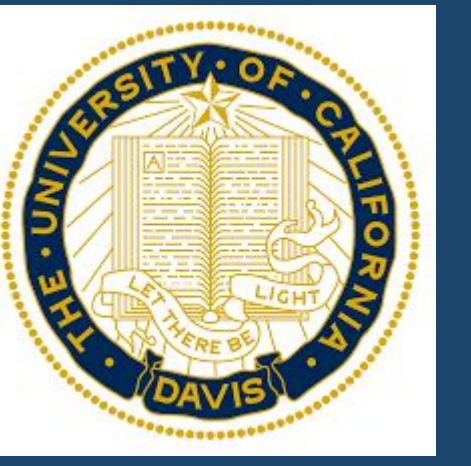




# Advocacy Takes Courage and Courage Takes Practice: Teacher Candidates Learning by Listening to Multilingual Youth



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## Problem & Purpose

- Too often, Teacher Candidates (TCs) learn about advocacy at the conceptual level, with few opportunities to enact advocacy in practice (Kavanagh, 2017).
- Requires listening deeply, framing an argument, working collaboratively around a shared vision, connecting to an institution's mission, navigating political, interpersonal, and emotional tensions-- skills that require practice.
- We created an assignment to help TCs learn advocacy and equity by *doing* advocacy and equity, starting with the voices of young people.

## Three Premises

- In order to learn about advocacy for equity, we must practice advocacy for equity.
- In order to understand equity, we must include the voices of young people.
- Advocating for equity takes courage and courage takes practice.

"It is knowing how to listen well that I better prepare myself to speak" (Freire, 1998, p. 107).

## Context

- Graduate TE Program at Research 1 University
- 62 Multiple Subject Candidates, 4 Single Subject
- Required Course: History of Bilingual Education, Second Language Acquisition, Policy
- TPEs: "Demonstrate effective communication and *advocacy*"

## Theoretical Framework

- **Critical Pedagogy:** the cycle of praxis, which Freire describes as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (2006, p. 51).
- Ethnic Studies: community responsive education that **connects to students' daily lives, their communities, their families, and their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic histories.**

## Conclusions & Implications

- In the act of listening to young people, TCs practiced looking for brilliance and wisdom of youth
- TCs relied on teammates and learned to develop their advocacy intuition
- Created dialogical space between university and community partners to address notions of equity and prepare next generation of advocates
- TCs practiced strategies for advocating for equity *before* they become teachers
- We hope this will make them bolder and more confident when they confront the next systemic issue

## TCs Conducted Equity Projects

- Conducted across two ten-week courses focused on language and literacy
- Groups of 4-6 teacher candidates, 12 groups total
- Name, Reflect, Act cycle (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008)



## Interviews with Multilingual Youth

TCs asked 5th and 6th grade students at their school sites:

1. Were there challenges that you faced as a bilingual student here at X School?
2. What could the school do to help you with those challenges?
3. Do you feel like your home language is valued here at X School?
4. Was there a time when you were treated unfairly due to a language issue? What could be done to make things right?
5. As a bilingual student, what are some things you wish all your teachers knew?
6. If you could be principal at your school, what changes you would make to make life better for bilingual students like yourself?

## Data Sources & Analysis

- Transcribed interviews with three focal groups of TCs, interviews with principals and teachers who attended the poster symposium
- Inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
- Artifacts used to describe characteristics of projects across class
- One focal group selected for deeper analysis

## Equity Themes Addressed by TCs

Broad Theme	Number of Groups	Number of TCs	Example Project Title
Validate Bilingual Identity	4	22	"I don't think they value Spanish": Valuing multilingual students' cultural wealth through representation and translanguaging
Use Translanguaging in the Classroom	6	24	"I Talk in English at School Because...It's School": Supporting Translanguaging in English-Only Environments
Promote Peer Relationships Among Bilinguals	3	15	"I Wish my Teacher Knew...": Community Support Systems for Multilingual Students Outside of the Classroom

## Focal Group

- 1 Latinx man, 1 Latinx woman, 1 White woman, and 1 candidate who declined to state
- All were earning a bilingual authorization
- TK-8 Spanish-English dual language school
- Student population was 90% Latinx, 80% from low SES households



## Focal Group's Equity Project

**Title of Project:** "I feel like I'm losing my heritage": Supporting dual language students in their transition to middle school.

- **Identify:** TCs identified the following issues
  - the need to develop strong bilingual identities
  - the need to nurture students' continued language development in the transition from elementary to middle school
- **Reflect:** TCs drew on the following research to shape their understanding of the issue and create a model of behavioral change
  - Translanguaging Research highlighted the importance of youth being able to use all their linguistic resources (García and Kleifgen, 2018).
  - Anzaldúa's (1987) work on the complexities of language and the connection between language and identity.
  - Interrelatedness of translanguaging, bilingual identity, student-teacher relationships
- **Act:** TCs presented their action plan at a symposium with local teachers & principals
  - Expand cultural celebrations beyond Mexican holidays to be more inclusive
  - Survey parents & Start Parent Resource Center
  - Enhance Spanish language education & bilingual staff
  - Ethnic studies curriculum & Community Responsive Pedagogy