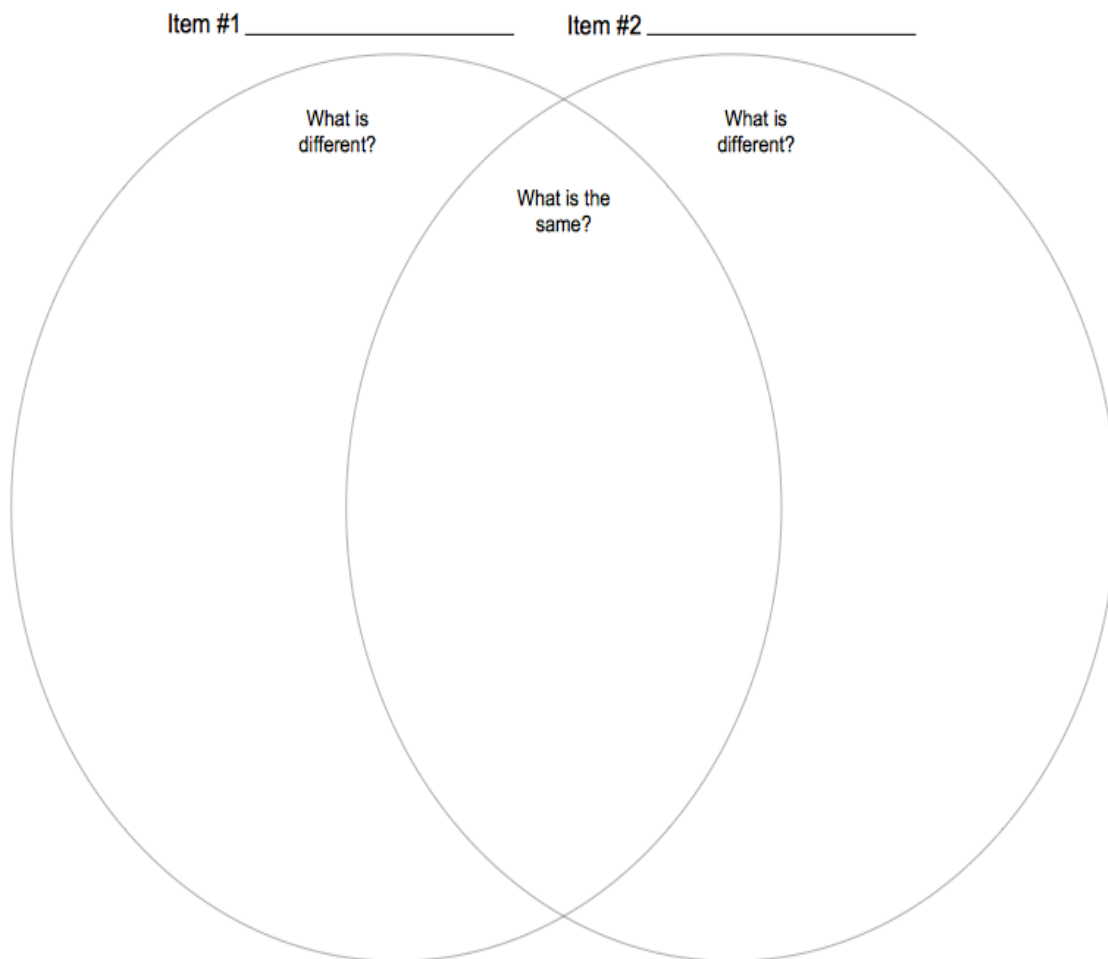
“We have come a long way in the African-American community,” she said, but we now face “the worst crisis since slavery.” (P9)
3. What were the issues the children encountered? In your opinion, what problems still exists today?
4. From 1-4 which of the following issue would you consider the worst: violence, guns, drugs, and teenage pregnancy. (Make sure you explain why.)
5. In the book, Marian talks about caring for our children by being involved as parents. In your opinion, why do you think is it important that we show we care for our children? What would you do? How would you help?
6. Read the following passage:

O God of children of destiny and of despair, of war and of peace,
Of disfigured, diseased, and dying children,
Of children without hope and of children with hope to spare and to share,
Help us to love and respect and protect them all. (p. 11)

 - a) Take one of the lines and in 100 words explain what it means to you. Why is that line important to you?
7. Where did Marian grow up? What was the place like
 - a. Also, draw how the place looked like and illustrate 4 things you remember.
8. What is the meaning of *segregation*? Create your own sentence using the word.
9. From what places were African Americans segregated?
10. Describe Reverend Arthur J. Wright. Who was he?
 - a. Describe someone in your family who is strong about helping others and who believes anger is not the way to handle issues.

11. Compare and Contrast the white residents and the African American residents using the graphic organizer.²

Compare and Contrast



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The objective of the study guide was to reinforce what the students had been learning in the first two weeks. An aid in helping them be prepared for the exam on the Friday. The handout would be given ahead of time in order to give students the day before the test to ask any questions they might have. The study guide would serve as a way for the students to give me feedback on

² Credit to Education Oasis: May only be used for classroom purposes.

whether it helped them prepare for the test. As a future teacher, I can say the curriculum project has prepared me about what it is like to plan out lessons to best help the students with their learning. Moreover, I know I can adapt to these lessons, and they will be a great resource for other future teaching jobs.

Artifact 25

The Angel's Game (El juego del angel) by Carlos Ruiz Zafón is a book I read in Spanish over the summer. This book is part of a trilogy about a man who gets an offer by a stranger, but that comes at a great price. It is a mystery one is trying to solve, but when the reader thinks he or she has found an answer more questions arise. This journal is on why this book was very engaging for me, and it includes a few challenges I had with reading this book.

Brenda Aguilar
 October 7, 2014
 English 581: *The Angel's Game*

El juego del angel, a book written by Carlos Ruiz Zafón, is one of my favorite readings. All the books I have read from Zafón have been very interesting and I don't regret reading them. They have a lot of mystery and suspense where one is kept on their toes. You might think you know the answer, but the author keeps you guessing until the end. However, I will also mention how it was also difficult for me to grasp at some points. What made it difficult was how I am not used to Spain Spanish where most of the words used were academic or unfamiliar to me. Yet, I was still able to understand the meaning by the context. Another issue was that some of the words used in his writing are Spanish words that were used in the past and are not so common today. Through the reading, I enjoyed his gothic style of writing where some of the settings he portrayed are from back in the day. It was mostly related to the old Spain. As I mentioned before, the book is very mysterious and dark. The reader would have no trouble getting into the story because of the details. I would say that if anyone were trying to find a book in Spanish, Carlos Ruiz Zafón would be a good choice.

Reading my journal once again, I recall my language learning in Spanish. Most people would think I am proficient in Spanish and would have never thought I had any difficulty in the language I grew speaking with. However, I learned to speak the Mexican Spanish, not the Spanish used in Spain. I also never learned to write properly in Spanish where I had to learn on my own because I recognized the letter sounds. Reading this book, I also found challenges since I was not used to some of the words used in Spain. They were words I had never heard before, so I

had to figure out the meaning by looking at the context. In addition, there were a few words that are not common today, so I had to get used to the writing. As a bilingual person, there are a few words and writing structures I still need to acquire.

Winter 2015

English 560 Applied Linguistics

In the winter quarter, I took the Applied Linguistics class where I learned about phonology, morphology, syntax, and the diverse aspects of applied linguistics such as World Englishes, language standards, contrastive rhetoric, and language and politics. In class we took a look at the American Phonetic Alphabet (APA) and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) where the class was to understand where we had to figure out which symbol represented what sound. For example, the symbol ʃ (j) can be seen in shed, sure, mission, facial, nation, fish and ash. This is what we would have to learn and study, making it somewhat challenging for me since there were many symbols to remember.

Another topic, I remember talking about is World Englishes— a term used to talk about the emerging varieties of English that have been developed in certain places influenced by the United States or the United Kingdom. It was interesting to have a conversation along with this on the idea that there is no one correct way of speaking English. Dr. Tracey McHenry emphasized that the language today has been going through constant change, and there is also the need for ESL teachers to realize that it is not the only language the students are speaking. There are many more students who are growing up speaking two or more languages a varieties of English different from American English.

English 575 Contemporary Rhetorical Theories

In the same quarter, I was also enrolled in the For the Contemporary Rhetorical Theories class. Our professor was having us read various articles from different contemporary rhetorical theorist (e.g. Michael Foucault, Lloyd F. Bitzer, Kenneth Burke) where the class had to recognize

and apply to a case on a Podcast channel called *Serial*, a show produced and hosted by Sarah Koenig talking about legal cases and getting to the bottom of them. The case we were listening to was about Adnan Syed who was arrested for the murder of Baltimore high school student, Hae Min Lee. Koenig brought up many questions about the inconsistencies of Adnan's case, and the listener will wonder who the real killer was. For me this made everything more engaging along with using the theories we learned. For example, Bitzer's theory deals with the approach of altering reality. Through his theory, I was able to relate it to the case, which in one episode the Koenig talks about Jay's interrogation where he speaks of being Adnan's accomplice in burying Lee's body. For me this meant altering reality since it is hard to believe Jay, who kept changing the events that happened. This course as a whole was very interactive, and each person had something to share and we would discuss questions together.

Artifact 26

Another memorable moment in this class was the presentation we had to do close to the end of the course. Each person was to decide on a theorist to present on and I chose to do mine on Gloria E. Anzaldúa. It was in my interest to present about her since we both are bilingual Mexican American woman. Using PowerPoint, I presented about her and focused on her contributions to theory. The following are just two of the slides I created for my presentation.



My PowerPoint of Gloria E. Anzaldúa used in my Introduction slide. 2015



A PowerPoint collage slide with all of Anzaldúa's published books and contributions (Aguilar, 2015)

The main focus of the presentation was on her book *Borderlands* (1987), sharing with the class her thoughts on culture and language. There is a particular chapter called, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” where she talks about her experience with using her Spanish language in school. She remembers being told to go back to *México* if she didn’t like speaking American. Moreover, there were speech classes students had to take for the purpose of getting rid of their accent. For me, this was something I was able to connect in the way that there was a moment in my life where the school was enforcing an English-only policy. This happened when I was in high school where we were not allowed to speak any Spanish, even if it meant to have a conversation with our friends or to ask a question. Growing up, I learned to go back in forth with both languages with my friends, and never did I think there was anything wrong with speaking both of our languages. It became frustrating when we were not allowed, but it did not last too long before it changed, and we were once again allowed to use Spanish. Washington is an English-Plus state, so most would be surprised to see such policies in public schools (Reeves, 2005). To this day, I will never know why the school did that. It was for this reason possibly that Anzaldúa believes in the value of using our languages that belong to us as individuals. The value of my bilingualism is something I shared with the class and they understood saying how they too wish they were able to speak two languages. Alongside, was the feeling about how I transition to both languages depending on the people whom I talk to, including being at home. It is at home where I usually use Spanish to communicate with my parents. Through my research and reading *Borderlands* about Gloria E. Anzaldúa, I was able to come to think about using her as a resource for my thesis. It was important for me since she focused on the concepts of culture and language.

Artifact 27

After reading *Borderlands*, I took a quote from one of the pages and I decided to journal for about 5 minutes. Anzaldúa’s quote about not losing touch with her roots inspired me to write about not forgetting my roots.

Quote

“Yet in leaving home I did not lose touch with my origins because lo mexicano is in my system. I am a turtle, whenever I go I carry “home” on my back.” (Anzaldúa 18)

Brenda’s Journal

My home language

Olvidar mi lenguaje is to say I’ve forgotten where I come from. Hablar en español is important since it is the first language I heard from *mis padres* (my parents) when I was growing up. My Spanish language defines who I am as a person, *una persona* (a person) who is American *pero de linaje Mexicano* (but of Mexican descent). I am a Mexican American woman, who values her language and is not *avergonzada* (ashamed) to hide her language or where she comes from. Therefore, when people ask me if I speak Spanish, I answer with pride and will sometimes teach people a few words. The most important moments for me are when I speak to my *familia* (my family). It is always interesting to add some English phrases such as “What are you doing?” or “What are you eating?” because I know they will understand. They both will normally respond back with little English and all Spanish. However, it makes me feel more at ease to communicate with my parents in our language, making me feel at home. After all, this is how we communicate *nuestros problemas y nuestra felicidad* (our problems and our happiness) at home to one another. It is the Spanish language used to talk to our *tios/tias y primos/primas* (uncles/aunts and cousins) when we have family gatherings.

Conversations where they always end up of “*Te acuerdas cuando estábamos en México ...*”, “*Nosotros sufrimos más cuando eramos niños...*” or “*Cuanto a cambiado el pueblo y las calles...*” (“*When we were kids...*”, *we went through so much...*,” or “*Look how much the town and streets have changed...*”). Whenever I hear my parents and my relatives talk about their memories of *México*, I always have these painted images in my head. They always keep me wanting to know more about their past as young teens. I am able to appreciate everything my *familia* has done for me and for the encouragement for me to do better. Who would I be if I did not have my Mexican language to tell my experiences *cuando era joven* (when I was young) and as an adult, to talk about *mi familia* and share their stories, and most importantly to share what I have learned through their experiences. I would definitely be lost without my language; it is like denying my existence as a person. My home language *siempre será parte de mi y siempre estará conmigo* (will always be part of me and will always be with me).

During the TriTESOL conference at Highline Community College, I presented on the retention of the heritage culture and language through the use of autoethnography. Adriana Sanchez (20016) and I presented together where we both share pieces of our journals, and this journal was one of them. Moreover, it was to highlight Gloria Anzaldúa’s contributions to our understanding of the gifts of bilingualism. In this journal I weave both Spanish and English into my writing as a way to communicate to my reader that I acknowledge both of languages. Through this journal, I also

honor my families who have been there teaching us valuable lessons. It is my believe people should write in both of their languages as a way to keep in touch with their origins.

Fall 2015

English 580 Second Language Acquisition

Being back fall quarter felt was a fresh start and great to know I would only have one more course to complete before I could graduate. However, I didn't know how my job and being enrolled in two classes would take a lot of my time from concentrating on my thesis. I hardly had any time, where I was constantly reading pages of articles, textbooks, and other resources online. Nonetheless, going back to the class I was enrolled in Second Language Acquisition, I will admit my success in getting through the class. This class really helped me learn about the process of acquiring a second language and knowing that not all will attain the target language the same way. I can say this for myself since I grew up bilingual—at home I learned Spanish and at school I learned English. It was a mix of both languages as soon as I stepped into the community where some already spoke both languages.

Through the course we used three textbooks, but one that stood out to me the most was Mary Pipher's book called *The middle of everywhere: Helping refugees enter the American* (2002). In her book, she talks about the experiences refugees face in the United States. Specifically, she writes about refugees in Nebraska. Pipher describes how most refugees come to the United States without knowing anyone and are here due to wars/ violence in their country. For this reason, Pipher stresses on the importance of cultural brokers to be there to guide them through the resources available to them.

Pipher also lists twelve attributes of resilience in her book, which I think are important to look at. Dr. LaVona Reeves also, wrote about these attributes in her article, "Pipher's Attributes of Newcomers' Resilience." In her article, she highlights that even though "Pipher's multiple case study deals primarily with refugees, the traits of resilience would apply to other populations as well, even those who are here temporarily (Reeves, 2005, p.1). These traits include: 1) future

orientation; 2) energy and good health; 3) the ability to pay attention; 4) ambition and initiative; 5) verbal expressiveness; 6) positive mental health; 7) the ability to calm down; 8) flexibility; 9) intentionality or being thoughtful about choices; 10) lovability; 11) the ability to love new people; and 12) good moral character. They are attributes that all can work on cultivating in coping with struggles and move beyond them.

We also had the opportunity to do a presentation in the class with a partner who we had never worked before. For me this was a great opportunity to meet someone new and get to work with someone who could teach me something new. We both presented on Chapter twelve titled, "Building a Village of Kindness." In this chapter you get a sense of the refugees as being energetic, positive, and with good manners. For example, "They don't tell us they don't have money for dinner, for their kids, or a bus ride to the doctor" (p. 327). There is also the show of family loyalty and the loyalty amongst the ethnic communities. An example of family loyalty is how several "adults work two jobs so that they can send one paycheck to the old country to support family there" (p. 328). The loyalty amongst the ethnic communities is seen where the individuals "help each other by sharing food, clothes, and housing" (p. 328). The communities who share the same experience are able to relate to newcomers who have just arrived so they want to help them out.

Artifact 28

At the end of the presentations, there was a journal prompt for the class to do a short quick write.

The question was, in what ways can locals learn from newcomers? The following is my own personal journal answering the question.

Today most people don't know much about refugees and their transition to a new country where they learn and adjust to a new culture. Most refugees come from places where there is war, violence, rape, and other traumatic experiences and must seek refuge in a different country (in this case the United States). However, there some people who don't understand the pain they have gone through and are still able to move on. They are able to find a job to save money and send back to their loves ones, they want to learn to progress in life, they work to provide their child/children so he or she can go to school, and are humble. After reading the book and listening to stories of those who have worked with refugees it came to my mind how many locals can learn from newcomers. They can help each other learn from one another's culture, the language, and

their experiences. They can learn about being able to stay calm with a positive mind to overcome struggles. There is also the lovability of helping one another in the community because they know what it feels like to have to go deal with war-torn countries. Especially, it helps us get rid of these negative ideas about refugees who think they are here to take jobs or who don't pay anything because it is not true. Even local teachers can learn from newcomers within the community to better assist them with their learning. In all, being aware of refugees is something for people to learn more about and act as a cultural broker who can aid them in a place that is new to them, which I am sure refugees would appreciate a lot.

At the beginning of the course, I did not know much about refugees until I read the book *The middle of everywhere: Helping refugees enter the American* (2003). It was the first book I ever read about refugees in America and learned how much they can teach Americans. I know there will be a time when I will work with refugee students, and I want to make sure I do my best in helping them transition to the United States. As a teacher, I would want to make sure I provide the students with a safe environment since most refugees come from war torn areas. Most teachers would not know about this unless they tried to get to know their students. Students will not tell you what they have been through, and for that one must be a good listener in order to help them. It would be an opportunity to work with refugees, and I would benefit from their lived experiences.

Artifact 29

The following artifact was written in my English 580 where we had to recall back to when we were read as a child, memories of learning to read, memories of learning to write, and memories of learning to speak and listen. I will provide my thoughts and discoveries I did not see before at the end of this artifact.

Brenda Aguilar
2015/12/10
Dr. LaVona Reeves
ENGL 580: Second Language Acquisition
Literacy Narrative: Family Story
Memories of Being Read to as a Child

I grew up in Desert Aire, in a predominantly Mexican neighborhood where everyone knew everyone. As a child, I was never read nursery rhymes or children stories. What I remember most is being read small passages from the Catholic bible in Spanish or from the first communion

booklet. Most of the time, the only stories I would hear were the ones from my mother's living experience in México and the struggles she and her family lived through. It was always at nighttime, when my mom would tell her stories to my brother and me while we slowly drifted away in our sleep. Listening to true events about my mother's past were powerful and significant because you learn to be grateful for what one has and the value of one's parents for giving their children the best. These stories will always be part of me, and the ones I remember the most. During my early school years is when I actually came across a book I could physically pick up and read. The most enjoyable books were from Dr. Seuss. Why, you might ask. Well they had many rhymes making it very fun to read. From then on, books had a lot of meaning up until I started middle school because everything was all about preparing for the state test called the WASL. Occasionally, I would start reading, but it got more complicated and busy.

Memories of Learning to Read

My first few years in school were spent reading books in a classroom at a rural school where majority were Latinos. It was at this point, where learning to read was very fun and as a kid, I would pick up a favorite book and began reading away through each adventurous page. These books were from *Dr. Seuss*, the *Rainbow Fish*, *Madeline*, the adventures of *The Bailey School Kids*, etc. When I got to 3rd grade up to 6th grade, I recall beginning to read books like the *Boxcar Children* collection, the *Nancy Drew* collection, and from the *Lurlene McDaniel* collection, and more. Most of these books had a very mysterious story and really enjoyed them very much. What was great about this time is I had the chance to read books I really wanted to read without having my teacher's say you need to read this. After a certain grade, students were required to be well prepared for the WASL state test. It was during this time where the focus was more on the appropriate subjects students would be tested on such as writing, math and so forth. Reading at this time changed too because it was the teacher's who were in charge to provide students with small passages to answer a few questions. Then school and reading became a little more disappointing and unenjoyably.

Memories of Learning to Write

In kindergarten school, the teacher had our class start by learning to write the alphabet letters in print and in cursive. Cursive writing at that time was very important for students to master since it was a great skill to have even though as a young child it is somewhat difficult. I do not regret learning to write in cursive, I am actually thankful to have learned cursive because it has helped me today with my writing in taking down notes. Cursive writing is helpful. My second year up to my third year in school students were to learn to create short sentences about what was learned in class. The idea was to learn to create complete sentences by the end of the school year. Writing was more enjoyable when the holidays came around since the activities were more art based and would have to write to the people the art was created for. For example creating short paragraph for the Thanksgiving cards all our class created for our parents. This was also done when it came around Christmas and Mother's day and Father's day. This to me was very fun and interesting because it involved both creativity and writing. Most students now a days enjoy this kind of activity where teachers can use both ideas into activities where students are able to show their art skills too. After those years, writing transitioned from paragraphs to learning to write essay papers for different purposes. In other words, I learned to write through the different modes of discourse, which I really wish my high school had better prepared us for college. Writing really got very displeasing when it came to writing for the purpose of passing the state test, the WASL. Writing for the solely purpose for the WASL had no meaning to me. I wanted writing to mean more where it had a purpose to learn and want students to write across different styles.

Memories of Learning to Speak and Listen

Growing up, I found speaking and listening very important in order for me to get the message across to my parents. The language I had to pay attention was Spanish so I could communicate to my parents. After all, it was the first language to hear up until three and a half years old. Speaking and listening have always been important, especially, because being raised within the Mexican culture, I always had to pay attention to what I was going to say. There was the idea of respect where we had to respect those who were older or those with the authority such as the teacher in school. The respect I carry with me today is what makes me who I am and wherever I am I consider those around me. Now, listening and speaking the English at school was more important since our class would be asked questions in class and sometimes we had to interact with the other students in my class. Communication was key in working in groups and creating presentations where each person had to report to each other and work as a team. It was a way for us to work on our speaking and listening skills so there would not be any misunderstanding. Let me end, with an important note, listening and speaking skills require a lot of practice in order to improve on these skill. If one is not able to use there speaking and listening skills then it is very hard to get any message across to the person who one is talking to.

Looking back, I discover that it is mostly based on when I was growing up acquiring my language and skills in knowing how to write and read. I learned my Spanish language through *mi madre* who was there to tell us her stories back when she was in *México* and from reading to us from the Catholic bible. The English language was not difficult for me to pick up at school where I was able to learn how to write in sentences. Growing up, I did not know was how to write in *español* properly since *mi padres* never taught my siblings or me, making it somewhat sad for me because I remember wanting to write in *español*. When I got older, I slowly learned to write on my own by writing the words the way they sounded in *español*. To me when I look back this artifact, I can say that I wish I had learned how to write in *español* at a young age. However, I also understand *mis padres* were busy working to provide my siblings and I with the best.

Culture Paper Response: Retention of Cultural Values

For the course, everyone was required to do two major assignments: (1) an interview someone who spoke another language and ask them questions about how they acquired both languages while connecting it to the literature on the topic. It also included asking other questions relating to issues such as their learning in the public school whether that was in the

United States or in a different country. The paper had many components such as a place for the acknowledgements, the abstract, the introduction, the purpose, the researcher's assumptions prior to the interview, the research questions, the review of literature, the research methods, the interview/dialogue, the data collection, the data analysis, the discussion and reflection, and conclusion. The second assignment was called the culture paper which is one I want to share the most in this chapter, since it talks about three components that connect me to my heritage: *Dia de los muertos* (Day of the Dead), *Las posadas* (Nativity re-enactment), and *la unidad de la familia* (family unity). They were important cultural values I remember the most growing up as a young girl. Going back to Pipher's (2003) book about the role of Americans and teachers being the cultural broker to newcomers made me think about how *mis padres* have been my cultural brokers. If it weren't for them I wouldn't have retained my heritage language and my cultural values. Who would I be?

Most of what will be in the following are taken out of my culture paper since I cannot include the entire document due to length constraints in the thesis. I begin by explaining a little about *Dia de los muertos* and *las posadas*. Both of these festivities will be celebrated differently across many Mexican American communities and may differ with the ones in *México*. In *México* both *las posadas* and *Dia de los muertos* is celebrated at large and there is more work put these festivities. For instance, the decorations will have be of bright lively colors with many candles and roses, as well as unique ornaments of where the event is taking place. The ones celebrated in the United States tend to be less elaborate, but the value of the festivity is what makes it more important than having many decorations. The festivities that are celebrated at home in the United States seem to be more personal where only the closest relatives will be there. However, the ones celebrated at church will have the whole community, which in most cases not everyone will know each other. This doesn't stop anyone from interacting with one another since they all have the same value and they share the same language. Every year, these two celebrations are filled with mixed emotions such as happiness, comfort, trust and unity. It is time where we come together to

cherish the memories we have been sharing together through the wonderful celebrations. In the following, I will then go in depth about *Día de los muertos*, *las posadas*, and finally *la unidad de la familia*.

Artifact 30

Día de los muertos

El Día de los muertos also known as the Day of the Dead is a tradition where people honor the dead who have passed on to the other life. As Sherry Rowan states, "It is a day set aside to remember and honor the dead by erecting altars to them in the home and at their grave (p. 238)". This celebration takes place every year on November 2, but some families will start the last week of October.

During this tradition, Rowan (2001) would agree that attitudes on death for Mexican have a different meaning. In other words, to honor the dead is not a moment to fear the dead, but rather it is a moment to recollect those happy memories one had with their loved one. For example, when I think of my cousin who died in a car accident, I always remember the respect and kindness he showed towards his family. The big smile he would express to the people around him, as he would start a conversation on how everything was going. In addition to the memories, there are songs involved played or sung by the family. From what I remember, these songs are the ones the deceased loved to listen or sing to. Although some songs will be related to death and how we will meet our loved ones again in the afterlife such as *Cruz de olvido*, *Nadie es eterno en el mundo*, and many other songs.

There are two ways of setting up: (1) going to their loved one's grave or (2) creating a personal altar at home. The altars consist of these offerings known as *ofrendas* (Marchi, 2011) to



honor the deceased with many of their treasured belongings. These altars vary in size and are filled with decorations and bright colors. Now, the altars involve placing *ofrendas* such as “*pan de muerto* (bread for the dead), salt, grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, coffee, soda pop, alcoholic beverages, special dishes (such as tamales or mole) mementos and photos of the departed, candles, and Catholic iconography (such as crucifixes and images of saints)” (Marchi, p. 108). *Pan de muerto*, bread covered in red colored sweetener and sometimes have a dead-looking figure, which is different from the common Mexican bread known as *pan de concha* (shell). In the following, you will see an image of an altar (Figure xx) with special *ofrendas* for the deceased and another photo of *pan de muerto* (Figure xx). The photo of the altar was taken at the *Día de los muertos* event hosted at Eastern Washington University, and the *pan de muerto* was taken back home freshly made by my mom’s friend.

Figure 6. Altar with special *ofrendas*: Photo taken at Day of the Dead Event on November 2, 2015.



Figure 7. *Pan de muerto* or bread for the dead made by my mom’s friend. (Brenda 2015)

On this day there are also beautiful flowers placed around the altars called, *cempasúchil*, or marigolds. These beautiful marigolds “are the traditional flower of the day” (Rowan p. 238). Even though *Día de los muertos* has a religious component, it is important to keep in mind that it has to do more with the retention of the Mexican heritage. It is through narrative literacies such as the following journal that we retain cultural values through sharing our written past-experiences.

Learning about *Día de los muertos* as a child

Día de los muertos or Day of the Dead is a celebration I always remember being explained to me as a young girl. I was always curious about what I would see, asking, “¿Amma que es eso?”,

“¿porque una ofrenda?”, “¿porque la comida si no se va comer?”, and “¿porque se ve el pan así?” (“Mom, what is that?”, “”why an offering?”, “why the food if it will not get eaten?”, and “why does the bread look like that?”). They were questions waiting to be answered in full detail so that I would be able to understand what was going on. Everything eventually became clear as it was celebrated each year inside our small home. When the day was approaching, my mom would plan and think about the perfect spot to create the altar. She would ask for my opinion on the perfect spot, yet she knew where she wanted the altar to be. When it came to the altar decorations, my mom would ask herself if she had enough money to get flowers, candles, and other embellishments. However, at the end of the day, she would say that the memories of our loved ones was the most important to keep in our hearts. With this in mind, she would have various photographs of our loved ones who had passed away on the altar. It might sound scary or sad, but this moment is filled with joy and loving memories of them when they were living. *El pan de muerto* or bread for the dead, delicious bread covered in a sweetener that looks like red sprinkles, is one of my favorite bread. This festivity is a special one to share with the family and with others. To have my parents is a gift where they can teach me a lot about our Mexican heritage and something I can teach others. If it weren't for them, I would have never understood the value of remembering our loved ones through the celebration of *Día de los muertos*. (Brenda 2015)

Las Posadas

Let me begin with my journal called *Las posadas*, where I include my personal experience with this amazing festivity.

Las posadas

If I had to share, a special custom in my Mexican American culture it would be *las posadas*. Ever since I was a young girl, this has always been part of my learning experience and the one I enjoy the most every year. When I went to *México*, I was about 7 years old, and it was there where I first experienced *las posada* within a very large community. It was so much different then the ones in my hometown Mattawa, Washington. As a young girl, in *México* in a new environment, I was very excited and filled with energy to learn about my surroundings and help out with everything. I was able to be part of the procession of *las posadas*, but my mom was there to explain to me what it was and what I should do. The purpose of *las posadas* is the reenactment of Joseph and Mary seeking for shelter leading to the birth of baby Jesus. It involves a long procession of many people with candles on their hands until they reach the church, which takes place at around 7 or 8 o'clock at night. I must say during this time, in the month of December it can get a little cold. You can only imagine having the cold freezing air as you are walking, yet a beautiful event. Once they arrive at the church, there will be dialogue and songs asking for shelter as they keep being denied. At the end of the procession, there is also a sale of food/beverages for the people to eat such as tamales, pozole, atole (Mexican warm drink), and other warm foods/ beverages. What makes this event very special is the interaction with the community, the sharing of this important event, along with the songs we join in one big choir. They are special songs only I can understand in Spanish because it is that familiar sound of what reminds me of home and my family. This so called home is every experience I remember growing-up to and that were taught to me by my parents. (Brenda 2015)

Las posadas or the nine-day celebration in many Mexican American communities is their own way of celebrating Christmas. *Las posadas* begin on December 16 and end on Christmas day, December 25. As Mary MacGregor-Villarreal describes, “The candlelight procession proceeds from one pre-designated house to another, where Joseph and Mary seek shelter”(p. 72). In other words, *las posadas* is a procession of the reenactment of when Joseph and Mary were seeking for shelter in Bethlehem, but were repeatedly turned away. Some *posadas* are celebrated within a larger group where the whole community participates at a Catholic Church, and other *posadas* are

“celebrated in private homes “ (pg. 72). Relatives, close friends or neighbors usually attend the ones celebrated in private homes. The ones celebrated in private homes are more personal where the families come together to pray and sing together. *Aguinaldos*, gift bags filled with cookies and candies are handed out to the people who are present. It is a tiny gift people and children enjoy, which is a way to give back to the people. It does not just end there, a small fiesta takes place, where people join in to have a warm meal and socialize. It is a moment for the family to give thanks for how far they have come and the unity that keeps the family strong.

As I mentioned earlier, I have had the opportunity to be part of *las posadas* within the Catholic Church in México and within private homes in my hometown in Washington. Both to me are always memorable, especially, the participation of the community or family. Having the community or family involved in the procession helping is a great feeling. It is feeling of peace and a moment where everyone joins to sing together. One of the songs I always remember is called, *En el nombre del cielo te pido posada*. This song consists of two dialogues going on, the person/people inside the home turning the seekers away and the person/people outside asking for shelter. In the following, you will see the lyrics to the song, which I have included the translation in English.

En el Nombre del Cielo Les Pido Posadas

***En el nombre del cielo
les pido posada,
pues no puede andar
mi esposa amada.***

Aquí no es mesón
sigan adelante,
yo no debo abrir,
no sea algún tunante.

***No sean inhumanos,
tengan caridad,
que el Dios de los cielos
se lo premiará.***

Ya se pueden ir
y no molestar
porque si me enfado
los voy a apalear.

***Venimos cansados
desde Nazaret,
yo soy carpintero
de nombre José.***

No me importa el nombre,
déjenme dormir,
porque ya les dije
que no he de abrir.

***In the name of heaven
I ask you for shelter,
for my beloved wife
can go no farther.***

This is not an inn
Get on with you,
I cannot open the door,
you might be a rogue.

***Do not be inhuman,
Show some charity,
God in heaven
will reward you.***

You may go now
and don't bother us anymore
because if I get angry
I will beat you.

***We are worn out
all the way from Nazareth,
I am a carpenter
named Joseph.***

Never mind your name,
Let me sleep,
I've already told you
We won't open the door.

*Posada te pide,
amado casero
por sólo una noche
la Reina del Cielo.*

Pues si es una Reina
quien lo solicita
¿Cómo es que de noche,
anda tan solita?

*Mi esposa es María.
Es Reina del Cielo,
y madre va a ser
del Divino Verbo.*

¿Eres tu José?
¿Tu esposa es María?
Entren, peregrinos,
no los conocía.

*Dios pague señores
su gran caridad,
y les colme el cielo
de felicidad.*

Entren santos peregrinos, peregrinos,
reciban esta mansión
que aunque es pobre la morada, la morada
se la doy de corazón.

Cantemos con alegría, alegría
todos al considerar
que Jesús, José, y María, y María,
Nos viene a visitar (x2)

*We request lodging,
dear innkeeper,
for only one night
for the Queen of Heaven.*

If she is a queen
who is asking
why is it that she's out at night,
wandering so alone

*My wife is Mary.
she is the Queen of Heaven,
she will be mother
to the Divine Word.*

Is that you Joseph?
Your wife is Mary?
Enter pilgrims
I didn't recognize you.

*May the Lord reward you
for your charity,
and may the sky be filled
with happiness.*

Enter holy pilgrims, pilgrims
receive this mansion
although it's a poor dwelling
I give with my heart.

Tonight is for joy,
for pleasure and rejoicing
for tonight we will give lodging
to the Mother of God the Son. (x2)

This is a song I know by memory and every time the month of December comes by, I connect it to this song. A song telling me of *las posadas* coming up soon, which I know it is a time to get ready to join my family back home. It is my family and community who I can go back to, my speech community that I can relate to. It is the language we can identify, the customs and the culture we carry with us.

La unidad de la familia

This brings my attention to the aspect of *la unidad de la familia* (family unity) in Mexican American families. In a study, Leslie Reese and her co-researchers interviewed Mexican immigrants where they talked about family values. One father who was interviewed recalled on “the respect he was taught at home by his parents as a ‘*bonita herencia*’ (‘beautiful inheritance’) which was given by his parents and which he is giving his own children” (p.459). Respect can also mean teaching ones child “to greet people when they enter a room, to give up their seat on a bus to an older person, ... and to obey their parents” (p.460). It is a way of keeping the values passed down to the next generation and what keeps the family together. This is why family is always there to help one another such as taking care of ones grandparents, parents, uncles/aunts,

and even those who are not related, but are trusted. One way my family stays connected is through family gatherings, where we will eat with whatever we have left and we will have long conversations on how the family from *México* is doing.

Melissa Morgan and Jasmin D. Llamas found in a study on Mexican American cultural values where they report “family as an important aspect” as a way to get through difficult times (p. 620). I can really connect to this where my family is there for me whenever I am going through a hard time at school. They are the ones who give me suggestions to help me make a choice when I must decide on job opportunities or money saving decisions. It is the family who I can count on no matter what the situation may be and the reason I am thankful for how much I have accomplished. It is this togetherness or bond we have learned to survive in this world, as opposed to fighting the struggles alone. This can also be *familismo* or familism (Bravo, 2014) what Mexican American families would emphasize as the responsibility and support the family members have to relatives.

The notion of family unity has made me who I am today. A person who has come to respect my parents for their effort in providing me with their love and teaching me their ways of staying humble and appreciating what I have. This encourages me to keep on going and becoming successful as a way to repay my parents for their sacrifices they have made for my siblings and me.

Conclusion

Let me end with a quote from Pipher, “Having a cultural broker can make a tremendous difference in how successfully a new family adapts to America” (p. 94). In my case, my parents were my cultural brokers as a way to understand my Mexican cultural values. If it were not for them I would be immersed in the American culture leaving out my Mexican culture. We want the world to know about the different cultures out there that will help us understand about other customs. After all, this world has become more diverse than what it used to be in the past. So let us build a community where we can all be part of to share these beautiful experiences.

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<http://www.mysanantonio.com/community/southside/news/article/Las-Posadas-procession-reaches-across-generations-5083352.php>

When, I look back at this culture paper, it reminds me of how much I appreciate the celebrations and values *mis padres* have taught me to cherish. If it were not for them, I would have no idea of the meaning of the celebrations, and I would not have carried it with me. If there is something I think about is that I would want my children cherish these values and customs with them. I would want to make sure they learn from them, especially the idea of respect. The same way I learned from my parents, I would hope my children to respect all their teachers.

Tri-TESOL Conference

It was also during this quarter when I had the opportunity to present at the Tri-TESOL Conference at Highline Community College. I had presented the year before, so it was an honor to present again along another colleague. Ms. Sanchez and I presented together on “Auto-ethnography Expressing Mexican American Identities” where we shared some of our experiences along with the purpose of our presentation. The objective was to demonstrate autoethnography as a research method, discuss the varieties of English and Spanish, highlight Gloria Anzaldúa’s contributions to our understanding of the gifts of bilingualism, and offer teaching suggestions. Our work came mostly from our written progress for our thesis. Ms. Sanchez and I are both using autoethnography as a research method and both almost share then same story in growing up bilingual. For this reason we decided to collaborate with the help of Dr. LaVona Reeves. The outcome of the conference presentation was great, where the audience enjoyed it asking that they would want to use our work as reference. It was one of the most memorable moments where we both appreciated to have a wonderful audience who were willing to share their quick writes.

Artifact 31

This journal was written after I presented along with Adriana Sanchez at the Tri-TESOL Conference. For me this journal was to share about the happiness I felt for being able to be part of a conference where we could share part of our work from our thesis.

Brenda's Journal in Response to the Tri-TESOL Conference

October 2015

The Tri-TESOL Conference has been a wonderful opportunity to part of a wonderful experience. Last year, I also presented at Highline Community College for the WAESOL Conference along with other colleagues, and most importantly my advisor, Dr. LaVona Reeves. Last year, I was very nervous since it was my first time presenting, but thanks to Dr. LaVona Reeves who helped us through the whole process and letting us know everything would be just fine. She helped us by having us meet with her and discuss our ideas about our presentation. There were times where we would get together to rehearse our presentation since we only had about 45 minutes. I was glad to work with other colleagues with whom I had class with, and I was happy to share my story of *mi quinceñera*. I also acknowledge the time Dr. LaVona Reeves took to help Adriana and me prepare for the Tri-TESOL Conference this year. We are both working on our thesis, which deal with the retention of culture and our heritage language through the use of autoethnography as a research method. Yes, I did feel nervous, yet at the same time I had to think positively and know everything would go well. Adriana and I practiced two times before we had to present since the room was occupied. I was happy at the end of the actual presentation since we finished on time and we both received wonderful comments. They even suggested how we both would be of great resource to other students and it would be great if could present at schools. I really enjoyed it and had a wonderful time listening and being there as support for other colleagues who were also presenting. There was someone who I met for the first time at the conference who talked to me about this activity she has her students do and that is recreate one of the popular tales in America and have them create their own ending. It was in a form of a comic strip and she even demonstrated some of the examples her students made. They were all great and it is an activity I would want to try in my own ESL/EFL classroom. As a future teacher, I believe there is so much to learn along the way, where I am glad to hear from presenters share amazing ideas at conferences such as the Tri-TESOL Conference, the WAESOL Conference, and the Spokane Regional ESL Conference. (Words 410)

This journal to me has a lot of meaning to me about the day we presented at the Tri-TESOL Conference on my own with another colleague. For me, having to present at this conference was another major step and accomplishment I could share with friends and with *mis padres*. It was important for me to tell *mis padres* about my experience as a graduate student who is able to share her lived experience with other ESL teachers. I am happy to say *mis padres* are always happy to hear about the opportunities I get, and I know I have made them proud.

Winter 2016**English 489 LGBT Writers: Lives and Works**

Aside from interning in English 582 Modern Language Methodology, I was also in the LGBT Writers: Lives and Works class. I want to center on this class since it I had a wonderful

experience learning from students within the LGBT community. Coming into the classroom with no knowledge about the LGBT community or about their lives and their works about LGBT made me feel nervous in the beginning. The only person I had read about was Gloria E. Anzaldúa whom was queer herself. She was a person who contributed to queer theory.

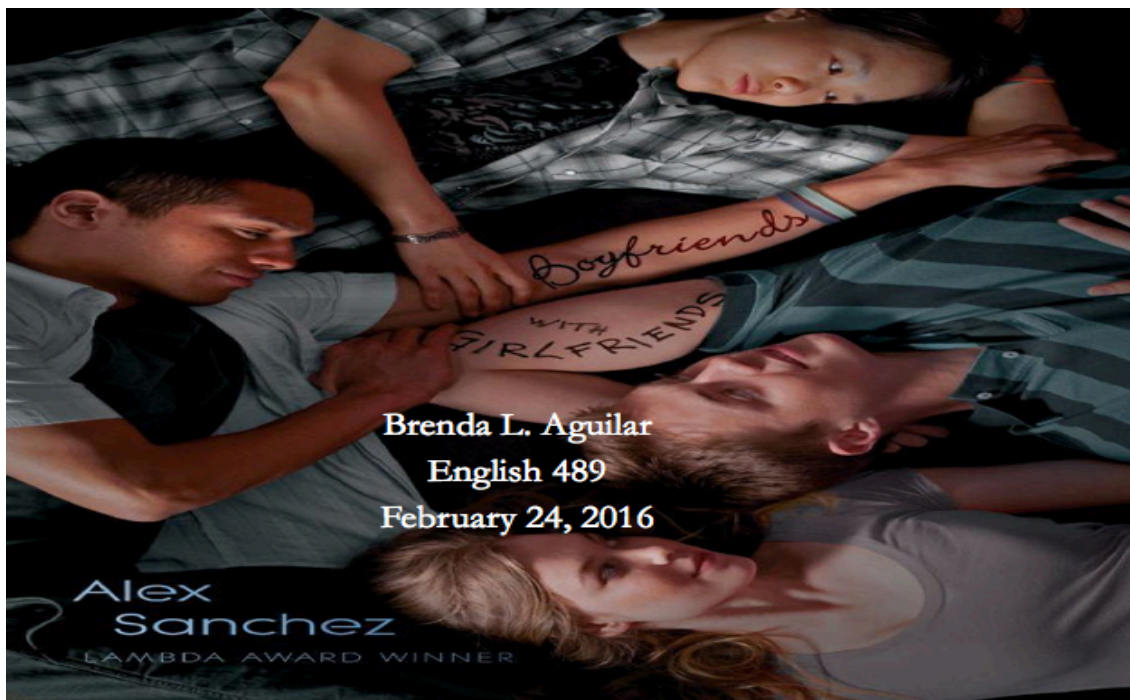
At the beginning, there was the feeling of being the outside person who didn't fit in. I felt as if they all knew more than what I did making me feel incompetent with no right to share my own thoughts. Nonetheless, it took time before I was comfortable around everyone. A lot of the in-class journal writings we did in class helped me learn more from them, especially, when we got the chance to share with the class. One of those memorable moments I have in my mind is when almost everyone in the class experienced of being told something for being different. They explained how at times they felt there was no place for them to belong or have friends who have been judged for being different. There was a moment where some students shared their story about a friend committing suicide because they couldn't take it. This made me think about my friends, family, and other people who I have come to know which whom I all value and I would never want them to hurt themselves. As Alex Sanchez, a Mexican American writer, would agree learning about other people's experiences and struggles provides people "a key to empathy, compassion, and understanding" (Sanchez, 2005, p. 48). In other words, people are aware that it can happen to anyone and the things people say can hurt someone solely because they are different.

Through the course, I was also able to learn about other LGBT writers such as Leslie Feinberg, Rita Mae Brown, James Baldwin, Virginia Wolf, Walt Whitman, and Audre Lorde. All are incredible writers and people who went through a lot during their time where they did not have the resources or have terms to use to identify with. It is sad to think that you couldn't come out in the 1950' s/ 1960's and to say I'm gay, lesbian, transgender. The way people label those individuals of different sex orientation is hurtful, which made me think twice of how I should refer to someone. Now, I am sure all these writers saw the unfairness of how they were being

treated that perhaps today's readers would not understand how it was like to live during those times. However, I acknowledge their written work as a way to educate people and to be there as resource to those who need an author to relate to.

Artifact 32

Along with these important writers, I was to select a book that followed the criteria for the selection of young adult queer literature. *Boyfriends with Girlfriends* by Alex Sanchez was the book I wanted to present to the class. The following are a few samples of my slides that I created to teach the class.



PowerPoint title page

It was in my interest to share with the class about a Mexican American author who struggled at a young age for being different. There is a video where he is the speaker at *The Queer Young Adult Literature Conference* (Web, 2015), where he talks about himself and his work as a writer. He revealed being picked on for being Mexican, which was very difficult for him when he started school. It was then when he first experienced prejudice. By the time he reached middle school he had hidden his Mexican heritage because he did not want to be looked

down upon. When he was thirteen it was then when he heard the word “gay” and it was then when he knew what he was. At that time he had no resources or books “that showed at least one other person on earth who was feeling his feelings” (Sanchez, 2005, p.47). It was later through the encouragement from friends who encouraged one another, which he decided to publish his own written work. Most of the ideas for his books come from his own experiences and from written emails he has received from teens.

Boyfriends with Girlfriends is a story about four teenagers trying to find their places in this world and with one another. We have Sergio who is a bisexual Mexican-American and has dated only girls. We have Lance who has known he is gay, but has never had a real boyfriend. When they meet there is an instant connection where they feel there is something special. However, as the story develops there are certain issues they face due to their dissimilarities. Then we have Allie who has been into guys her whole life and she has been with her one boyfriend, Chip. Both have been dating for about two years, but she begins to notice she is not feeling the same. At one point, Allie asks Chip, “How do you feel about our relationship?” (Sanchez, 2012, p. 19). It comes to show how Allie is beginning to question whether she really loves Chip. Most importantly, she notices she has fallen for Kimiko, and Kimiko has been crushing on Allie since the moment they met. Kimiko is also crushing on Allie, but feels she is not good enough for her. It is a big journey for these four characters, which whom are trying to work out their love relationship and find their places in the world.

In all, the presentation was something I enjoyed the most, where my classmates all presented on their book following the criteria for the selection of young adult queer literature. To understand that perhaps there will be a moment in my future teaching career where I will have students who might need my help in dealing with the same situation. It will be my job to help them by providing them with the necessary resources available and create an environment in the class where he/she feels safe. For this reason, I am grateful for the many learning experiences I have in life to help me develop as a person.

Summer 2015

Written Journals from Readings Not Done in Class

Artifacts 33- 37

The following journals were written in response to a quote from a book I had read. These quotes were chosen because they meant something to me. They encouraged me to write about the feelings I had at the moment relating to my culture, my family and my beliefs.

Artifact 33

This first journal is about how I felt as a woman in my Mexican American culture. I must say this was written in I had different feelings about the past growing up as a child, which is not how I feel today. I have a different view about my culture being traditional. I often got the message that a man had more power than a woman and for me this was frustrating.

Quote: "In our daily lives, we women of color strip off the mascaras others have imposed on us, see through the disguises we hide behind and drop our personas so that we may become subjects in our own discourses " (Keating & Gonzalez-Lopez, 2011, p.52).

Keating, A., & González-López, Gloria. (2011). *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's life and work transformed our own* (1st ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Es cierto, como mujer (It is true, as a woman) I feel that I am constantly finding new things about myself. In my *cultura* (culture) as a *mujer* we are not to think or go against what is imposed upon us. Growing up there were some beliefs I disagreed with my *cultura*, but I find myself at fault. I find myself at fault for not speaking my mind and for not standing up for what I believed. Now that I am not a child, I am not afraid to speak my mind to my parents and I do so in a respectful way where we can both understand what I mean. I think my years in the university have helped a lot with being able to share my stories, my thoughts, and being more social. My ideas and beliefs are transforming as I find myself learning from different *culturas* (cultures). I'm not the only *mestiza* in this world who struggles with her identity and with what she believes in. I feel I'm constantly being shaped as a person where there is so much to learn from the world and the different people with different customs. All I want is to be able to have my voice without being judged or told how to think. (Words 205)

I honestly believe we are constantly changing as individuals. What we were or believed is not what it is today or might be later. I can say much has changed about how women are seen, where many now show their high potential. For instance, I look at myself and think about how far I made it into the graduate program and soon will graduate. I look back and think about how sad I would have been if I had not taken the chance to go to university. I believe I would be stuck back

home with perhaps my own family and unhappy. For me, success is about finding a job I know I will love to do and dedicated. I want to encourage others in my culture about the endless opportunities out there to finding a career they will enjoy. My hope both women and men will support one another for a better future where the next generation can feel inspired to go college and go beyond to becoming well known examples for other people.

Artifact 34

This next journal was written about certain moments where I felt I needed to write in order to get rid of certain feelings. They were the feelings of being lied to when all I did was to respect those around me. This quote allowed me to reflect about myself as a person and the importance of writing in order to find peace.

“To paraphrase Anzaldúa: Don’t let them confine you, define you, debase you—you are more than their insults. Speak up against the gringo, the mexicanos [Mexicans], your brother, even your mother. Love them but don’t let their love give them power over you” (Keating & Gonzalez-Lopez, 2011, p.56).

Writing has always been the easiest way to express my emotions. I want to scream everything I’m holding inside and let out what is bothering me. I want to express the anger, the sadness, the joy, the trauma, and the many other experiences I have been through. I dislike the feeling about having people over power me. It is the main reason why I am always conscious of the people around me. To me “trust” has always been important in my life. As a little girl I was always found it difficult to trust my friends and family members because I was able to observe at such a young age how people lied. They would lie about being ok, but I knew there was more to what was going on in the family or with my friends. It is a struggle everyone goes through and experiences. But I feel like I am still learning as a person to find where I stand and not let others lie to me or make me feel guilty. After all we learn as we grow and live life.

I have come to understand how much writing allows us to express what we would not be able to share with those around us in person. Writing is a different approach where perhaps we are able to look back and reflect carefully. To think about what it is that made us feel or think a certain way and how to fix those problems. As I write, I think about what I could change to make myself a better person. I know there have been ups and downs, but I find people can also change and we must cherish one another. Life is short, and I would not want to lose anyone in my family. For example, when I lost a family member, I felt more comfortable writing about it instead of talking

to someone about how I was feeling. Writing about my loss made me reflect on life and how we can take it for granted. I found myself thinking about how I have a future and *mis padres* who care about me. I feel writing can serve as therapy, and I would hope others could use writing as a way to help them learn about themselves.

Artifact 35

This journal is mostly about *mi hermana* Crystal. She is a person I care for the most in the family since I took care of her at such a young age. It took me a while to understand the feeling *mi hermana* had about me pushing her away, when she needed me to listen to her.

Quote: Do you know that you're the one person— no, that's not true; one of two or three people — in my life that I always think about, to impress? That when I think something "smart" or do something extraordinary, that it's you that I'm waiting for? "Derek will like this." "Derek will get this." Derek will think this is funny." (Martinez, 2014, p. 66)

Was I there for you?

This journal is written and dedicated to the youngest in the family, my sister. Let me first mention the age gap between my sister and I is eight years. When she was born, I was always there for her having to take responsibility as the older sister. Whenever she could not sleep at night, I was the one who had to make her go to sleep using the baby stroller. I didn't dislike it at all because in the end it was my mother who needed the help since she had to wake up at 4:00 A.M. in the morning to prepare lunch for work. I was glad to help her, but for a young girl, it was hard to have such a big responsibility and still have to worry about my classes at school. However, when she was 5 years old I noticed how she always wanted to hang out with my cousins and I who were older. Without realizing it I didn't know how I was pushing my sister away from me making her feel insignificant. Most of it had to do with how she had cousins her age to play with and I had cousins my age I could talk with. After I went off to college we hardly communicated with each other, and the only person she would still have around to talk to was our second oldest brother would go off to college soon after. So this made us very distant from each other until one summer I thought it would be a great idea for her to stay with me for summer vacation at Cheney, Washington. I wanted her to get an idea of what it was like to be around the campus at Eastern Washington University. During her stay with me, she was able to state clear how she saddened of being left out. This was a revelation for me because it just never occurred to me the way she was feeling. It was something I felt she could of talked to me so I could have fixed what I was doing wrong. The feeling of guilt took over me for not noticing. It was this guilt that Domingo felt towards his brother Derek in the book called, *My Heart is a Drunken Compass*. The reading helped me reflect about myself and ask myself questions of how my sister was feeling and what she thinks about me now. Now a day I try to communicate with her as much as I can and hope we can build a strong bond even after she goes of to college and I am working. My sister is very important to me and I hope she knows that.

As I write about my sister, I know how important she is to me, and I want the best for her. She is the person who has been there for me whenever I found myself feeling down. Sometimes I felt I should have done more for my sister so she did not feel alone. I know we have been communicating a lot more and telling each other about how we are feeling. She will soon be attending Eastern Washington University and I hope she will follow her dream. As family, I will be there to help her whenever she needs me to be there or if she needs advice. If I made it this far, I know she can to.

Artifact 36

To me, this journal was the one I consider very personal even though it seems short. I kept thinking back to when I was in high school and how I was dealing with stress and anxiety. It was one of the hardest times I felt myself feeling drowned by all the worries I had in my mind.

“I was addicted to being sad, and sad was my new home...” (Martinez, 2014, p. 95).

In the book, *My Heart is a Drunken Compass*, the author talks about this deep sadness. To me this sadness takes me back to how I used to feel all the time. I felt this way most of the time when I was in high school making it my darkest moment. Why, you ask. A lot of it had to do with the situation going on at home and the stress from the work I had to do for my classes. Most of the time there were many assignments I needed to complete for my Math class and English class. I remember having to stay up late at night to finish my homework so they would be turned in on time.. Having to write the painful situation is a struggle to write down everything one is going through, yet in the end there is this great feeling of letting go of those deep wounds one carries. My mind was always full with the same ideas and questions on what was going to happen when I got home from school.

This journal shows a lot of my struggles with my stress and anxiety. I was a person who worried so much about everything and what people had to say about me. For instance, at school, I always wanted to be the student who showed her biggest effort in her work. Sometimes I would spend hours up until past midnight just to complete my assignments and making sure they were correct. I know *mis padres* knew I was smart, but for some reason I always doubted myself. I did not realize until I was in college where I had to relax and not frustrate myself. I had to work on

myself by thinking positively and manage my stress to lower my anxiety. Now I take work more calmly and step at a time, so I do not overwork myself.

Artifact 37

In this artifact, I look at myself as a person who speaks both English and Spanish. There are also those people around me who are bilingual and the connection I feel to those who can communicate in both languages.

Quote: “Para mis hijos [For my children], Carlos y Melissa: brought up entre dos culturas [in two cultures], con un Spanglish impecable [with an impeccable Spanglish]” (Castillo, 2005).

Castillo, D. (2005). *Redreaming America : Toward a bilingual American culture* (SUNY series in Latin American and Iberian thought and culture). Albany: State University of New York Press.

It's very interesting to hear this quote from Debra A. Castillo dedicated this to her two children in the book *Redreaming America: Toward a bilingual American Culture*. Personally, I use Spanglish where I use English and Spanish interchangeably. Most of the time I will Spanglish when I speak to my siblings, cousins, and friends. They are the people who can speak the language making it easy to communicate since I grew up speaking Spanglish most of the time. What makes it great to have people use Spanglish is the comfortableness of speaking it. For some reason it puts me in an uncomfortable position and makes me feel incompetent when I am speaking only one of the two languages. Listening and speaking in Spanish makes me feel at home connecting to my roots, yet there is the impression that people are judging me the way I speak. It mostly has to do with the idea on how I have a degree, so the expectation's of how people view me frightens me. People in my community, especially relatives are the ones who always have something to talk about to put me down. It might sound strange, but it really makes me feel uneasy to think I might stumble and make a mistake the minute I say something. It has happened to me before where I have to pause and relax so I can speak normally once again. What I have noticed in using Spanglish is switching to the language I need when I forget the word I am trying to express in the other language. There might be other Spanglish speakers, who are probably going through this feeling of being in between two cultures. Being able to use Spanglish is something students should not be ashamed of, but know it is what makes us who we are. I have this sense of belonging in more than one culture where my beliefs are constantly shaping and I hope that through the years I am able to learn from other cultures too.

To me, both languages are of equal importance. They are both part of who I am as a Mexican American. I appreciate the languages because I can communicate to my community and my friends. I believe when you are able to share both languages there is a comfortable feeling where I the person understand where I am coming from. As I said, both languages are equally significant, so I do not feel strongly about one language over the other. I grew up speaking both Spanish and

English, where I spoke Spanish at home and English at school. However, I do find myself using both languages back and forth with my cousins and *mis hermanos*. It is a habit I have been doing even though most of the times I am not aware of it unless someone points it out. I also hope to learn other languages in the future since I am fascinated with the various languages and cultures.

Artifacts 38-44

The following seven journals were inspired by other Mexican Americans' life stories I was reading. During the first year of the graduate program, I had developed the habit of doing five-minute journals in class, but with these seven, I did not include any quotes from the readings and just let the memories flow out in both languages. Artifact 38, I wrote in *español* because that is how I remember my mother and the bond we have that this home language helped build.

Artifact 38

El respeto a mi madre

Mi respeto a mí madre es muy grande. Desde cuando era niña, ella era la quien me cuidó y protegió. Siempre estuvo a mi lado dándome consejos sobre todo lo que una niña debería de comportarse. Me decía que tenía que respetar a las personas mayores que yo, respetar los hogares de otras personas, y tener mucho cuidado de lo que comentara guardando respeto. De niña, mí madre me contaba sus historias sobre su juventud y como era la situación de esa época. Ella me contaba sobre el sufrimiento que vivió en su hogar con sus padres. La relación que sus padres tenían era muy triste y violenta donde siempre era su madre quien andaba cuidando de sus hijos. El padre de mi madre cada día llegaba a la casa embriagado insultando a la mamá de mi madre. Por eso cuando mi madre se casó con mi padre ella pidió que no vida no fuera la misma que ella notó con sus padres. Pero fue lo mismo cuando ella se juntó con mi padre porque ella también acabó sufriendo a lado de el por su alcoholismo. Es por esta razón que soy muy fuerte y distante con mí padre. Se que las cosas han cambiado hoy y se que me tomará tiempo para poder hablar fácilmente con mí padre. En otras palabras, el respeto que le tengo a mi madre es grande que solo algunos de nosotros podemos comprender.

English Translation

The respect I have for my mother is huge. Ever since I was a little girl, she was the one to take care of me and protected me. She was always by my side always telling me how a little girl should behave. She would tell me to respect those who were older than I am, to respect other people's homes, and to be careful with my comments to make sure to show respect. As a little girl, my mom would always tell me stories about her childhood and how everything was during her time. She would tell me about her suffering having to live with her parents. The relation her parents had was sad and violent where her mother was the one to take care of her children. My mom's father would daily get home inebriated insulting my mother's mom. It was the same when my mother and my father got together because she ended up suffering at his side due to his alcoholism. It was for that reason I am strong and somewhat distant from my father. However, I

am thankful that things have changed today and I know it will take time to be able to talk to my dad easily. In other words, the respect I have for my mother is bigger than only some of us would understand.

When I wrote this journal, I kept thinking about *mi madre* the one person who has been there for me from the very beginning. She was the one who has given me all her support in letting me know I had to do better by getting a high education. I learned a lot from her experiences as a young girl who dealt with many struggles in *México* her parents. My wish is to find a job so I can give back to *mi madre* for everything she has provided me with. I admire everything she has done as a mother because I believe *mi mother* has taken the most responsibility to work and to be there for my siblings and I.

Artifact 39

Artifact 39 was a moment when I had to look back to when *mi padre* wanted us to speak only English at home. In his mind, he thought it would help us achieve more in our future career. With this journal, I decided to write in *español* as a way to show how my first language is very important.

Journal:

Al igual que Richard Rodriguez, yo también recuerdo cuando mi padre quería que mi hermano y yo habláramos solo en inglés en la casa. Nos decía que solo así aprenderíamos el lenguaje más rápido. Para mi padre y mi madre el aprender inglés significa tener la oportunidad de conseguir una carrera decente y estable. Un trabajo que no sea el mismo que el de mis padres donde trabajan todo los días bajo calurosas condiciones. Mi padre no quería que sufriera en lo caliente y cargando escalera. Decía que el trabajo en el manzanal era muy pesado y que le causaría mucho dolor verme ya que mi madre también trabajaba en el fil desde las 4 A.M. hasta las 3pm o 4 pm. Así que recuerdo que quería imponer esa regla de hablar inglés, pero nunca estuvo en casa lo suficiente para establecerlo. Además para mi no había alguna razón de parar de hablar en Español si en la escuela siempre hablábamos en inglés. Yo creía que hablar en Español en la casa era especialmente para nosotros, la familia. Era el lenguaje que yo me sentía más acostumbrada de hablar con mis padres y por esa razón no se que fuera pasado si fuera dejado el Español. ¿Que sería de mi? Es el primer idioma que escuche cuando nací y crecí con ese idioma. Esas preguntas son las que yo me pregunto en ves en cuando.

English Translation

I remember when *mi padre* wanted *mi hermano* and me to speak only English at home. He would say that we would learn the language faster. For *mi padre* and *mi madre*,

learning English meant having the opportunity to get a decent and stable career. A job, not the same as *mis padres* who work almost every day under hot weather conditions. *Mi padre* did not want me to suffer from the hot weather and from carrying the ladder. He would say work in the apple orchards was too heavy (difficult), and that it would cause them a lot of pain to see me work since *mi madre* also worked in the fields from 4 A.M. until 3 or 4 P.M. So, I remember him wanting to impose the rule of speaking in English, but he was never home to enforce it. In addition, there was no reason to stop speaking in *Español* when we would always speak English at school. I believed that speaking *Español* in the house was special to us, the family. It was the language I felt more used to when speaking with my *mis padres*, and for that reason, I do not know what would have happened if I had left *Español*. What would have been of me? It was the first language I heard when I was born and was raised with that language. These are questions I ask myself once in awhile.

I come to understand that *mi padre* wanted what was best for my siblings and me.

However, for me it was also important to keep my Spanish language at home. I did not see a point in letting go of my first language since it was the language I always used to communicate with *mis padres*. I do not believe parents' should make their children only speak the target language when their first language is valuable for others to understand.

Learning our language and culture will help us understand other cultures as well.

Artifact 40

This next journal, I felt the need to write about *mis abuelitos* (my grandparents) who have passed away. Thanks to them, I learned a lot from their stories in *español* about *México* as well as about *mis padres* siblings and him. Their stories were meaningful to me since there was so much I wanted to learn about when *mi padre* was young and how he was like.

Journal:

Recordando mis abuelitos (Remembering my grandparents)

May both of my paternal grandparents rest in peace and I am thankful for the many stories they would tell us. Both of *mis abuelitos* are the ones who I remember the most growing up as a child since I met them in *México* and then they came to the U.S. to visit for a while before they had to leave back. Even though their beliefs were very traditional and closed minded, I still had a huge respect for them. They both taught me many of their life learning experiences as well as those from what my father and his siblings went through growing up in *México*. I recall back to the days when we would have a family reunion when our grandparents were in Washington staying with

my parents and then the rest of the relatives would gather and there is where I would listen to all the stories. It felt like a timeline of going back to the past up until they left home. Those reunions were always filled with laughter, as my grandparents would talk about my dad and his brothers' mischievous doings when they were young. For instance, *mi abuelito* was very strong about the importance of education and wanted the very best of his children. Even though they loved to play basketball, *mi abuelito* (my grandpa) emphasized education and work to his children. My dad even remembers when *mi abuelito* would ask his siblings and him about what they had learned in school. He recalls having to describe in detail what he had learned in school or he would be in trouble. Sometimes they would get in big trouble for playing basketball without my grandpa's acknowledgement. However, eventually, my dad and his brothers decided to move to the United States where they knew would have a better opportunity in finding a job and getting paid well. My grandpa also loved music, so every evening or morning he would play his trumpet at when he was staying at my parents' place. I also think it is the reason why my dad and my relatives also enjoy playing music instruments such as the acoustic guitar, the piano, and the drums.

As for *mi abuelita* (my grandma), she would always talk about how *mi abuelito* was always strict with his children and his emphasis on education. She would also tell us stories about her grandchildren when they were small. For example, she would talk about the time my brother and I went to México and how we would help them with the plantation of peanuts. There was a time when I remember getting lost with my two brothers in the mountains, while we were walking the small goats. These stories were told in Spanish and I was always somehow excited to hear them again as images played in my mind. *Mi abuelita* was a great cook and when she was staying with us in the United States, I remember the many delicious Mexican dishes she would prepare for us. The best part was when she would bake bread along with my grandpa. They made the best bread where I was always patiently waiting to eat a piece of bread with a warm cup *de atole* (of cornflour drink). My grandparents are the people who I admire for the stories and the advice they would give me. If there is one advice I take with me is the respect and love for our parents.

As I read back this journal, I am filled with happiness to listen to their stories. It brought a lot of images, as *mis abuelitos* would describe their memories about those times in México. I was able to see how they had instilled the value of respect and love in *mi padre*. *Mis padres* taught us about the value of respect, and I can understand why they made sure we respected our teachers and them. I am grateful to *mis abuelitos* who were able to teach this value to *mi padre* because I think I would have been raised differently. Lastly, there is so much to learn from those who are older than we are. They are much wiser since they have already experienced some hardships, and for that reason I cherish *mis abuelitos*.

Artifact 41

Artifact 41 was written as I was reminded about my grandparents from the previous journal where I wrote about my memories about them. This next journal is about the loss of *mis abuelitos* who I wish were still here.

Journal:

La muerte de mis abuelitos/ My Grandparents' Death

La vida es muy corta y se que no siempre sabemos cuando vamos a morir. Lo que si se es el dolor que uno sufre por la perdida de alguien. De niña yo no sabia el sufrimiento hasta que perdí a mis primos, primas, y otros familiares por cosa de un accidente automovilístico. Esto paso cuando estaba en la secundaria (en el noveno grade) y fue un momento devastador para mi donde no lo pude creer. Pero cuando sucedió la muerte de mis abuelitos paternos fue aun mas difícil para mi. En ese entonces no sabia como ayudar a mi padre quien estaba sufriendo mucho. Quería ayudarlo lo mas que podía pero a la misma ves pensé que el necesitaba su espacio para estar solo y dejar su dolor con su llanto. Recuerdo bien el día que recibimos la noticia que mi abuelito había muerto en el monte cubierto en picadoras de abejas. Yo imagine el terror que sufrió mi abuelito y me duele mucho que haya muerto de esa manera. Aún más fue el sufrimiento de mi abuelita porque como familia, en especial, mi padre y sus hermanos hicieron lo posible para que ella no se deprimiera o enfermara por la causa de la muerte de su esposo. Pero lo triste fue que mi abuelita fue enfermándose poco a poco y al siguiente año ella murió. Fue entonces que vi a mi padre sufrir aun mas por la muerte de su madre. Sentí muy feo porque solo imaginé el dolor que uno siente por la perdida de una madre y la de un padre. Lo único que se me venía en mi era los recuerdos de mis abuelitos cuando fui a México de niña y cuando vinieron a visitarnos en Mattawa, Washington. Lo que yo aprendí es valorar a mis padres aun mas y a las demás personas que están a nuestro lado.

English Translation

Life is too short, and I know we will not always know when we are going to die. What I do know is the pain one suffers due to the loss of someone. As a girl, I did not know of that suffering until I lost my cousins and other family members due to car accidents and health problems. This happened when I was in high school (in 9th grade), and it was a devastating moment for me in which I could not believe. However, when the death of my paternal grandparents happened, it was a lot more difficult for me. At that time, I did not know how to help *mi padre* who was suffering the most. I wanted to help him the best I could, but at the same time, I thought that he needed his space to be alone and let go of his pain with his tears. I remember well the day we received the news that my grandpa had passed away on the hill covered in many bee stings. I imagined the terror my grandpa must have suffered, and it is painful for me that he had to die that way. Even more was my grandma's suffering because as a family, especially, *mi padre* and his brothers did their best so she would not become depressed or become ill because of my grandpa's death. Nonetheless, t my grandma slowly got sick and the following year she passed away. It was then I saw *mi padre* suffer even more because of his mother's death. I felt very bad because I could only imagine the pain one must feel at the loss of a mother and a father. What came to me were my grandparents' memories of when I went to visit *México* as a girl and when they visited Mattawa, Washington. What I learned was to value *mis padres* a lot more and the rest of the people who are at our side.

The memory of my paternal grandparents is significant since I visited them when I went to

México and when they came to *el Norte*. The loss of a family member is always hard and it is

more difficult when you are trying hard to support the loss of your parent's parents. I know it was

difficult for me to show the support *mi padre* needed at the moment. However, I thought that

perhaps he needed his own space to be alone and not make him feel any worse. I found this time a

difficult time since I wanted to do my best to stay happy, but sometimes crying helps to let go of the pain we are feeling inside. I hope people appreciate their grandparents and their parents because they will not always be around.

Artifact 42

The journal “My Home” was inspired thinking about *mis padres* and our house. It was the memories of being away for too long, where I could remember was how I remembered my home and *mis padres* when I was a young girl.

June 27, 2015

My Home

The memories of growing up back home have been both good and bad. Ever since I could remember, we have been moving around to different homes due to my *papá's* (dad's) work because the company moved him around a bit. My first home was in a town called, Desert Aire, a peaceful and well-protected community. This place was what I cherish the most because it is where I spent most of the years. This home filled with my *mama's* (mom's) favorite *musica* such as *Los Temerarios*, *Los Bukis* and Catholic songs. She really enjoyed playing music when she could while she would do chores around the *casa* and prepare what dish we would have for *la cena* (dinner). It was in this town too where I enjoyed playing basketball outside with the neighborhood friends without worrying about any danger. Even after having some good memories there was also the bad, which is hard to talk about, yet it cannot be ignored. My dad is an alcoholic, and back in those days he was very aggressive verbally to the point where the situation got worse and he ended up going to jail. My dad eventually came out of jail under certain circumstances, and he was back with us again, but this time we moved again as a way to start a new life, a new beginning. At least this is what I recall as a young girl. When I was about eleven years old, we moved to another town about one mile away called, Mattawa, a place with a bigger population. Yes, it seemed like a fresh start, but the question was how long would it last before we moved again. This home is our actual home. I felt less safe due to how I was used to our old home where company security people would drive around making sure things were in order. After moving to Mattawa, I really changed a lot as a person. It felt as if I had become a different person always inside the house and becoming really depressed because I did not feel as safe and secure there. It was like this until my family moved to two different locations surrounded by apple orchards. Now, I currently live in a place where my dad has worked for the company, even after it switched owners. The place is very peaceful, but also busy by morning with many dedicated workers. I have come to understand how being home means being able to share wonderful moments with my family and feel protected.

This journal shows the appreciation I have for *mis padres* who are always working, but there are also those memories I remember when they were home. For example the music and the food are a connection I make with home and my family. Yes, there are also those upsetting memories of *mi padre* being an alcoholic. Nonetheless, he has been a better person who pays more attention to *mi*

madre and to his children. He does not drink excessively or cause any trouble, and I am thankful for his hard work to become better person.

Artifact 43

The following journal is mostly about how I feel about myself and what I hope to accomplish. I explain about my goal to teach English as Second Language and my wish to teach abroad. In the journal, I also talk about my experience working with Asia University America Program.

¡Yo!

Cada vez en cuando me encanta escribir en español. Para mi es una manera de mantener mi lenguaje en la cual es parte de mi identidad. Yo soy una persona que quiere alcanzar y lograr sus metas. Para mi es importante que logre ser una maestra de enseñanza de inglés como segunda lengua. Mi mayor deseo es de poder viajar al extranjero y aprender de cómo los maestros/as de otras culturas enseñan a sus estudiantes. Después de haber obtenido la suficiente experiencia me gustaría regresar a los estados unidos para poder encontrar un trabajo donde pueda enseñar a los estudiantes internacionales. Desde el momento que trabaje con estudiantes de otros países en EWU, me decidí que me mi sueño es de ser maestra para ayudar a las personas que vienen a los estados unidos para aprender inglés. Por ejemplo, en la universidad de Eastern Washington, he estado trabajando con Asia University America Program. Es un programa donde estudiantes de Japón vienen a EWU para estudiar inglés. Yo he estado asistiendo a los estudiantes en sus clases de manera que tienen a alguien de practicar el lenguaje. Me motiva la idea de ser maestra algún día dándome las fuerzas de seguir adelante aunque al mismo tiempo me siento atemorizada sobre lo que pueda suceder. Temo de las situaciones que podría encontrarme en el futuro como maestra. Por ejemplo, como poder motivar a los estudiantes en clase y como lograr que los estudiantes escriban sobre su vida. Ayudar a las personas entender que uno puede aprender sobre las experiencias de uno y puede crear una comunidad donde podamos compartir nuestra cultura/s. Sobre todo, quiero ser un ejemplo para las personas que pueden relacionarse conmigo o pueda ayudarlos pensar críticamente.

English Translation

Once in a while I love to write in *Español*. For me it's a way of maintaining my language, which is part of my identity. I am a person who wants to reach and achieve her goals. It is important for me to achieve my goal in becoming a teacher of English as a Second Language. My biggest wish is to be able to take a trip abroad and learn how teachers from other cultures teach their students. After having a little bit of experience, I would love to return to the United States so I can find a job where I can teach international students. From the moment I worked with students from other countries at EWU, I decided that my dream is to be a teacher to help the people who come to the United States to learn English. For example, at Eastern Washington University, I have been working with Asia University America. It is a program where students from Japan come to EWU to study English. I have been assisting the students in their classes in a way where they have someone to practice using the language. The idea to be a teacher motivates me giving me the strength to keep going forward although at the same time I feel frightened over what could happen. I fear the situations that I could encounter in the future as a teacher. An example is how to motivate the students in class, and how to accomplish to get the students to use writing to tell about their lives. To help people understand that one can learn about ones' own experiences and

can create a community where all can share about our culture/s. In all, I want to be an example for the people who can relate with me or to guide them to think critically.

As I look back, I have to say I am close to finishing my master's degree and hope to be teaching soon. I describe in my journal about my wish to teach abroad and I am hoping I do by looking into Asia University in Japan. If it is not possible, I would also take other opportunities to teach in other countries. I want to teach first and get the teaching experience I need to develop myself as a teacher. My last goal is to go back to school and go for my PhD to teach at a university.

Artifact 44

Artifact 44 is the last journal I included about *mi hermana* being close to forgetting her first language, *español*. In a previous journal, I wrote about *mi hermana* being an important person in my life for being understanding. However, this journal is more about her and how she had to learn to practice her *español*.

Mi Hermana: Forgetting Español

This is dedicated to *mi hermana*, the youngest in the family whom I care so much about. She is now seventeen years old and is in high school. Growing up, I remember her having trouble with word pronunciations in both English and *Español*. I remember *mi madre* always telling me how she noticed that *mi hermana* was having difficulty in pronouncing words clearly. For this reason, as a young girl, she had to take a special course with a Speech/ Language Therapist. This was when she was in either preschool or kindergarten, and up until this day I have never asked her about how she felt or if she even remembered anything about it. My sister has been the one who has gone through so much more than *mis hermanos* or I went through. When my sister was born, she was at the edge of dying since she was not responsive, than later when she was one year old, she was suddenly hospitalized for having some of kidney disease. I recall my mother telling me about the doctors telling her how close my sister was to dying if she hadn't taken her to get checked. My sister was hospitalized for a couple months for having some kind of kidney disease. When she was about 16 years old, she also suffered from anemia, which no one in my family noticed until she fainted one day. My mom took her to the clinic and the doctor gave her some vitamins and iron to help her get well.

Now, going back to my sister's language learning, I must say her pronunciation improved, but one thing I did notice is she was getting comfortable with speaking the English language. There was nothing bad with her speaking English, yet I felt she had to consider her Spanish language too. My brother and I would speak to her in both English and Spanish, while my parents would speak to her mostly in Spanish. My sister would understand Spanish, but she had trouble with words in Spanish in what she wanted to say. Her Spanish started sounding English and it was interesting for me to see how she would try to pronounce the English words into Spanish since she thought that's how it translated into. I would try to repeat the proper translation of the

word to correct her and other times I would just let her know. I also remember telling her how not all the words will translate well into Spanish, and to be careful. There was a time where I told her she needed to start using the Spanish language by using it more often at home, but she would be upset. It was in my interest for her to appreciate our home language and I had to explain to her to realize that some young Mexican Americans leave their home language behind.

It was until much later when she was about in middle school and high school where she asked me more what word to use in Spanish to describe what she wanted to say. Her Spanish developed the most when she began her Spanish classes in high school. I was proud of her when she mentioned how she had read these Spanish books she had found home on our bookshelf. They were books I had read during the time I was taking Spanish classes at Eastern Washington University. For example, she read *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* by Gabriel García Márquez. Reading this book was a great way for my sister to get reading Spanish books and to improve her vocabulary. Thanks to her willingness to practice, she is now able to have more conversations with everyone in the family. The next thing I hope she does is for her to keep journaling each day. So far, I am trying to send her letters where she can reply to me and keep in touch that way. I hope she really starts developing in interest for writing while using both Spanish and English.

I can say *mi hermana* has come a long ways in retaining her language. It must have been difficult for her since she did not use the Spanish language often at home. *Mi hermano* Federico and I were not there for her to practice. I noticed English had become more dominant because that is how she communicated with my cousins and her friends. As I look back, *mi hermana* was not asked to speak in English only at home, so I am surprise why she had difficulty producing words in *español*. But it did not take *mi hermana* long to realize what was going on and was soon able to speak *español* again. The Spanish class she took really helped her improve her speaking and writing skills. She did not have the same experience as I did when I took Spanish class where it was taught in mostly English. She got the help she needed, and I am proud she did not give up her *español*.

In all, I want to thank *mi padre* for doing better and for giving us the support we need. He gives us advice on making good choices and appreciating what we have. Our communication has improved so much that we have more to say to each other about how our day is going, and when we go home, he is there to have lunch and dinner as a family. Moreover, I am grateful for having amazing parents who were there to encourage us to get a higher education and for teaching us the meaningful values of respect, hard work, responsibility, and beautiful Mexican American celebrations. It is something I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Chapter 4

Discussion and Reflection

This chapter is focused on the discussion of and reflections on the findings. It is to pull together all the loose ends about what other autoethnographers, Mexican American writers, writers from different cultures—and both men and women writers all have to say and to examine shared experiences. The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on these scholars' lives and weave my own life into a larger and ever-changing narrative of being bilingual and bicultural. This primary focus is the themes I found that connect all of us:

- 1) languages and cultures;
- 2) family— cross-generational values, ties, and support
- 3) the transformative power of education; and
- 4) identity and hybridity

Languages and cultures

Anzaldúa

Writers such as Anzaldúa, Rodriguez, Leiva, and Lee all weave both of their languages throughout their work. Using both languages, they are able to convey new meanings with their voices from their lived experiences. For instance, Anzaldúa, Rodriguez, and Leiva use both Spanish and English to describe particular moments that were most memorable or to explain something they can do only in their language. For example, when Anzaldúa expresses, “ A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves—a language with terms that are neither *español ni inglés*, but both” (1987, p. 55). In the same way, I use both of my languages— Spanish and English. I grew up using English at school and Spanish at home. With both languages, I can communicate the struggles of *mis padres* working *en el manzanal*, the stories told to me by *mis abuelitos*, about *mis hermano*, and what I have learned growing up. However, it is worth taking into consideration the

variations of Spanish within different Spanish-speaking communities. Anzaldúa explains that “a border tongue which developed naturally. Change, *evolución* [evolution], *enriquecimiento* [richness], *de palabras nuevas por invención o adopción* [of new words through invention or adoption] have created variants of Chicano Spanish, *un nuevo lenguaje* [a new language]” (1987, p.77). The poem in Chapter 2 is an example where Anzaldúa uses the word *rajetas* on line four.

To live in the Borderlands means knowing
 that the *india* in you, betrayed for 500 years,
 is no longer speaking to you,
 that *mexicanas* call you *rajetas*
 that denying the Anglo inside you
 is as bad as having denied the indian or Black
 (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 216-17)

I have heard the word *rajar*, which means to slice, but I have never heard or seen the word *rajetas* before. Here, Anzaldúa uses the word as a way to describe a person who has betrayed their word. There are many cases where people will use different words that will sound unfamiliar. For example, when I was young, it never occurred to me I had been using the wrong word for *hayan* (be). Instead, I was using *haiga* a word I had picked up from *mis padres*. *Mis padres* had adopted this word just as Anzaldúa would consider as “*un nuevo lenguaje*” (a new language).

In addition, Anzaldúa claims we all must acknowledge our cultures. To me this means accepting both of my cultures—my Mexican and American culture. *Mis padres* were the two people who taught me their values of respect, responsibility, and hard work. They also taught important traditions, such as *Día de los muertos*, *Las posadas*, and *quinceañeras*. It was through the Spanish language *mis padres* communicated these values to me. Thanks to their values, I brought those values with me when I started kindergarten. In kindergarten, I had to adapt myself to the cultural classroom. I had not trouble with the English language, yet had to do with the expectations of as a kindergarten student. I did not know I had to work in groups with my classmates, when I had learned was to sit quietly and politely to show respect to my teachers. School was the place where I learned that learning the English language allowed me to go off to college and earn a degree.

Rodriguez

Rodriguez's weaves in both Spanish and English to recall back about his parents and having to speak only English. For instance, he remembers being told by his parents, "Speak to us *en ingles*" (p. 28). At young boy, he was upset since the Spanish language was what connected him to his family. Even though he slowly forgot how to use words in Spanish, he didn't dislike or block his language because those memories of speaking Spanish are still there.

Unlike Rodriguez's who was told to speak only English after a nun had talked to his *padres*, I still kept my first language. I do remember *mi padre* asking us to speak only English, but my siblings and I did not listen. *Mi padre* was at work most of the time, so he could not enforce his rule, and I did not see a point in changing to English at home when we did speak English at school. What is more, my parents do not really know much English and can only understand a few words.

In his book, there is a section where he talks about his grandma, saying, "Her voice illumined disjointed memories as it passed them again. She remembered her husband, his green eyes, the magic name of Narciso. His early death. She remembered the farm in Mexico" (Rodriguez, p. 39). In the same way, I am able to recall back to when my grandparents were still alive. All I can think of are the stories they would share at the family reunion. They would go back to the days in *México*, always reminiscing on the times when my dad and his siblings were young as well as the value on education my grandpa had instilled in his children. There was also my grandma who would tell me to love and respect *mis padres*.

Leiva

Leiva also had a similar event recalling back to the messages she got from her grandma. For example, Leiva's grandmother would say, "*Es mejor andar sola que mal acompañada* (It is better to be alone than in bad company)" (2014, p. 1). If there is message my grandmother gave me was to be a humble and respectful person to *mis padres*. My grandpa would emphasize the importance of education to be a successful person. He really enjoyed writing in *español*, and I

would have wanted to share the letters he wrote at that time, but they were lost. I was always surprised to read and see how well he wrote in *español* something my parents did not have. In addition, Leiva talks about the lives of two presidents who are successful people today. One of the presidents she talks about is Dr. Baldwin who describes,

I learned all the prayers in Spanish because she was the one that taught us the prayers. First I thought, isn't that interesting, I mean, I learned all those prayers. I know them but I learned them in Spanish first. (Leiva, 2014, p. 59)

Mi madre would teach *mi hermano* and I all the Catholic prayers the same way Dr. Baldwin was taught. Through the prayers, I found myself at peace and attached to *mis padres*. The prayers in *español* are what connected me to my heritage language and *mis padres*.

Lee

Lee, on the other hand expresses his value of using both languages, English and Korean. Even though he feels more confident in the Korean language, both languages are part of him and have shaped him. In my case, both languages are equally important and define who I am, Mexican American. I am proud to weave them into my literacy narratives to what I have been taught by *mis padres*. They are the written diaries identified as

‘날적이’ (Naljeogi) that he remembers provided a space for him and his class to express what they were feeling or going through. The feelings such as, “이종의 대안 문화 글쓰기를 통한공동체, 자기표현의장(Alternative space where students show something about themselves), 문화자본이 적나라하게 드러남, 집단주의 적인문화를보여주는 것이기도함 (Writing is a cultural capital, and diary itself shows our cultural collectivism). (Lee, p. 5)

Through both languages I communicate about my lived experiences at home and in the school setting. *Mis padres* repeatedly made sure to stress the significance of respect. It was never forced, but it was by the lessons they taught us when we would visit family members. When we did we made sure we sat quietly and be on our best behavior. It is a cultural aspect my parents were taught by their parents. Even today, I can still recall the words *mi madre* would say in *español*. She would say “*No vayan a seguir malos pasos*. (Do not follow the wrong path)” or “*Mijos, se comportan bien*. (My children, be on your best behavior).” It was her way of showing us love and

what she wanted us to learn. For this reason, I continue to value her words and what she done to help us in our life.

Growing up, they were all able to share their first language with their parents. It was when acquiring a second language at school they learned how English was important for them to get a higher education. For some using both languages is important in one's written work, and it is something that should be seen more in academic papers. As individuals the reader can get an understanding of where bilinguals and multilingual writers are coming from. One is able to seek answers of how their language process was and how they use the language/s. In Richard Rodriguez case, he slowly let go of his Spanish language, but he is still able to describe a few things in *español*. Even though he was criticized for not being a role model to many Mexican Americans, I disagree. As a person he has not denied who he is or his parents. The experiences are what have made him grow as a person in what he has been able to learn about himself.

Family— Cross-generational values, ties, and support

Family is key when it comes to language and culture. After all, the parents are the first people we interact with in our home language as children. However as we grow older many factors start to shape our values. In the following, I want to focus on Rodriguez, Morales, Leiva, and Lee on the idea of family—cross-generational values, ties and support.

Rodriguez

In Rodriguez's book, we see the appreciation he has for his family even though he gave up the language to be considered American. He talked about his parent's and his grandma giving the reader a description at the beginning of the book. When he refers to himself he says, "I was a bilingual child, a certain kind-socially disadvantage- the song of working-class parents, both Mexican immigrants" (1987, p. 12). He is not ashamed of coming from Mexican parents who worked hard to provide them with the best. For me, *mis padres* are the examples who have taught me about hard work and respect. They are people who have and are still working in the orchards. If it were not for their struggles, I would not be who I am. Like Rodriguez, who had the support

of his family to be successful, *mis padres* where there to encourage me to do my best in school.

Rodriguez's parents supported him by asking him to speak only English. I believe this helped him become the successful writer he is today at the cost of losing his heritage language.

On the other hand, I have both of my languages and thanks to my parents support I am working hard to finish my thesis this year.

Morales

Morales has provided a powerful doctoral dissertation by giving voice to the Mexican American children, who go to the cherry orchards to help their parents and learn valuable lessons about social class and work. Without these narratives how would we know that "the stories of people in cherry orchards [which] are much more complex than dominant narratives illustrate" (p. 126). To tell the stories of *mis padres* is meaningful because they have instilled the values of hard work, respect, and responsibility. Another central aspect is the support of the family. As I indicated, no matter what obstacles we may encounter, we as a family are always there to help one another. For me, it is the "unity" we have. Morales further explains, "children in the orchards learn the rules and expectations for being good workers," and for that reason, "having a job and making money is a goal that children understand well" (p. 127). As I have stated before, *mis padres* have shown me to be a hard worker. I feel there is a difference between being a good worker and hard worker. One of the children, Celina, answers, "Um well my dad says cause American people don't like to get dirty and that they are not good cherries pickers" (Morales, p. 128). Estrella's response was, "Mexicans 'are into picking cherries' and that unlike other 'lazy people, Mexicans 'are not that much lazy'" (p. 129). Both of these statements were made by children in regards to what they considered a good worker, but comparing their own community with the Anglo people. My goal is not to disrespect or to invalidate the children's perception. For me, as a young girl, *mis padres* never once spoke anything unkind about the workers in the community or the Anglo people. Certainly, as a young girl like the children, I never once would have had the same views. *Mis padres* are the people who always taught me to respect the people

around, and it was wrong to say anything unkind about other people. The values and support of the family will not always be the same in each generation. I also believe it depends on how the values are taught to the children and if they emphasize it enough.

Leiva

In Leiva's work, she examines the academic journeys of a Latino university president and a Latina college president of Mexican descent. Her purpose is to find insights of how the two presidents overcame the obstacles to be the successful people they are. Dr. Sanchez, the president who Leiva interviewed says his success "had to do with his parents instilling in him that he had to grow and become better" (Leiva, 2014, p. 53). In the same way, *mis padres* always were there to show their support for me. They wanted me to become better, to do better so I could reach my goals. If it was not for their support and value of education, I do not know where I would be. Similarly, Dr. Baldwin denotes the strong sense of family and the support they gave her. She reveals,

...I think a part of our family and parents had always encouraged us that, you know, you are Catholic, we are good to other people, and so religion was a good part of our lives, and also that you treat others with respect, then you expected to be respected. My mom had a phrase, '*darse a respetar.*' (Leiva, 2014, p. 64)

Mi madre also had this phrase of "*darse a respetar,*" emphasizing that one must show respect in order to receive the same respect. Respect means being polite, having sympathetic comments, and on top of all, appreciating *mis padres*. My grandma would often say to respect *mis padres* since they will not always be around to help me.

Lee

The idea of family is having a strong relationship in order to overcome any struggle and a motivation to strive for success. Lee demonstrates this tie and support from his family. For instance, Lee's parents worked hard to provide their children with the best by making sacrifices. His parents did what they had to do, "Because they know what the poverty and deprivation is like and they do not want to leave those negative things to their sons, they made every effort for their

sons not to repeat same things as their generation” (Lee, p. 59-60). I am empowered to see how we share similar stories, and I am able to understand the pain, yet I also see his appreciation for his parents. I want to give back to them by helping them pay for their bills, to make them feel that they no longer have to worry about us, and for them to realize they have done enough. When I wrote my literacy narratives I see what *mis padres* have done for my siblings and me. However, I also have to express some of my concerns about *mis padres*. It is hard for me to comprehend why they would rather keep working in the orchard instead of going to the doctor when they are in pain. *Mi madre* says they will charge her a lot, and she thinks they will tell her she has nothing to be concerned about. I let her that money is not the problem; the greater problem is to not know whether she needs medical attention right away. I want *mis padres* to realize they are important to me and that together we can support one another.

The transformative power of education

Fundamentally, the notion of transformative power of education is key for many people who go through the school system. My writing is one way to demonstrate this transformation Anzaldúa, Rodriguez (1982, 2014), Leiva, Morales, and Lee experienced by education. As Collins explains, “outsiders within occupy a special place—they become different people, and their difference sensitizes them to patterns that may be more difficult for established [educational] insiders to see” (1986, p. S29). There might be some similarities we share, but our experiences are different. Each person shares a unique “standpoint” (Collins, 1986, p. S14) one is able to bring into the study as an outsider within.

Anzaldúa

Let me first begin with Anzaldúa, a Mexican American writer who was a strong person and believed in the power of education. At a time where there was still this idea of only English it was hard for most people like Anzaldúa who were considered outsiders. For instance, she educues, “I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for ‘talking back’ to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name” (1987, p. 75). When she

started Pan American University, she goes back to what education wanted for Chicano students to do. She says, “I and all Chicano students were required to take two speech classes. Their purpose: to get rid of our accents” (1987, p. 76). In my experience, I never saw teachers scolding students or being told not to speak in *español*. There was only a particular instant in middle school (7th grade) when we were asked to not speak *español*. However, it did not last long, and I never knew why the school wanted this. For this reason, I believe Anzaldúa had to fight for the right to use one’s heritage language while still appreciating both. She had to raise these questions by getting an education and educating people around her. Thanks to her work, as a Mexican American two generations away, I do not have to face all of those obstacles, but there still are some I will continue to face. Now we have the NCTE National Language Policy, “This policy enables everyone to participate in the life of this multicultural nation by ensuring continued respect both for English, our common language, and for the many other languages that contribute to our rich cultural heritage” (NCTE.org, 2016, <http://www.ncte.org>). English teachers are committed to do the following as required by our national professional organization—work for

- 1) literacy for all Americans and those residing in the United States;
- 2) respect for and retention of the home language or dialect; and
- 3) foreign language study for all.

As a bilingual and bicultural, I have learned the way education can transform who I am. The values I was taught home were carried into the school system, and I had to adapt to the way the school worked. I learned from the lesson I had in kindergarten, where silence was not going to get me through education. For me, being quiet was a way to show my respect to all of my teachers, but I realized I had to interact and be involved with the class. Fortunately, I was able to adapt to these changes and still be able to show respect to my teacher.

Rodriguez

Unlike the scholar Anzaldúa and other writers presented in this study, Rodriguez had a different experience and belief about the transformation power of education. The way he saw it

was assimilating to the “public society” for his academic success (p. 26). In other words, this meant the loss of his language for the public gain. As I go back to my written artifacts, I do not think I could give up my language for my academic success. I believe one can have both of their heritage language and the dominant language while still being successful. A better way for me to explain this feeling is by what Anzaldúa states, “To live in the Borderlands means knowing...that denying the Anglo inside you, is as bad as having denied the Indian or Black” (p. 216). This means if I deny my English language, then I am also denying my Spanish language. Another aspect is the term “the scholarship boy” he describes himself. I think he wants the reader to understand he is no different from others, yet what sets him apart is his choice to follow a different path. In an interview, Rodriguez explains to Scott London, “I became a writer because the Irish nuns who educated me taught me something about bravery with their willingness to give so much to me” (www.scottlondon.com). For me, I want to be connected to my roots and language. One is by writing in class, the way my Spanish teacher would even though he gave us the option of writing in either in English or in *español*. For me, to have the chance to write in *español* meant to have the chance to improve my writing in *español* even if I did not know how to properly spell a word. This opportunity made me feel I was able to express celebrations, such as *Día de los muertos* or my thoughts on certain issues. This made me feel less of an outsider, where I was able to share with my teacher something I was taught by my parents. To honor those who have passed away by creating an altar on November 2nd. I have learned education is important, but education alone is not enough.

Leiva

In Leiva’s case, she describes the feeling of being an outsider when she first started high school at the age of sixteen. She had just recently arrived from Costa Rica and talks about the feeling of being out of place. Leiva describes, “I was just the girl who did not speak English...I was the one most teachers did not want to deal with in class because I required individual support in order to understand” (Leiva, 2014, p. 1). As a future teacher, I want to help all of the students.

If they need individual support then I would be happy to help out. Like Leiva I did feel the school did not provide the necessary help to the non-native speakers in my school. For example, when our class of 2008 was required to take the WASL, I remember thinking about how unfair it was for the students who did not know much English to have to take the test. Leiva must of felt like an outsider, but quitting was not the answer either. She states, “My main drive was always that I wanted to make my family proud and I wanted to be able to help them” (2014, p. 2).

The support I received from *mis padres* and the emphasis of education, I knew I wanted to find a career I would be passionate about. I wanted to become a teacher, where I could help all students be successful. Moving along, there are two presidents Leiva interviews who talk about their experiences and about how they overcame the adversities to become successful. Dr. Sanchez, a university president, explains the moment where a counselor did not want to help him. In high school, the two counselors we had would help out all students. The counselors encouraged the students to either go to a 2-year college or 4-year university by giving them information about the different colleges and universities in Washington state. Dr. Sanchez never felt discouraged because he was self-motivated to go off to a university and continue on to graduate school. The self-motivation came from the messages he received from his parents “to grow and become better” (Leiva, 2014, p. 53). For Dr. Baldwin, the message to her was the emphasis of going to school. She believes anyone can accomplish any goal and be intellectuals. I would have to agree with her statement, “We define ourselves” (Leiva, 2014, p.79). For me this means, to appreciate who I am and to follow my goal in teaching.

Lee

The best part of education is to establish a community of writers inside the classroom. It gives voice to the students, and students gain confidence to share those experiences with the class. Lee’s study is a good example where he reflects back to his education in Korean and in the United States. He remembers having to write daily for his sociology department, called

communal diary or “날적이” (Naljeogi in Korean). In the same way, I want to share my experiences through this autoethnography about how the transformative power of education was shaped me into the writer and future teacher I hope to become. The written artifacts I have collected have brought many insights about myself I did not know when I first started. I knew I wanted to look at my retention of the heritage language and culture, but I have also discovered the role *mis padres* have in my learning and education. As Lee indicated, “Our individuality has to be rediscovered as we try to escape total conformity. We just want to be ourselves” (Anonymous, *The Communal Diary*, c. 1994, 2012). It is the space I need to honor *mis padres*, and assert what education has provided me to be successful. Education has opened doors for me to be of help to students who will need my assistance as a cultural broker. A bilingual and bicultural person who can serve as a resource, and can illustrate to the students that anyone can be successful regardless of who they are. Students should never feel they are outsiders just because they cannot speak the target language. Instead, the students should know they bring cultural and language awareness into the classroom. As a future teacher, my goal is encourage and motivate students to write as a way for them to not only share their experiences, but also show them that journaling can help them improve their writing skills.

Identity and hybridity

As I come to an end, I want to clarify why identity and hybridity are major in my autoethnographic study. At the beginning, I did not think of my identity or question who I was. It was through this autoethnography and through the work of scholars and other writers that I reflected and analyzed my experiences to see what I found about myself. Anzaldúa and Rodriguez are perfect scholars who have been a major contribution to my understanding about myself as a bilingual and bicultural woman. Other writers such as Morales, Leiva, and Lee have also been a major support in telling about the importance of writing and discovering my own

identity and hybridity in my life. Identity and hybridity is more complex and I am sure most writers know this, but what are those aspects that impact who we are?

Anzaldúa

In *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa talks about the complexity of finding a place of where she belongs. For instance, she expresses, “Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.78). Her perception is she finds this as “*un choque*, a cultural collision” and “she learns to juggle cultures” (1987, p. 78). As I started adjusting myself at school, never did I once feel I was different from the rest of the students or my teachers. I did understand my teachers were the authority in the class because *mis padres* taught me to respect my teachers and my elders. As far as my culture, at home my parents were teaching me to appreciate my own culture without them saying I should stick to my Mexican heritage only. *Mis padres* appreciated the opportunity my siblings and I had to go to school and learning as much as we could to be better students. I think what they did not realize was how much help they helped us by teaching us important values, such as hard work, respect, and responsibility. To have these values has allowed me to be the caring and dedicated person I am to help my future students. As Anzaldúa emphasized,

I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my voice: Indian, Spanish, White. I will have my serpent’s tongue—my woman’s voice, my sexual voice, my poet’s voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence. (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 59)

She had a strong belief about being who she was, and as a writer she wrote about what mattered to her the most. She explains, “A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves—a language with terms that are neither *español ni inglés*, but both” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 55). For me, using both English and *español* is to communicate my experiences, and the values I was taught by *mis padres* helping me

look at my hybridity as Soliday indicated. The hybridity within me is to tell my stories and share those experiences as a Mexican American.

Rodriguez

In the case of Rodriguez, we look at him as the “scholarship boy” who explains his loss for a greater gain. He states, “If I rehearse here the changes in my private life after my Americanization, it is finally to emphasize the public gain” (p. 27). It was difficult for him in the beginning as he describes his life: “But then there was Spanish. *Español*: my family’s language. *Español*: the language that seemed to me a private language.” and “Spanish speakers, rather, seemed related to me, for I sensed that we shared-through our language the experience of feeling apart from *los gringos*” (Rodriguez, p. 16). The Spanish language meant for him the connection to his family before he lost it. For me, my Spanish language meant being able to share the many stories within our family, to communicate with the community, and recall on the values passed down to us. I get the feeling of being able to have a connection to the people who spoke the same language, but for me it did not mean it separated from the people he refers to “*los gringos*.” As I started school, I might have had a struggle with classroom culture of kindergarten. I did not know being silent in class would cause concerns with my teacher to have to call *mis padres* in. There was also the worry of having no friends in the classroom. *Mis padres* had to talk to me and tell me I had to build a friendship with someone in the class. It did not take long enough before I build a friendship with a Spanish-speaking girl, Angelica. When we interacted in school to each other, we only spoke in English. At school, my thought was to be a good student by doing the work I was expected. School allowed me to think about a career and about believing anything is possible to be. I believe school has had a major influence in my life in what I have developed. I think if it were not for school, I would perhaps not be where I am right now. I would have never met other people beside the community from back home, especially the orchard community. Also, I would not be sharing my experiences in this study, and I would have never learned how my

surrounding and what I have been taught by my parents have shaped me into the hard working person I am today.

Morales

Morales shares the Mexican American children's perception of what they have learned about what is considered a good worker in the cherry orchards. I understand Morales herself has had the experience of working in the cheery orchards and the struggle it is. There was a time when *mis padres* took *mi hermano Federico* me to the apple orchards since they had no one to babysit us. I have to say the work they do is very difficult even when we tried to help as small children who were about 5 years old. Morales is able to make the children's stories "counter-hegemonic"(Morales 2015, Quicke) by sharing their perspectives and not be the master narratives, such as what we read in history books. I find this as true since what I share is coming from my own lived experiences. As part of my identity, I must say there has been the orchard community who has provided me with the understanding of hard work. This is especially coming from *mis padres* job who have worked more than 25 years in *el manzanal*. Now, in Morales's study she raises the question, 'What do you learn in the orchard?' aimed at having the "children [share] their learning in terms of work and rules of the job" (p. 127). One of the children, Celina, answers, "Um well my dad says cause American people don't like to get dirty and that they are not good cherries pickers" (p. 128). For Itzel, she is convinced "that 'some [people] work more than others' (p. 129). The children may have not had a bad intention to say this about American people, but at their age I never once thought about this. *Mis padres* never once said anything unkind about the workers or about the American people. I was raised to respect my teachers, those who worked in the orchard, and most importantly *mis padres*. As part of my identity, I carry the value of respect and hard work. These two values are what I want my future children to carry with them and my students to take away with them when they leave my classroom.

Leiva

Leiva's work, I have to say both the presidents she interviewed as well as herself have shown their success due to their determination and because of the support from their parents. To begin, both these presidents come from Mexican parents who have shown them the importance of education for a successful future. One of the presidents, Dr. Sanchez, indicates that self-motivation came from "his parents instilling in him that he had to grow and become better" (Leiva, 2014, p. 53). Part of my identity comes from comes from the sacrifices *mis padres* have done to provide as shelter and food. Sometimes when we wanted a candy or a toy from the store, *mis padres* would explain to us they could not because they did not have enough money. At a young age, my brother Federico and I understood and would not complain. Even as I got older, I knew what it was like to work in the orchard since I worked in the cherry orchards and in the apple orchards. The experience provided me with the knowledge about wanting something better for my life. It helped me understand I wanted to have a career I would enjoy working at and be able to help out *mis padres*. Nothing comes easily, it is the hard work and dedication we set ourselves to achieve our goals. Another part of my identity comes from learning from *mi madre* was about the faith being Catholic. A big part of their culture in *México* and part of mine now as a Mexican American. For example, I learned about *las posadas*, a nine-day celebration of the reenactment of when Joseph and Mary were seeking for shelter in Bethlehem, but were repeatedly turned away until the birth of baby Jesus. In the Mexican American community, this is how Christmas is celebrated. I talk about this in my culture paper I wrote in my English 580 Second Language Acquisition. Another celebration is *Día de los muertos* where people honor those who have passed away. This celebration would seem like it is a sad day, but I have learned it is a happy day where all people share the happy memories of their loved ones. To honor our loved ones there is an altar created for them and there are many prayers involved. Ever since I can remember, *mi madre* was always there to explain to me each year what these celebrations meant.

I value them both since these meaningful traditions come from what I learned from *mis padres* Mexican culture.

Lee

For Lee, his experiences shaped the person he is and he hopes to be as a teacher. Writing made a huge impact in his life where he was able to describe the experiences from age 7 to 27 in Korea and the education he had in the United States. As a boy, he remembers this daily hygiene inspection by a teacher in first grade. He recalls, “I was called to step onto the podium in front of students to be castigated by the teacher for my bad hygiene status” (Lee, pg.27). I never had this happen to me the way Lee experienced it himself. The teachers I had throughout my education were caring about our education and us. I might have been a quiet person, but my teachers always saw my hard work in class. However, Lee’s memories he had as a child were mostly negative, making him have a bad perception of all teachers until coming to Eastern. It was not until his thesis that he reflected back and discovered how not all teachers are the same. He was able to face his negative perception about teachers through writing. Moreover, his written thesis helped him understand himself better. He wanted this experience to aid him in the teaching profession to “become more open to [students] personalities and more empathetic to their experiences” (p. 97). In the same way as Lee, my experiences have shaped the person I am today, and I can say I am constantly learning from those around me. For example, I keep learning from my professors at Eastern Washington University who have shown me how much I have grown. They have made me feel welcome in class and have made me appreciate who I am. They value my bi-literacy and appreciate my knowledge of both languages.

As stated earlier in one of my writings, my dad wanted my siblings and me to speak only English at home. He thought that was the only way we were going to pick up the language, but fortunately we did not develop the habit of speaking English at home. It didn't feel right, and I am happy I never gave up either of my languages. It tells a lot about who I am today and I appreciate my parents for understanding my desire to speak only *español* at home. Like Rodriguez, I lost

both of my grandparents whom I had visited long ago when I was about six year old. When they died, what I remember the most was when they would tell my family their stories in *español* and what they did as they would walk around our house and look at the surroundings when they visited us for a while in Mattawa, Washington when I was in high school. If I had not retained and studied *español*, I could not have understood their stories and would not have these precious memories of them to pass on to the next generations. Adrienne Viramontes argues, “Engaging in autoethnography allowed me to make sense of myself in relation to my family, culture, and the place where I come from...” (2012, p. 8), and this method helped me in the same way because I feel closer to my family and *mis padres*’ birthplace, even though I have visited their homeland only once in my life.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Chapter 5 is the conclusion of the thesis with (1) discussion of the assumptions, (2) answers to the research questions, (3) identification of limitations of the present study, (4) recommendations for future research, and (5) final reflections on how the project changed the researcher for the better.

Discussion of the assumptions

As required in TESOL guidelines for qualitative research (2016, web), I disclosed any assumptions I had when I began this project, and I will now think about and discuss whether I was correct in my assumptions based on the readings and reflections on my own life.

1. This is my own personal experience, and what I write cannot be generalized to others who are Mexican American.

Despite the written works of other Mexican Americans, it is important to understand that my experiences cannot be generalized to others who are of Mexican American descent. For example, I went through a different experience that allowed me to reflect back on my life to discover myself as a person who grew up *en una comunidad pequeña de mexicanos y Mexicano Americanos* (in a small community of Mexicans and Mexican Americans). The interaction I had with people *en la escuela* (at school), *dentro de la comunidad* (within the community), *y en la casa me a permitido aprender y apreciar el esfuerzo de la gente al igual que sus experiencias vividas* (and at home allowed me to learn and appreciate people's hardships as well as their lived experiences). Within these experiences, every event has a different meaning to each person and can be expressed in different ways whether it is through language, art (Eldridge, 2012), poems, and/or music. Further, not everyone has been taught to respect or to appreciate hard

work if they never saw their *padres* sacrifice to provide them with a better life. For example, Morales explained in her doctoral dissertation about what the children were learning from their parents about working hard. One of the children had said, “Um well my dad says cause American people don’t like to get dirty and that they are not good cherries pickers” (p. 128). *Mis padres* never compared people in this way because they believed anyone could work hard. They never allowed any negative comments since they had always shown me to respect others. In this case, my assumption is true, but I also understand that parenting styles and values may vary across generations.

2. I am a bilingual Mexican American who is still in the process of shaping my own identity.

I find this assumption to be true. There is no end to the changes ahead of me since I am constantly learning about myself. For instance, through my k-12 years, I thought I would always be feeling alone and left behind, not knowing where my future would take me. Through the college years, however, when I lived two and a half hours from Mattawa, I noticed how different and wonderful it felt to be back home with a community of mostly Mexican Americans and to speak our language together. At EWU, I learned about other languages and cultures from the classmates I interacted with—who came from South Korea, Russia, Ukraine, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Vietnam and many other places. For example, as a graduate student when I presented on *Quinceañera* (Artifact 8) at the Washington Association for the Education of Speakers of Other Languages (WAESOL), a Saudi peer, Alla Alshuaibi who presented alongside me, indicated that in the Koran a mother is respected three times more than a father because the mother has carried the infant for nine months and has had the responsibility for the growth and development of the child (Aguilar, Alshuaibi, Eliason, & Reeves, 2014). In other words, the mother is an important figure in the family. For me, this was a cultural learning experience where I thought we shared something in common. My mother is the

person whom I care for the most since she was the one to show me her support when I needed it the most.

3. My parents have a major influence in my life.

Completing this project, I found this assumption to be more true than imagined, their influence being far greater than I had thought at the beginning of the project. Through understanding their strengths and weaknesses, I have been able to make my observations and learn from them. This has meant learning from their lived experiences by not making the same mistakes. For instance, they wanted my siblings and me to continue with our education so we could find better jobs. *Mis padres* did not want us to work in the orchards and live tough lives, so three out of four of us children have sought higher education. My eldest *hermano* who was born in *México* and came to Mattawa at age 10 and completed high school here, but does work in the orchards alongside my father. It was also *mis padres* who taught us to appreciate the little things we had at home and never complain. In this way, *mis padres* taught us the importance of working hard to get what we wanted because not everything we want is free. Both *mis padres* would leave early in the morning, entering the orchards at 4 or 5 A.M. Especially, *mi madre* was always up early in the morning preparing lunch for both *mi padre* and for herself. As they would say, “*Uno tiene que madrugar porque el trabajo llama.*” (One must wake up early because work calls).” In other words, *mi padres* always emphasized the responsibility of a person on the job.

Clearly, the principle of responsibility is an important lesson I learned so *mis padres* could count on me. I also appreciate the support *mis padres* gave me through my studies and the advice to do my best in school. This principle of responsibility kept me motivated to become successful in giving back to *mis padres* and helping those in my community. Most importantly, I am thankful to *mis padres* who taught me about *respeto* (respect) and the value of family unity. The influence they have had on me has shaped me into a responsible and respectful person.

4. My beliefs and values may be in conflict with other *Chicanas'* values as well as those of other cultural groups represented in Washington beyond the orchard workers' community. This assumption I found not to be fully affirmed because I had more in common with the scholars whose work I read than expected, so I did not experience many conflicts in values. I realize that I was raised differently, where I grew up speaking *español* at home, while speaking English at school. Today, I will sometimes find Mexican American parents speaking only English to their children without teaching them their heritage language, so the children grow up speaking only one language. Further, when the parents do not seem to value the culture or celebrate the important holidays like *las posadas* (the nine-day celebration around Christmas time including the re-enactment of the nativity in the Catholic Church) (Artifact 30) or *días de los muertos* (day of the dead) (Artifact 30), the children may never know or come to appreciate their parents' culture. The embracing of such cultural events can contribute to the children's sense of self and community in which *Chicanas'* may feel encouraged to carry on the traditions.

While most of my peers were orchard workers' children, some *Chicanas'* parents may have a restaurant or a mini store, or work at a warehouse. Therefore, what beliefs and values other *Chicanas* grow up with may be very different from mine.

4. Remembering some of my life experiences might cause me some discomfort, but I believe examining these threshold moments will be beneficial to me and to others.

While I was writing my journals, I found discomfort in writing about the loved ones I lost and *mis padres'* struggles working to give my siblings and me the best. These lived experiences are in some ways painful to talk about since I was a witness to those struggles and losses. However, they are of great importance in that they have given me motivation to keep moving forward. Not everyone has the same privilege to live long enough to complete his or her dream. Furthermore, writing about my discomfort has also led me to become a stronger person and feel as if I do not have to be drowned with

painful feelings of loss. I have found a place where I can feel at ease and it is my hope that others understand they are not the only ones who are dealing with such sadness.

5. Being shy and reserved may make it difficult for me to write this autoethnography.

It is very difficult to explain whether being shy and reserved made it difficult to write this autoethnography. Growing up, I was a quiet person and very reserved. It was mostly because of what *mis padres* had taught me as a young child— to respect not only them, but also those who were my elders and teachers. This meant being quiet and only speaking if I was ever asked a question by my elders. Even to this day, it is something I have with me, making it very difficult to seek help or ask questions. *Mis padres* in some ways were strict with me to the point where I became more nervous if I didn't listen to them. Even when I started kindergarten, I respected all of my teachers and never caused any trouble. So writing this autoethnography has allowed me to write my own experiences with my own voice without making it difficult.

Answers to the research questions

1) As a bilingual woman, what were my struggles in learning two languages?

I would not say there were struggles learning two languages, but rather the struggles were more culture-based—the classroom culture of kindergarten and the cultural Spanish class. For example, my kindergarten teacher might have thought I was inadequately prepared for school since I was always quiet. As a bilingual, I do not recall struggling with understanding what I needed to do in class; the greater problem was the explicit rules of Spanish. Despite of what my teacher thought, she had *mis padres* come in and asked them if there was anything going on at home since I was not talking in class and did not interact with the other students. The reason why my teacher did not understand was because *mis padres* had taught me to respect my teachers by being silent and polite. I did not know kindergarten required me to be involved, and I certainly was not aware I had to

interact with my classmates. As the few weeks passed by, I noticed what was expected of me in the classroom by observing what the other outgoing students did.

Another example, was the in my high school Spanish class where I had a first-year Anglo Spanish teacher who taught mostly in English with very little *español*. He was a kind teacher, but he had a hard time engaging the students who were mostly heritage speakers. He had to work with textbooks the school had provided him, which were not at a high enough level for us and had no connection to our lives. If there was something I did appreciate, it was his allowing us to journal in either language. I know I did not fully explain this in the previous chapter, so I need to address a cultural matter. There were times I was upset with my Mexican American classmates who were disrespectful to the teacher for not properly speaking in Spanish, and he understood what the students were saying. I was the one who felt more ashamed because I thought it was inappropriate. As I described earlier, *mis padres* had always taught me to respect my teachers—something perhaps my classmates had not been taught. I believe no one should be disrespected, but should be helped by providing feedback about what is working and what is not. This challenge made me want to be a Spanish teacher at that time.

2) What major influence did *mis padres* have on my education?

I believe I would not have made it this far in my life if I had not had both of *mis padres*. They were the ones who taught me the value of respect and hard work to be successful. In addition, they have taught me to be resourceful in sharing my heritage language and culture. At a young age, *mis padres* did not want me to work in the orchards because it would cause them pain. In their minds, I was an intelligent girl who should continue with her education. They have shown me what it means to struggle, and for that reason I want to make them proud.

3) In what ways are *mis padres* my cultural brokers?

From the beginning of Chapter 1, I explain how *mis padres* have been my cultural brokers. The cultural values and the Spanish language they were taught by my grandparents in *México* have been passed down to me. They were the ones to teach me the value of respect, hard work, and the beautiful celebrations. It was through these values that they showed me I am able to share my experiences as a bilingual and bicultural person. At the same time, however, I also became their cultural brokers in that I was immersed in the American culture every day and could sometimes explain things to my parents, even today.

- 4) As a bilingual and bicultural Chicana, what experiences have helped shape me as a future teacher?

The experiences at home shaped me more than anything to be prepared as a future teacher. It was my parents who taught me to respect all my teachers and to have the will to help others who need it. I did my best to help my parents when they needed it, such as when I had to take care of *mi hermano, Federico*, and *mi hermana, Crystal*. Learning to assist others and being a cultural broker have helped me to be prepared for the teaching profession.

- 5) What have I learned about myself that has helped me understand the retention of heritage language and culture?

The NCTE National Language Policy has helped me understand three significant components about the retention of heritage language:

- a. English literacy for all.
- b. Respect for and retention of the home language or dialect.
- c. Foreign languages for all of us in the United States.

Students should never feel they cannot use their own language. As teachers, we need to respect their languages and have them teach us about their language. I believe all of us can learn from one another. Language and culture are gifts that we inherit, and there is a

balance. For instance, I can happily say I am bilingual and bicultural. There has never been a time where I consider one language more special than the other. I believe there is a balance where I learned *español* and my Mexican heritage at home, and I learned English and my American culture in the public school. I am grateful to have both heritages and languages.

6) How has my identity been shaped in family, community, and school?

As I began to understand my community and school, I had used everything I learned from my family. I learned to work hard by watching *mis padres* work in *el manzanal* (the apple orchards). Going into the community and school helped me appreciate both of my cultures and languages. Furthermore, family shaped me the most because it was their value of respect and hard work to help me to in my teaching profession.

7) Why is the retention of language and culture significant?

First of all, I do not want to be told to speak only English and be stripped of my Spanish language. I do not want to give up my language as Rodriguez did to be seen as American. I want both of my languages to be part of me. Culture is also important to me because I carry both my Mexican and American cultures with me. Thanks to *mis padres*, I learned to speak *español* and to live by Mexican values they taught me, especially those I followed in school to show my respect to my teachers. My dedication to work hard came from watching my parents work long hours in the orchards during the spring, summer and fall. In the public schools, I picked up English quickly, and I learned about the American culture, especially the idea of never giving up and always focusing on becoming successful at whatever we choose as careers. For me, the retention of both of my heritage languages and cultures means I accept they have both shaped the person I am today.

Reflections on limitations of the present study

While autoethnography serves as a way “to make personal experiences meaningful and cultural experiences engaging” (Ellis, Admas, & Bochner, 2011, p. 277), there are those who consider autoethnography to be “messy” (Trahar, 2009, p. 3) and literacy narratives to be “clumsy” (Wittman, 2016, p. 678). In both, there is selective memory at work in that the writer remembers only parts of the story while other parts remain unclear to her, and this may muddy the waters for readers. Another limitation is that not all artifacts could be included, and it was challenging to decide what to share and what to disclose about family history. There remains the ethical complexity of the research itself, where one is recalling from events that are from 21 years ago. It is impossible to tell the whole story in detail since what we experienced then will not be what we might remember today. An ethical dilemma was deciding to share only what I thought would be helpful in understanding what has shaped me as a bilingual and bicultural woman. However, there were some parts of my life I decided to leave out because they were too personal, and it would take away the whole idea of my writing being about happy events that taught important lessons.

Clearly, the autoethnographer has to take care not to hurt anyone alluded to in the story and not to do harm directly or indirectly. Self-censorship plays a major role and makes this method problematic because it is important to tell the truth as it is remembered but not to bias readers, for example, against certain groups or certain individuals. I have tried to be fair in my assessment of the learning environments I found myself in that made me uncomfortable, such as the Spanish class where the Mexican American boys made fun of the Anglo Spanish teacher in high school because of the simple storybook type materials he was forced to use by the district and his nonnative ways of speaking our home language—Mexican Spanish. This is also seen in ESL classes when the students themselves are quite advanced and proficient in the Target Language, but the teacher is a nonnative and may not always use correct grammar in class or introduce culturally relevant materials. Still, TESOL forbids discrimination against nonnative English teachers and disputes the concept of “nativeness” altogether. I am left wondering what

the policy of the association of foreign language teachers in the United States has a similar policy for Spanish teachers. I concluded that if respect was taught in these boys' home, it was taught differently from the way I was taught because *mis padres* made it clear that it applied to all people, not just other Mexicans or Mexican Americans. I also wonder today if the same materials had been taught by a Mexican American Spanish teacher like myself, there would have been a difference in the students' response. Though I will probably never teach *español*, I wonder if my students will make fun of me for some reason and how I might handle it.

Recommendations for future research

As I look back at the 44 artifacts and my writing experiences, it is necessary to emphasize the themes I continuously found

- a. languages and cultures;
- b. family—
- c. cross-generational values, ties, and support;
- d. the transformative power of education;
- e. identity and
- f. hybridity.

Future researchers would do well to look at the experiences of multilingual students who are coming from bilingual and bicultural parents and at monolingual students as well. Niemann et al. conclude “that examining people’s social constructions of their ethnic identities, in their own words, is critical for understanding their social realities” (1999, p. 59). In other words, how do monolinguals’ lived experiences differ from those who are bilingual and bicultural, such as myself? As stated by Gonzales-Backen, “The formation of each ethnic identity component and the associations between components are likely to be impacted by various ecological factors, including the community, family, peers, and individual characteristics” (2013, p. 96-97). What values do they hold as true? In my experience, I was able to maintain both of my languages and come to appreciate both without their being a clash. Perhaps, multilingual students’ experiences

could allow future teachers to understand their role “in recognizing [student’s multilingual], multicultural strengths in the classroom” (Kennedy & Romo, 2013, p. 121). It was through the contributions of scholars and other writers I included in my work that I decided to look back to my lived experiences to see how I have developed as a person and to see what I can offer to future autoethnographers who are looking into writing and analyzing their own lives (Canagarajah, 2016; Dayton-Wood, 2012; Reese, 2001). Finally, to allow those “who are interested in viewing the world from a different perspective and through a different lens” (Hamdan, 2012, p. 600) know that not all will have the same purpose for writing an autoethnography. Others might want to write about their teaching experience in a different country, looking at art analysis, factors in becoming successful students, and other topics.

Final reflections on how the project changed the researcher for the better

According to Andrews, Squire and Tamboku (2008), “narrative inquiry is based firmly in the premise that, as human beings, we come to understand and give meaning to our lives through story” (as cited by Trahar, 2009). Trahar explains it involves a collection of narratives whether it is written, oral or visual—I have included all three in the present study. What I learned from journaling, however, during the process and over the years is expressed well by Watt:

Although I learned a great deal about qualitative inquiry and reflexivity...writing this narrative consolidated and extended that learning. If I had not kept a journal much would have been lost, both during and now after the project. Having access to journal entries permitted me to consider my research holistically. (p. 98)

In addition, locating journals written in high school and writing retrospective journals to provide context and interpretation for readers was a valuable experience for me as well. The multi-layering of artifacts was a creative outlet for me and engaged my thesis chair in many discussions about my life and hers. Watt notes:

This secondary level of reflection led to an increased recognition of the central role the journal played in the initial study. Through using writing as a method of inquiry I was able to make links between how I carried out my study, reflective journal entries, and the literature on qualitative methodology. (p. 98)

Added to what Watt did is my desire to look back and see myself through different eyes as I wrote in the Anglo high school Spanish teacher's class, noting that it was unfair for the media to portray Mexican Americans as drug lords or illegal workers and choosing to write in *español* instead of English, though we were given the choice to write in English. I was surprised to see that at 16, I was brave enough to note that some Americans were also criminals just like some Mexicans—but not all are bad.

Though literacy narratives are “clumsy” and autoethnography is potentially “messy” I found myself feeling less fragmented as a scholar and more whole as a “fledgling” writer, as described by Watts here:

This [journaling] process enabled me to connect theory and practice, thereby gaining new insights into the complexity of qualitative inquiry and what it means to be a qualitative researcher. My own fledgling practice thus served as the foundation for what turned out to be a very personal and powerful learning experience. (p. 98)

For these reasons and more, I find the literacy narrative, narrative inquiry, in general, and autoethnography, in particular, truly connected to one another in that the researcher's lived experience is at the center. Golden and Womack (2016), in “Cultivating literacy and relationships with adolescent scholars of color,” explain that young writers need ways to analyze their own literacy events and to build relationships, as I have tried to do in this thesis. And Kara Wittman calls the literacy narrative a potentially “clumsy tale” (2016), which is what I would still call this thesis, despite the time spent collecting, selecting, and reflecting on the 44 artifacts I have included here.

For this reason, I find narrative inquiry—in particular the bi-literacy narrative—and autoethnography similar in that writers' lived experiences are at the center of a story that develops over time. In both, there is an engagement of “intense and transparent reflection and questioning of their own position, values, beliefs, and cultural background” (Trahar, 2009, web). Through dialogue, one is able to understand and acknowledge the diversity in higher education and create a place where everyone can learn about those differences and similarities. As an

autoethnographer, I invite readers to tell their stories—“clumsy” though they may be—and as writing teachers, I encourage them to write with their students—both inside and outside the margins.

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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Eastern Washington University January-March 2016 Cheney, WA

Intern for English 582 Modern Language Methodology

- Assist students who needed help
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- Assisted students in group work with in-class activities

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- Conversation partner for students
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- Met with students outside of class to assist with homework

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Intern for English 112 Composition for Multilingual Students

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 - Helped students complete final projects
-

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Tri-TESOL 2015, October 2015
 - *Auto-Ethnography: Expressing Mexican American Identities*
 - Presenters: Brenda Aguilar, Adriana Sanchez
 - Mentor: LaVona Reeves, Ph.D., Professor of English; MATESL Program Director
- Spokane Regional ESL Conference, February 2015
 - *Teaching UNESCO values K-16: Youth, media, & sustainability lessons*
 - Presenters: Brenda, Aguilar, Alaa Alshuaibi, and Brian Eliason
 - Mentor/Co-Presenter: La Vona Reeves, Ph.D., Professor of English; MATESL Program Director
- WAESOL 2014, October 2014
 - *Teaching UNESCO values K-16: Youth, media, & sustainability lessons*
 - Presenters: Brenda, Aguilar, Alaa Alshuaibi, and Brian Eliason
 - Mentor: LaVona Reeves, Ph.D., Professor of English; MATESL Program Director