

Spring 2022

## **“What I have learned about ethnic studies is to love myself more”: A Look at Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Newcomer Students**

Lan Nguyen  
*San Jose State University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd\\_projects](https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_projects)

 Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Educational Methods Commons](#), [Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons](#), [Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Nguyen, Lan, ““What I have learned about ethnic studies is to love myself more”: A Look at Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Newcomer Students” (2022). *Master's Projects*. 1098.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.76mv-77n2>  
[https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd\\_projects/1098](https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_projects/1098)

This Master's Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Projects by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@sjsu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@sjsu.edu).

**“What I have learned about ethnic studies is to love myself more”:  
A Look at Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy and Newcomer Students**

Lan Nguyen

Lurie College of Education

San Jose State University

## **ABSTRACT**

Throughout American history, schooling has been used as a tool of settler colonialism, hegemony, and white supremacy. This process of utilizing schooling as a tool of domination has been labeled by theorists as “miseducation”. To attempt to combat the miseducation that students experience in their schooling, I implemented culturally sustaining pedagogy, which necessitates the maintenance and strengthening of students’ relationships with their cultures in schools. In my project, I focused on newcomer students, as immigrant students are often the most underserved population in schools, and also are the most vulnerable to assimilationist teachings. This project utilized classroom observations, student work, and qualitative interviews with students to examine what I observed as I implemented culturally sustaining pedagogies with newcomer students to foster positive self-identity and belonging.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my professors at San Jose State University who have modeled culturally sustaining pedagogy and supported my critiques of the teaching profession. I am thankful to have worked with faculty who have modeled the possibility for a more radical, caring, and equitable education system. More specifically, thank you to Professor Bernadette Rodriguez who helped me learn how to be a better teacher for emerging bilinguals, and for pushing me to critique the colonial practices of some English language acquisition techniques, so that I could avoid these pitfalls in my own practices. Thank you to Luis, Marcos, and Christina, my beloved mentors in the Ethnic Studies Residency Program who provided comfort during times that were incredibly tumultuous and continuously advocated for me and supported me throughout the teacher training program. Thank you to the ESRP program, and my fellow teacher residents Demi, Jacob, and Christian for cultivating a space that is healing and inspiring for ethnic studies educators. I would like to extend extra gratitude to Luis Poza for advising me on this research project, and helping me grow into a stronger scholar. Thank you so much!

I would also like to thank my mentor teachers for helping me become a better educator. Thank you Victoria Durán for the endless support and affirmation, and for modeling unconditional love and care for students. Thank you to Natalia Sanchez for welcoming me into the classroom to allow more opportunities to learn and grow as an educator. Thank you to Karen Fechino-Toepp for being a wonderful and supportive colleague and for modeling relentless advocacy for the most vulnerable students on campus, and for the guidance on how to better serve newcomer students.

Thank you to my parents and brother, who were all once newcomer students themselves after escaping the aftermath of the war in our homelands. When I work with newcomer students,

I see parallels in their journeys and yours, and I strive to be the educator I wish you all had.

Thank you to my partner Bryan and my chihuahua Violet for the emotional support throughout this very demanding program.

Lastly, thank you to my students who have granted me the privilege of being in community with them and learning alongside them. As evident in this paper, I came into the field of education with endless critiques, frustrations, and resentment due to my own schooling experiences. But watching students demonstrate, joy, trust, community, and love has been incredibly healing and serves as a motivation for what I do. While I am your teacher, you teach me every day and for that I am endlessly thankful.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction .....	6
Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework.....	9
Miseducation.....	9
Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy .....	11
Chapter 3: Literature Review.....	12
Hegemonic Education in the U.S. ....	12
Internalized Oppression .....	15
Newcomer Students .....	19
Subverting the Master’s Syllabus .....	21
Chapter 4: Methods .....	27
Participants.....	27
Positionality.....	28
Procedures.....	30
Data Collection Methods .....	32
Data Analysis .....	33
Chapter 5: Findings.....	34
Introduction to Student Participants.....	34
Vũ.....	34
Mariana.....	34
Roberta.....	34
Ainara.....	35
Gorge.....	35

**TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)**

Maribel.....35

Students’ Experience and Relationship to Schooling.....36

Translanguaging in the Classroom.....38

Fostering a Transnational Identity.....42

Combatting Deficit Perspectives.....48

Names as Cultural Markers of Identity.....54

Students’ Sense of Self-Identity and Belonging.....57

Chapter 6: Discussions & Implications.....64

    Summary.....64

    Limitations.....65

    Implications for Future Research.....66

    Implications for Practice.....67

Appendix A - Transcultural Identity Lesson Plan .....70

Appendix B - “I am From” poem template .....73

Appendix C - “I am From” poem exemplar .....74

Appendix D - The 4 I’s of Oppression Unit Overview (includes self-love learning segment).....75

References.....76

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In my own experience as a child of working-class Vietnamese refugees, I've witnessed how the schooling system perpetuates internalized oppression.

In 5th grade, Ms. Parker, a middle-aged white woman, felt the need to devote a lesson on the art of table etiquette. She stood in front of our class of solely working-class Southeast Asian, Pacific Islander, Black, and LatinX students, and emphasized that regardless of what we do at home, we must eat using forks and knives instead of our hands during our classroom meals. This lesson left me and my classmates bewildered and feeling as if we were savages that needed to be civilized. This unnecessary lesson on “etiquette” was the result of Ms. Parker imposing her bias that Western table manners were superior to immigrant cultures and led to the marginalization and devaluation of the particular norms of etiquette of our households, and by implication, of immigrant customs.

Ms. Parker also encouraged high-achieving students of color to attend middle schools on the “better” side of town, where richer families and fewer families of color lived. This was one of the first times I internalized my working-class community of color as being inferior to wealthier and white communities. While my family faced difficulties due to our income, such as having to live in a high-crime neighborhood where it was unsafe to play outside, I did not previously see my neighborhood as a deficit, because we had a community of neighbors who supported each other and kept each other safe. However, Ms. Parker told me that my neighborhood was holding me back. Ms. Parker’s recommendations, guided by her biased view of poor communities as deficient led me resent my neighborhood of working-class families of color to attend a middle school twenty minutes away, in an upper-class, predominantly white area of the city. I continued this trajectory throughout the rest of my educational journey - I was



part of a prestigious magnet program in high school where my classmates were students who resided mostly in the wealthier zip codes, and I attended a renowned private university where I was the only student in view to stand up during an orientation activity that asked students “stand up if your family has ever received food stamps.” Throughout my educational journey I received numerous so-called compliments that I was “different” from other students of my background (race, gender, socioeconomic status) and this led me to internalize that academic success was dichotomous from the identities that I held. This led me toward a trajectory of internalized resentment toward my racial identity and class background that would take me over a decade to understand and break down. These experiences drive my commitment as a teacher and researcher to analyze how we can utilize schooling as a tool to facilitate students’ sense of self-love rather than self-denigration.

My personal experiences have led me to put into practice the mantra “Know history, Know self. No History, No Self.” This famous quote, which resulted from a loose interpretation of “Ang hindi lumingon sa pinanggalingan ay hindi makarating sa paroroonan,” a quote by Filipino revolutionary leader José Rizal, guides my discussion of an ongoing problem of practice in American education. When students are not taught about the history of their communities (the oppression they’ve experienced, the accomplishments of their people, the epistemologies of their culture, and the ways that their culture has evolved and adapted), they lack a sense of self. I argue that as a result of these harmful systems of schooling, students experience internalized oppression. Jackson, et al. (2021) define internalized racism, a form of internalized oppression, as “personal conscious or subconscious acceptance of racist views, biases, and stereotypes of one’s cultural group that are drawn from and informed by the collective dominant society” (293). Internalized oppression has incredibly detrimental impacts on students, such as lowered

self-esteem, negative perceptions of one's family or community, and lower performance in school (Kohli, 2014).

In my teacher inquiry, I explored students' engagement with their identities and their reflections on how schooling nurtures and/or hinders their identities. I sought to guide students in defining and applying their understanding of internalized oppression as well as identifying forms of community cultural wealth, and observed students' comments about their self-identification and sense of belonging after participating in this learning. This ultimately guided me in addressing the question: what can I observe about students' sense of identity and belonging when the class curriculum is centered on culturally sustaining pedagogy?

## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Miseducation

Dr. Carter Woodson describes the theoretical framework of miseducation in his book *Miseducation of the Negro* (1933). Woodson argues that the system of American schooling is intentionally designed to teach people from marginalized backgrounds to internalize hegemonic ideals about their communities, thus perpetuating the systems of oppression. Throughout this project, I will be analyzing students' relationship with school through the lens of miseducation.

While Woodson's scholarship focused primarily on the Black community, many of his observations can be applied to other marginalized groups. Woodson argues that one tool of miseducation is the school curriculum, which portrays communities of color as inferior to the White race. In contemporary contexts, nearly 100 years after Woodson's book was published, this argument continues to hold true as American education continues to center Eurocentric narratives vis-a-vis curriculums that underrepresent communities of color or feature a deficit-based lens of oppressed communities (Huber et al., 2006). Woodson concludes that due to the nature of this curriculum, when African Americans achieve academic success, they simultaneously have internalized hatred and shame of their racial background, thus situating academic success as dichotomous from love for one's community. This contributes to systemic oppression, because when marginalized communities internalize their inferiority, there is assurance that structures of oppression will remain in place, as there will be no will to resist them. As schooling perpetuates internalized oppression, students will blame themselves, families, and communities for their negative conditions and remain unaware of the systemic factors that contribute to their oppressed condition, thus contributing to the maintenance of these systems. Carter Woodson argues this in *Miseducation of the Negro* (1933):

When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary.”(p. xiii).

Given this power of schools to shape people’s ways of thinking and making sense of the world, it is no wonder that major social movements such as the Third World Liberation Front, the Black Panthers, and the Young Lords take up schooling as an important aspect of social change.

Several contemporary scholars also provide examples of miseducation to show its lasting relevance. Constantino (1970) expands on this theory by applying a critical analysis of miseducation as a tool to subdue anti-colonial resistance in the Philippines during American colonization. He observed that the American military took over schooling in the Philippines with intent to indoctrinate the people of the Philippines to the ideology of benevolent assimilation, and to believe that the Filipino people needed American control because they were incapable of governing themselves. Similarly, Camangian (2011) applies the framework of miseducation to the present day by stating that American schools currently uphold a “Master(‘s) syllabus” that “seek[s] the social control of young people through a form of cultural terrorism of the mind” (p. 128).

Throughout history, students, parents, educators, scholars, and community organizers have been aware of this miseducation in schools, and have fought to transform schools into a source of affirmation and empowerment rather than hegemony. One such pathway is the framework of culturally sustaining pedagogy.

## **Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy**

The framework of culturally sustaining pedagogy stems from Django Paris's (2012) response to Gloria Ladson-Billings' (1995) framework of culturally relevant pedagogy. Ladson-Billings (1995) argues that schools should implement culturally relevant pedagogy, which bridges the gap between students' homes and schools by incorporating students' culture into the schooling experience. Paris (2012) claims that while he is aligned with Ladson-Billings' argument that schools must play a role in cultural maintenance, Paris worries that the term "relevance" does not go far enough to explicitly state the importance of sustaining, rather than simply including, students' relationship with their culture. Thus, Paris posits that culturally sustaining pedagogy goes further than being responsive or relevant to the cultures of young people, but rather it requires that schooling supports students in "sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence," (2012, p. 95). In a later conceptualization, Alim and Paris define culturally sustaining pedagogy as the perpetuation and fostering of "linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation" (2017, p. 1). This theory of culturally sustaining pedagogy acknowledges schooling's role in perpetuating the colonial project, and aims to disrupt the xenophobia and racism in the education system. Culturally sustaining pedagogy counters the process of schooling that results in acculturation, and positions the process of learning as additive rather than subtractive. While deficit-based pedagogies view the languages, literacies, and cultures of students of color as deficiencies that need to be overcome, culturally sustaining pedagogy views students' backgrounds as assets that should be sustained to attain cultural pluralism.

## CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

### History of Hegemonic Education in the U.S.

According to James Baldwin, a renowned Black writer and activist, education exists in a paradoxical state. Baldwin states that education should teach a student “the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions [...] To ask questions of the universe, and then to learn to live with these questions, is the way he achieves his own identity” (1998, p. 678).

However, Baldwin argues that societies do not in actuality want this of their citizens, but rather wish to create a “citizenry which will simply obey the rules of society” (1998, p. 679). An ideal education system, which Baldwin describes as promoting independence, self-determination, and self-actualization, would lead to marginalized communities possessing the tools needed to enact radical societal change and dismantle the systems that oppress them. However, an analysis of history suggests that American schooling has actively worked to disappear these epistemologies of self-determination through a process of miseducation in order to socialize students to accept and participate in their oppressed conditions. Thus, schooling is used as a weapon to colonize minds and prevent resistance to the oppressive state.

Starting as early as the 1600s, Christian settlers abducted indigenous children from their homes and forced them to attend boarding schools that promoted Christian values (Smith, 2004). This practice became institutionalized in the United States during the administration of Ulysses S. Grant, when Richard Henry Pratt proposed the infamous policy of cultural genocide that aimed to “Kill the Indian and save the man” (Smith, 2004). Within the confines of these boarding schools, indigenous children were victims of physical, sexual, and verbal abuse, were prohibited from speaking their native language or practicing their native customs, experienced medical experimentation and involuntary sterilization, and thousands lost their lives (Smith, 2004). The

abuses at these boarding schools were justified by missionaries and lawmakers who saw indigenous culture as “barbaric” and felt a need to “civilize” the indigenous population (Smith, 2004). Furthermore, the racialization of Native Americans as “barbaric” and “inferior,” and the resulting devaluation of indigenous life, allowed for the successful colonization of indigenous people (Kong, 2019). While many indigenous tribes were “pacified militarily,” settler governments saw this military domination as an incomplete colonization, because the indigenous people still possessed self-determination and collectivist values that could breed resistance to the settler colonial project (Kong, 2019). Thus, boarding schools were a necessary tool to break bonds within tribal communities and quell self-determination of indigenous people, resulting in a strengthened settler colonial U.S. nation state. The abuses of these residential schools continued throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a few schools still operating today (Smith, 2004).

This history of hegemonic schooling is also present throughout African American history. Hampton Institute, a school devoted to the education of freed African Americans, opened in 1868, three years after the Civil War ended. The school was designed to train freed Black people to accept their position as subordinated free laborers, with courses such as bricklaying, carpentry, horseshoe making, and other subjects that prepared students to be laborers (Kong, 2019). This training prepared African Americans to enter the low-wage labor workforce, thus perpetuating racial and class hierarchies. The curriculum at Hampton, as well as other schools created for freed people after the Civil War, lacked content that would lead to self-determination, such as steps for starting one’s own business, skills for leadership, or empowerment to innovate new things. Oftentimes, the curriculum in these schools perpetuated the white gaze, which viewed African Americans as “other” and “inferior.” This was seen in medical schools, where African Americans were taught about the disproportionate rate of ailments such as syphilis and

tuberculosis in African Americans, without the context that these diseases were more infectious in the Black community because the disease originated in White populations, allowing for herd immunity amongst Caucasians (Woodson, 1933). These statistics, when shared without the situational context, racializes African Americans as “diseased” and biologically inferior. Dr. Carter Woodson argues that after years of schooling under the white gaze, African American students will internalize these deficit-based views and begin to agree that their communities are inferior (Woodson, 1933). This internalized oppression maintains social hierarchies and perpetuates racial capitalism, in which African Americans are devalued and internalize their racialized status as providers of cheap labor to fuel the U.S. economy (Kong, 2019; Woodson, 1933; Baldwin, 1963).

With strong evidence that schooling has served as an effective tool to suppress Native American and Black communities, the U.S. continued its hegemonic project in the Philippines in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the Philippines became an American colony, the U.S. authorities took control of the education system in the Philippines and implemented a curriculum that indoctrinated the Filipino people into U.S. nationalist ideology (Constantino, 1970). This curriculum portrayed Filipino sovereignty leaders as criminals, celebrated American figures like George Washington while invisibilizing Filipino history, and adopted an English-only model of instruction, thus leading to a loss of indigenous language and a creation of communication barriers amongst generations (Constantino, 1970). These strategies led to division amongst Filipinos and contributed to the internalization of the benevolent assimilation ideology, which stated that the Filipino people needed American control because they were incapable of governing themselves. (Constantino, 1970). A successful internalization of these ideologies would quench movements for independence from the colonizer. This is evident in American



General Arthur McArthur's recommendation to appropriate Filipino schools as "primarily and exclusively as an adjunct to military operations calculated to pacify the people" (cited in Constantino, 1970, p. 22). Thus, schooling was used as an intentional and calculated strategy to suppress self-determination in the Philippines in order to maintain the U.S.'s position as the governing body of the colony.

An analysis of the U.S.'s historical approach toward educating Native Americans, African Americans, and Filipinos could be connected through the lens of social reproduction theory, which suggests that schools are not institutions designed to equalize inequalities, but rather perpetuate them (Collins, 2009). This social reproduction is manifested via a "hidden curriculum" in our education system that reinforces social hierarchies (Anyon, 2010). While the social reproduction theory suggests that schooling reproduces inequalities, some scholars argue that "colonial miseducation" would be a more accurate depiction of schooling (Camangian, 2021; Woodson, 1933; Kong, 2019; Constantino, 1970). The concept of colonial miseducation suggests that schooling serves as an intentional and hostile process to create as well as perpetuate hegemonic hierarchies, often in pursuit of completing the racial capitalist and settler colonial project (Camangian, 2021; Kong, 2019). Thus, while there are differing schools of thought on schooling's role in simply perpetuating existing hierarchies or its active role in creating these hierarchies, these histories and theories raise the concern that marginalized students are not leaving school with the tools needed to overcome or dismantle the systems of oppression that hold them back.

### **Internalized Oppression**

Drawing from Woodson's (1933) and Constantino's (1970) work, I argue that schooling miseducates students to internalize their oppression, thus veiling and protecting the systems

which create these lived conditions of hegemony, inequality, and violence.. While the most scholarly works focus on internalized racism, the internalization and acceptance of hegemonic narratives about one's own race, I argue that schooling also perpetuates the internalization of hegemonic narratives about other identities that students hold such as gender, socioeconomic status, citizenship status, etc. Thus, the term "internalized oppression" refers to the internalization of inferiority due to various identities, whereas "internalized racism," which the literature focuses heavily on, refers to the internalization of inferiority due to one's race.

Research suggests that there is a strong link between education and internalized racism. In a qualitative study, researchers observed that white teachers, who make up a prominent proportion of teachers, often experience discomfort when discussing race, and thus may sometimes not allow for critical conversations about race in the classroom (Noguera, 2003). This was exemplified in a Bay Area classroom where two Black students had shared with their teacher that they opposed the use of the "n-word" in classroom discussions of *Huckleberry Finn* and were only left with the option to leave the course if they were uncomfortable (Nogueara, 2003). This interaction suggests that students must accept the conditions of their racially hostile classroom environment or miss out on learning opportunities. This leads students to internalize that questioning racial hierarchies is situated in opposition to academic success, and trains students to accept racially hostile situations (Noguera, 2003). Furthermore, educational standards fail to include marginalized communities in a culturally relevant manner, which may lead to students feeling like their communities are unimportant or inferior. In the California U.S. History Standards, Native Americans are referenced only 14 times (Huber et al., 2006). LatinX communities are mentioned only seven times, despite being the majority racial group in many California cities, while Asian Americans are referenced only twice (Huber et al., 2006). This lack

of representation in the classroom curricula results in students feeling inferior and insignificant due to their racial identity, and may lead to students feeling resentment toward their racial group (Huber et al., 2006). The Eurocentric nature of education leads students to internalize that Western epistemologies, societies, and people are superior, thus resulting in shame of one's own community and ridding students of the potential to question and agitate against oppressive systems (Huber et al., 2006; Woodson, 1933).

Internalized oppression leads to detrimental effects in marginalized communities on an individual level as well as a societal level. Researchers E. J. R. David and Sumie Okazaki studied internalized racism in Filipino Americans and coined the term colonial mentality, which refers to the internalization of colonial teachings (2006). David and Okazaki shared examples of ways in which the colonial mentality is manifested, which include: the denigration of one's self (feelings of embarrassment, inferiority, shame, or self-hate about one's heritage), denigration of culture or body (perception that one's physical features or culture are inferior to European features or culture), discriminating against people of one's culture that are less assimilated, and tolerating the oppression of one's people (David & Okazaki, 2006). While these characteristics were noticed specifically amongst the Filipino American population, similar patterns can be observed in other marginalized communities (class, gender, sexuality, etc.). Kohli (2014) describes separate qualitative research that found that internalized racism was exemplified as self-deprecating viewpoints such as students blaming their families for their conditions of poverty, ceasing to speak their first language because they were embarrassed and internalized the language as inferior, and wishing that they were white. Internalized racism leads to lowered self-esteem, negative perceptions of one's family or community, and lower performance in school (Kohli, 2014). A study found that Black students who viewed their Black identity as a

negative quality were more likely to drop out of school, suggesting a correlation between internalized racism and academic achievement (Sleeter, 2011). Huber, Johnson, and Kohli (2006) argue that this phenomenon is more accurately described as “push out” rather than “drop out”, as “push out” acknowledges that students leave school due to the internalization of racism from teachers, curriculum, and lack of resources, which leads to disengagement and alienation in schools. Thus, internalized oppression is correlated with lower academic achievement. However, scholars also argue that academic achievement could be viewed as a successful “miseducation”, which leaves students ignorant and accepting of systemic oppression, thus diminishing students’ ability to resist and change the conditions of oppression that they live under (Woodson, 1933; Constantino, 1970; Kong, 2019). Therefore, students are left with two pathways in mainstream schooling: rejecting the colonial miseducation and getting pushed out of school, or accepting their miseducation and exchanging academic success for an internalization of their communities’ oppression.

In sum, a study of historical education practices shows that schooling has been used to indoctrinate students into internalizing their oppression. While many hegemonic schooling projects have been intentional tools of settler colonialism and racial capitalism, even well-intentioned teachers can facilitate the internalization of oppression (Kohli, 2014). Therefore, it is essential that the teachers study these histories, reflect on how they may be contributing to this system, and implement strategies to mitigate harm that has been inflicted on students throughout their years of schooling. South African anti-apartheid activist Steven Biko stated that “the most potent weapon of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.” Thus, to liberate students from the conditions of oppression, it is essential that educators recognize their

potential for perpetuating internalized racism and guide students in the dismantling of these structures.

### **Newcomer Students**

This paper will focus specifically on newcomer students, as immigrant students are often the most “overlooked and underserved” population of students in American schools (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Newcomer students are students who recently moved to the U.S. from another country, and include a wide range of situations such as youth who are refugees, accompanied minors, U.S. citizens, or students from migrant worker families (California Department of Education, n.d.). Newcomer students also arrive in the U.S. with a wide range of English language proficiency (California Department of Education, n.d.). Newcomer students have unique educational needs due to possible factors such as interrupted education, adjusting to living with new household members, limited English proficiency, and adjusting to a new culture (Bartlette & Garcia, 2011). American schools often fail to meet these needs by not having newcomer students' culture and language reflected in the school curriculum and teachers lacking awareness of students' experiences and thus developing a negative perception of students (Bartlette & Garcia, 2011). In a case study of 57 schools in 9 school districts, researchers found that most school districts in the study were not serving newcomer students adequately due to the lack of well-trained bilingual teachers, appropriate instructional materials, adaptations for students with interrupted education, and mental health services for students coping with the “traumas associated with leaving one culture and adjusting to another” (McDonnell & Hill, 1993, p. 13). These may be contributing factors to data that suggests that students who immigrate from Mexico drop out at a rate two to three times higher than American-born students (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000).

In similar vein to the framework of miseducation, Valenzuela argues that schools not only underserve newcomer youth, but that schools actively detract from students' cultural resources in a process she terms *subtractive schooling* (Valenzuela, 1999). Valenzuela (1999) studied differences among immigrant Mexican students and U.S.-born Mexican students and found that immigrant students had more positive experiences in school and higher rates of academic success. She concludes that these differences are due to immigrant students possessing stronger ties to their cultural identities and more social capital, and that Mexican-American students fare worse due to the *de-Mexicanization*, or the subtraction of students' culture and language, that students have experienced in their schooling. Valenzuela (1999) argues that English-only programs that aim to replace students' knowledge of their home languages with the dominant national language is a form of subtraction. Another example of subtraction that Valenzuela observes is the segregation of students into different tracks such as college bound vs. non-college bound, as well as ESL vs. non-ESL, which deprives students of their social capital by stripping away opportunities for students to interact with their peers. Valenzuela argues that an understanding and adaptation of an *educación*, a framework education grounded in Mexican culture that prioritizes a caring relationship between teachers and students, and emphasizes respect, responsibility, and sociality, is needed to better serve students (1999).

However, research suggests that most schools in the United States do not possess Valenzuela's recommended *educación* framework, but rather most schools promote assimilationist perspectives which involve letting go of one's ties with the native country in exchange for new ties and association with the current country (Jaffe-Walter & Lee, 2018). Adding onto the aforementioned history of American schooling as a tool of hegemony, scholars argue that public schools undergo a similar process for newcomer students, in that public schools

are “deeply implicated in national projects, charged with the task of transforming ‘outsiders’ into citizens of host nations by instilling normative ideals of behavior and identity” (Jaffe-Walter & Lee, 2018, p. 261). Thus, public schools are apparatuses of instilling values of American nationalism into newly arrived immigrant youth. Research finds that these assimilationist approaches result in feelings of exclusion and marginalization in newcomer students, thus resulting in lower self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and lower academic achievement (Jaffe-Walter & Lee, 2018).

### **Subverting the Master’s Syllabus**

While schooling has intentionally and unintentionally harmed oppressed communities throughout American history, there are also opportunities to transform school into a space of healing. Camangian names the hegemonic educational practices discussed throughout this paper as the “Master(‘s) Syllabus,” suggesting that American schooling works to benefit the oppressor and perpetuate the positionality of the “Master” (Camangian, 2011). This critique of schooling as an act of domination stems from Friere’s (1970) tradition of critical pedagogy. In Camangian’s work, he argues that it is possible subvert this Master(‘s) Syllabus by designing instructional units where students can draw from their lived experience to study the immediate conditions shaping their lives, analyze issues in the interests of oppressed communities, and positioning students as experts of their own knowledge (Camangian, 2011).

The field of ethnic studies was founded upon these very notions; thus, I situate ethnic studies as a necessary solution to subvert the American school system’s practice of miseducation. Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement, the field of ethnic studies was created after students at San Francisco State University organized the longest student strike in American history to demand a culturally relevant education (T’Shaka, 2012). Students

of various racial and ethnic backgrounds formed the Third World Liberation Front, in recognition of a shared struggle and experience being miseducated to subscribe to the values of the dominant society. After students at SFSU won the creation of a College of Ethnic Studies, students across the nation followed suit, organizing and striking in demand of ethnic studies programs. In the “Proposal for Establishing a Black Studies Program” written by the Afro-American Student Union at UC Berkeley in 1968, the purpose of an ethnic studies education is clearly articulated. The students drew from the notions of miseducation and claimed that schooling for Black students leads to “mental brutality, character subversion, and inundate alienation from [the] Black community” (Afro-American Student Union, 1968, p. 3). The proposal demanded that Black students receive an education that would prepare for “survival in an openly hostile country,” which would involve learning about systemic racism, studying African and African American art and culture, and examining Black social movements and leadership (Afro-American Student Union, 1968). In modern contexts, ethnic studies is defined as “an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and comparative study of the social, cultural, political, and economic expression and experience of ethnic groups”, which “recovers and reconstructs the counternarratives, perspectives, epistemologies, and cultures of those who have been historically neglected and denied citizenship or full participation within traditional discourse and institutions” (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2015) According to Tintiango-Cubales et al., K-12 ethnic studies educators must utilize culturally responsive pedagogy and community responsive pedagogy in order to be effective (2015). Culturally responsive pedagogy responds to students’ cultures and needs and assists in the development of their agency as cultural producers, while also situating students’ culture and funds of knowledge at the center of the curriculum (Tintiango-Cubales et al., 2015). Community responsive pedagogy develops critical



consciousness by connecting classroom learning with students' home and community life to help them analyze and act on their community's needs (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015). These ethnic studies pedagogies result in awareness of social conditions, feelings of agency to enact change, and positive youth identities, thus subverting the school system's tendency to miseducate students (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015).

Research consistently shows that ethnic studies has a positive impact on students of color (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015). Studies have found that students with higher levels of awareness of race and racism are less likely to drop out of high school (Sleeter, 2011). In a study involving in-depth interviews with Black students, researchers found a correlation between students' identification with Blackness and their sense of agency, suggesting that a curriculum that encourages students to learn about and embrace their identities will lead to student empowerment (Sleeter, 2011). Vasquez examined a case study of students in a Chicano literature course where students reported developing a sense of ethnic community as well personal and ethnic affirmation, confidence, and empowerment after completing the course (Vasquez, 2005). In a longitudinal study that followed Filipino American students who had participated in a Filipino American history and culture program, students reported possessing a "deeper love and appreciation of ethnic history, culture, identity, and community" ten years after completing the program (Halagao, 2010, p. 505). These studies suggest that ethnic studies not only leads to improved academic achievement for students of color, but also guides students on a journey of self-love and community pride, thus addressing and dismantling students' internalized oppression.

Furthermore, ethnic studies also functions as a pathway toward broader social change by guiding students to envision a liberatory future and helping them develop tools to enact the

changes needed to manifest this future. This is exemplified in a case study analyzing a social sciences program in Tucson, Arizona which practiced many elements of ethnic studies pedagogy (Cammarota & Romero, 2009). The program invited students in their junior and senior years of high school to read ethnic studies literature and critically analyze their own social contexts through Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). Youth Participatory Action Research is a pedagogical approach that guides students in developing critical consciousness and agency by conducting community-based research addressing social injustices in their own lives, schools, and communities (Tintiangco-Cubales et al., 2015). In the Tucson case study, students researched topics that personally impacted them and presented their findings to school policymakers, resulting in positive change such as updated books in the school library, approval of school building repairs, and increased classroom safety (Cammarota & Romero, 2009). Thus, ethnic studies pedagogy subverts schooling's perpetuation of oppression by guiding students in identifying systemic oppression and empowering students to change these systems.

With specific regard to newcomer students, Lee and Walsh (2017) argue that a socially just and culturally sustaining pedagogy for immigrant youth must involve fostering civic engagement and participation in the political process, critical conversations about race, and the recognition of the evolving and hybrid nature of students' cultural identities. Furthermore, Jaffe-Walter and Lee (2018) stress the importance of schools recognizing immigrant students' transnational livelihood. Transnationalism is the process of incorporating "multi-stranded social relations that link places of origin and settlement", thus forming an identity that is dynamic to incorporate both the culture of origin and the culture of the current location (Basch et al., 1994, p. 7). Researchers found that schools that recognized students' transnational experiences rather than promoting assimilation resulted in more immigrant students feeling a stronger sense of

belonging in their school as well as in the United States. Additionally, to resist the subtraction of students' native languages, researchers argue for translanguaging, which involves using both students' home languages and their new language in a dynamic and integrated manner inside the classroom (Baker, 2011). In immigrant students, translanguaging has been linked with a deeper understanding of the subject matter, a stronger development of the weaker language, a connection between home and school, and integration between fluent speakers and early learners (Baker, 2011). Thus, translanguaging is positioned as a technique to sustain students' cultures in addition to aiding students in English acquisition. These approaches combat the hegemonic "Master('s) Syllabus", to which newcomer students are especially vulnerable due to schools' long history of assimilationist pedagogy for immigrant youth.

*"Ethnic studies saved my life."* This statement was proclaimed proudly with certainty by Dr. Allyson Tintiangco-Cubales, a Filipino American teacher, scholar, and advocate for K-12 ethnic studies (Kollective Hustle, 2017). Ethnic studies pedagogy guides students in affirming their identity, thus undoing a lifetime of experiences that may have confounded in the internalization of racism. Furthermore, ethnic studies pedagogy empowers students and helps them develop tools to address and dismantle the oppressive systems they live under. Thus, ethnic studies is essential in addressing and correcting the miseducation that marginalized students have experienced.

In sum, a review of the literature suggests that it is essential for educators to acknowledge the hegemonic practices of schooling and to guide students in affirming their identities and empowering them to enact change. Dr. Bettina Love, a Black teacher, scholar, and activist, pushes teachers to pursue abolitionist teaching, which is a pedagogical approach striving toward educational freedom where schools nurture the creativity, imagination, boldness,

ingenuity, and rebellious spirit and methods of abolitionists to create an educational system where marginalized students can thrive (Love, 2019). This project explored what it could look like pedagogically to create such an environment where students can overcome internalized oppression and gain tools to prevent the internalization of oppression when encountering hegemonic forms of education elsewhere in their schooling. As educators, we must take this approach because as Love states in a video lecture hosted by her publisher, “education can’t save us; we have to save education” (Haymarket Books, 2020).

## CHAPTER 4: METHODS

### Participants

The participants of this study included 9th grade students enrolled in Ethnic Studies at my student-teaching placement at an urban high school in the South Bay Area. The school statistics show that 80.2 percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, which indicates that a large majority of students at this school are low-income. The school's population is predominantly hispanic by the district's classification system, with 79.9% of students identified as such. The school's racial demographics also include 15.3% of students identifying as Asian American, 2% of students identifying as Black, 1.1% of students identifying as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 0.6% of students identifying as "non-hispanic white".

The participants in this project stemmed from two pools: my second period SDAIE (Specifically Designed Academic Instruction in English) ethnic studies class, and a homeroom that I led consisting of all newcomer Vietnamese students. My second period SDAIE ethnic studies class consisted of all newcomer students, with a mixture of immigration backgrounds including undocumented students, students who were born in the U.S. but grew up in a different country, legal permanent residents, and students seeking asylum status. This class environment of 19 students included students who migrated from Mexico (5), Colombia (1), Honduras (6), El Salvador (5), and Vietnam (2). This was a mixed-grade level class that included students from 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade. The class also consisted of a diverse language abilities in both English as well as students' native languages. While the class expanded throughout the school year as new students transferred into the class or arrived in the United States, I had been serving in my student teaching role with this class since the first day of school in August 2021, meeting with students three days a week, with 4 hours of class meetings each week.

As for the second participant pool, I did not come into the classroom space until April 2022, thus granting me only a few weeks to observe and reflect on this space. The second participant pool consists of 18 Vietnamese newcomer students, 2 of whom were also students in my 2nd period ethnic studies SDAIE class. These students and I created a homeroom community, which met for half an hour for two days a week. Originally, these 18 Vietnamese newcomer students were spread out across different classrooms and teachers for their homerooms. However, in March, the school identified a need for a school-wide intervention to teach students about trauma and healthy relationships. The school administration pre-created lessons, materials, and videos to inform students about these important topics, but a teacher who works with newcomer students identified a gap in accessibility of the content to students who were emerging bilinguals. Due to my fluency in Vietnamese as well as my existing relationships with many of the Vietnamese newcomer students formed through subbing and community events, I was asked to create a new homeroom community for Vietnamese newcomer students in order to try to share the mental health-related interventions with students in a linguistically and culturally accessible way.

### **Positionality**

My identities and personal background impact my positionality as both a teacher and a researcher in this project. My identity as an Asian American woman may impact how students relate to me as an educator. While Asian American students may find me relatable due to our common cultural and racialized experiences, students of other races may find me less relatable due to my racial identity. Furthermore, my background as someone who is a first-generation college student who grew up in poverty may also influence how students relate to me. Many of my students are from low-income backgrounds, with parents who did not go to college, similar

to my own experience. This common identity may help me form connections with students. However, I am also mindful of the model minority myth's impact on the racialization of Asian Americans, which may impact students' ability to conceptualize my experience as a low-income Asian American. As a child of refugees, my proximity to the immigrant/refugee experience may aid me in connecting with newcomer students. Additionally, I speak English, Vietnamese, and Spanish, and this trilingual ability allowed me to form deeper connections with all the newcomer students I worked with by participating in translanguaging alongside students and conversing about personal lives or academics in students' native languages. Furthermore, growing up I also participated in English as a Second Language programs, and had to navigate bilingualism and English acquisition in schooling. However, I acknowledge that my current positionality as someone who was born in the U.S. and my mastery of the English language, which allows me to navigate the world as if I were a native English speaker, adds many levels of separation between my experiences and my students' experiences. Additionally, while I may have been able to form connections with Vietnamese newcomer students more quickly than other teachers due to my ability to speak the language and due to our shared cultural experiences, I did not navigate transnationalism to the same extent as my students.

My positionality as a student teacher placed me in a position with some authority in the classroom. While my youthful appearance and easy going demeanor may have positioned me as an adult who was approachable, my role as an educator in the classroom who needed to uphold expectations and procedures placed me in a position of power over students. Additionally, my ties to San Jose State University may have also impacted students' perceptions of me, as many students perceive universities as institutions that are exclusionary and elitist.

These factors may have influenced my own processes of data collection and data analysis, as my positionality may have led to bias. Furthermore, my positionality also impacted students and their perceptions and interactions with me, which would thus impact the research project. To mitigate the impact of my positionality, I made conscious efforts to practice vulnerability and explicitly shared about my background and positionality with my students. I was mindful of biases that I may have in my encounters with students and my processes of collecting and analyzing data. To minimize the impacts of my potential biases, I consulted colleagues and referred back to peer-reviewed literature.

### **Procedures**

To answer my inquiry question “what can I observe about students’ sense of identity and belonging when the class curriculum is centered on culturally sustaining pedagogy?” I engaged in the teacher action research process, which combines studying theoretical frameworks and literature with praxis inside the classroom, and intentional reflection about these theories and practices.

Throughout my student teaching assignment in my SDAIE ethnic studies class, I utilized culturally sustaining pedagogy and ethnic studies pedagogy. I was explicit in teaching students about internalized oppression, where it comes from, and how it harms communities vis-a-vis a first semester unit on the 4 I’s of Oppression (institutional oppression, interpersonal oppression, ideological oppression, internalized oppression). In an attempt to act as a direct counter to internalized oppression, students wrote a letter to their younger selves to affirm their experiences and identities as a summative assessment to this unit. Drawing from theorists’ advice to acknowledge students’ transnational identities, the following unit centered around the theme of migration and included topics such as different types of migration, intergenerational trauma,



transcultural identity, and differential treatment of varying migrant groups. Students were encouraged, but never forced, to apply these concepts of migration to their own lives. To wrap up the migration unit, students used structured sentence frames to write poems about the migration stories of themselves, someone in their life, or a famous person. Lastly, our class ended the school year with a unit based on Yosso's (2005) model of community cultural wealth, where students identified assets in immigrant and refugee communities throughout the city they currently lived. To stay true to the tenets of culturally sustaining pedagogy, the curriculum was shaped by students' input, with students sharing their interests in topics and goals for academic skill development in surveys before and after each unit. Students also expressed agency in their learning by requesting to engage in specific learning activities on a daily basis. In addition to these curricular strategies, I also utilized pedagogical moves such as forming humanizing connections with students, engaging students' families in the curriculum, and bridging the classroom with the surrounding community. To acknowledge the value of students' home languages, I shared key definitions and quotes in English as well as students' home languages, and utilized my trilingual abilities to allow students to write or verbally share their ideas in their home language while I translated.

In the 8 weeks that I spent with my Vietnamese newcomer homeroom section, I also implemented culturally sustaining pedagogy by speaking Vietnamese with the students. To allow students agency in how they express themselves, I gave students an anonymous survey to pick their preferred language in the classroom, and students unanimously chose to speak in Vietnamese. While Vietnamese was the dominant language in the homeroom community, I modeled translanguaging by switching between English and Vietnamese. I also adapted the pre-prepared lessons on trauma and healthy relationships by consulting other Vietnamese

educators and implementing examples and explanations that were culturally appropriate. Due to the limited nature of the time we had together, after 2 weeks of implementing the mental health curriculum (that would take 6-8 weeks to complete), I surveyed students on how they'd like to spend the rest of our homeroom time and students voted to use the space to build community amongst each other. Thus, the space was adapted to become centered on building community.

### **Data Collection Methods**

As part of my data collection, I compiled an observation journal that was filled out on a weekly basis. The journal was designed in a table format, with each row representing a class session. The column prompts included the date of the session, which class session (SDAIE ethnic studies or Viet newcomer homeroom), description of culturally sustaining pedagogical move utilized, and observations about students' sense of self-identity and belonging. I filled out the journal every Friday during my prep period, which allowed me an opportunity to reflect on the week before entering the weekend. In the column which consisted of my observations, I made note of students' body language, facial expressions, informal conversations with peers and with me, as well as verbal comments shared during group and class discussions.

Additionally, I solicited feedback from students via surveys at the end of each unit. These surveys asked for students' feedback about what they enjoyed learning, the relevance of the content to their own lives, and what they hoped to learn and practice in the next unit. The surveys also asked about students' sense of joy and feelings of belonging in the classroom community.

I also analyzed student work as part of my data collection. While I did not photograph and deeply analyze all student work, as I was partaking in my routine assessment of student work I paused and took photographs of work that exemplified students' feelings of self-identification or belonging. I also intentionally designed assessments to capture these reflections, such as

adding a question to the end of worksheets that ask students how they feel after this lesson or how they think they will use the content from this lesson in the future.

Lastly, I invited all student participants to a 1-on-1 interview to share their experiences in school, and how their schooling experiences have contributed to their sense of identity and belonging. Two students accepted my invitation and participated in a 20-minute semi-structured interview: Roberta, a ninth grade student from Honduras in my SDAIE ethnic studies class, and Vũ, a 12th grade student from Vietnam who participates in my SDAIE ethnic studies class as well as my Vietnamese newcomer homeroom.

By analyzing this data, I was able to make conclusions about my observations of students' expression of identity and belonging in relation to culturally sustaining pedagogical practices.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected throughout the study was used to determine what could be observed about students' sense of identity and belonging when culturally sustaining pedagogy is implemented in the classroom. I utilized deductive reasoning to find comparisons and contrasts between what I observed in the classroom and what other researchers concluded in my literature review. As I reviewed the data collected, I looked for themes relating to students' enjoyment (or lack of enjoyment) of their schooling experiences, and indications of students' sense of self-identity and belonging. I also looked for similarities and differences in my observations of self-identity and sense of belonging across different student participants.

## CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

### Introduction to Student Participants (With Pseudonyms Used)

**Vũ.** Vũ is a 12th grade student from Vietnam who came to the United States in September 2018 as a student entering 9th grade. Vũ is one of two Vietnamese students in my SDAIE ethnic studies class and also attends my Vietnamese newcomer homeroom. Vũ often arrives 45-60 minutes late to the SDAIE ethnic studies class with low energy. He has shared that he has a lot of responsibilities in his household such as translating for his parents, taking care of his younger siblings, cleaning around the house while his parents work, and working himself to help his family with finances. Vũ has a strong grasp of English and thus serves as an interpreter amongst his group of friends, occasionally asking to be excused from class to mediate conversations between his friends' parents and the school administration.

**Mariana.** Mariana is an 11th grade student from Mexico in my SDAIE ethnic studies class. Mariana takes the bus to school with her older sister who is in 12th grade and also spends time with her sister during passing periods and lunch. Mariana is quiet and reserved, and keeps to herself. She is dedicated to her schoolwork and can be seen studying for other classes after finishing her work in ethnic studies. She has a positive attitude and often shares that she is feeling “happy” during our daily class check-ins. On the weekends, she likes to rest and watch television shows. Mariana often wears clothing adorning *mariposas* (butterflies) and occasionally doodles these *mariposas* on her schoolwork.

**Roberta.** Roberta is a 9th grade student from Honduras who has been in the United States for 3 years, and is a student in my SDAIE ethnic studies class. Her father was a police officer in Honduras and thus spent a lot of time away from her when she was growing up. Roberta lives in a big household with her mom, many aunts, uncles, and cousins. She has five cousins who attend

the same high school as her. Roberta is very open in expressing her emotions and tribulations, often modeling vulnerability during our daily class check-ins. Roberta shows empowerment in speaking her mind and is protective of her friends and family members.

**Ainara.** Ainara is a 12th grade student from Mexico in my SDAIE ethnic studies class. She is 19 years old and most of her friends graduated the year prior. As an older student, she sometimes expressed frustration at the perceived immaturity of some of the younger students in the classroom. Ainara has a strong sense of ethics and speaks up when she feels that something is not right. She lives with her older brother in the United States, but has been very homesick because she misses her parents who are in Mexico. She really enjoys chemistry and plans to attend community college after graduating high school, with hopes of working as a nurse or pharmacist.

**Gorge.** Gorge is a 9th grade student from Mexico in my SDAIE ethnic studies class. In the beginning of the year, he seemed shy and demonstrated nervousness when participating in group activities or whole-class discussions. To avoid engaging with his peers, he often watched movies on his laptop when the class was not actively engaged in a learning activity. As the year progressed, Gorge appeared to become more confident and participated frequently in whole-class discussions, often being the first one to volunteer to share. As the year progressed, Gorge became a leader in the class, and consistently helped his classmates who were struggling with the content material or with English, and occasionally served as an interpreter for his classmates.

**Maribel.** Maribel is a 9th grade student from El Salvador. Her mom is very involved in her learning, and attended back to school night as well as a welcome night for newcomer families. Additionally, Maribel's mother insisted on Maribel inviting all her teachers to her quinceañera. Maribel is very studious, often going above and beyond expectations for her assignments. She has shared that she does this not because she is concerned about her grade, but rather she wants

the work to be to her liking. Maribel is driven and determined, and does not take no for an answer, such as when she continuously asked her mom for permission to play rugby for weeks until her mom finally caved.

### **Students' Experience and Relationship to Schooling**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic pushing students to remote learning from March 2020 until Spring 2021, most of the students in this study had limited experience attending school in-person in the United States. In a survey administered at the beginning of the school year asking students about their experiences with distance learning, some students shared that they experienced struggles with internet connection and that they felt “bored.” One student expressed frustration that she felt that her English did not improve during the time of distance learning.

In response to a question asking “What does education mean to you”, Ainara responded “education for me is the way you are to speak and treat people”. This perspective of education reflects Valenzuela’s (1999) framework of *educación*, which is grounded in Mexican culture and emphasizes the development of respect and social responsibility in students. Ainara, who is from Mexico, demonstrates value in *educación* and is seeking it out in her schooling experience.. In accordance with Ainara’s framework of *educación* and view of school as a place centered on relationships, Ainara shared that a challenge of distance learning was that “it wasn't so nice because you don't see anyone.” These responses suggest that Ainara centers social connections and relationships as part of her education, which falls in line with Valenzuela’s (1999) observations that newcomer students arrive in the United States with a strong sense of social capital.

While my literature review focused on American practices of hegemonic miseducation, an interview with Roberta revealed that she experienced a similar form of miseducation in her

home country of Honduras. As Roberta was reflecting on what she's learned throughout the class, she brought up a lesson about colonization that was introduced in October, which was 7 months prior to the interview. Students defined colonization and learned about the history of colonization in the United States, and then worked with other students from their home country to study the indigenous people of their home country, the colonization of their home country, and decolonial movements. Roberta shared "like, the *descubrimiento de Centro América* [the discovery of Central America], there were already people there. I didn't really know. Because in my country, like, they didn't really teach me about that. They were just like '*Cristobal Colon descubrió Centro América* but they didn't say about the things he did.'" Through the lens of Woodson's (1933) framework of miseducation, the failure of Roberta's schooling experience to teach the history of Honduras' indigenous people, their colonization, and their resistance results in a complicity to the settler colonial project of the nation state and the erasure of indigenous people. This suggests that the hegemonic nature of schooling is not only applicable to American schools, but also to Roberta's experience with schooling in Honduras.

In regards to schooling in the United States, Gorge wrote in a reflection that "ethnic studies teaches you a lot of things that the other classes do not teach you". When I asked him to name what is taught in ethnic studies that is left out of other classes, he answered "the experiences of people of color and immigrants." This suggests that in Gorge's experience with schooling in the United States, he had never previously seen people of color or immigrants reflected in the curriculum. This reflects Woodson's (1933) observations of miseducation vis-a-vis excluding the histories of oppressed peoples from the school curriculum.

Lastly, students have also shared experiencing racism in their American school. In an interview with Vũ, when I asked him if he felt like the school respected his culture, he shared

“not really... sometimes people are a little bit racist”. While Vĩ declined to share specific details about the racism that he has experienced, he shared “it makes me feel embarrassed because that’s the culture of Vietnam that was made tons of years ago”. In his comments, Vĩ demonstrated pride for his Vietnamese culture by acknowledging the long history of his Vietnamese heritage. However, he shared that his experience of racism resulted in feelings of embarrassment, which connects to assimilationism, a framework that suggests that students must give up their culture of origin in order to adapt to their current culture. While it is unclear if Vĩ’s experience of racism was in response to other students, teachers, administrators, policies, or a mixture of these factors, the school is ultimately liable for creating a safe and inclusive space to prevent incidents of racism. This indicates that the school as an institution, along with the teachers and administrators who cultivate the school environment, failed to foster a space that protected newcomer students from racism.

### **Translanguaging in the Classroom**

Informed by my literature review that exemplified correlations between translanguaging and increased language acquisition and stronger relationships with students’ home culture, I utilized translanguaging, which involves using students’ home language and English dynamically, in my formal class curriculum as well as in my informal interactions with students. This strategy fits under the model of culturally sustaining pedagogy in that it attempts to sustain and strengthen students’ relationships with their home languages. I modeled switching between languages as I spoke to demonstrate translanguaging. For example, after a student shared a poem that he wrote, I gave him feedback with the whole class listening:

Me: “Your poem really gives a strong tone of *cariño*, like ... how do I explain *cariño* in English...”



Another student interjected: “it’s like caring”

Me: “Yes, thank you, it’s like caring... the poem gives off a tone of a lot of care and tenderness... something like that. But I think *cariño* is something that can’t be perfectly translated into English.”

Through this modeling of translanguaging, I tried to show students that there is value and worth in their home languages in ways that cannot be replicated in English. My hope in explaining that *cariño* was similar to caring and tenderness was to include Vietnamese newcomer students in the conversation, who do not speak Spanish and thus do not have a conceptualization of *cariño*.

However, I emphasized that it is not a perfect translation to show that there is uniqueness in the term that should be preserved rather than reduced to a lesser meaning via an English translation.

This technique was also utilized by students. For example, in a conversation debriefing a lesson on Martin Luther King Jr., Roberta shared, “what he did involved a lot of sacrifices but he really changed a lot of things, so in the end I think it’s *vale la pena*... I don’t think there’s any way to say this in English but yeah I think it’s *vale la pena*.” *Vale la pena* translates into “it’s worth the pain”, but as Roberta demonstrated, while phrases and words can be translated, the full extent of the meaning does not always carry over, as students have developed associations and meanings with the terms in their native languages. Thus, translanguaging allows students to sustain and strengthen their relationships with their cultures and native languages.

When introducing key vocabulary words in my SDAIE ethnic studies class, I included the word and definitions in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The intent of this process was not only to aid students in understanding the English term, but also to sustain and strengthen students’ linguistic capital in their home languages by possibly adding new words and concepts to their repertoire of knowledge in their home languages. I asked for student volunteers to read

the words and definitions for the class, and noticed that students who rarely participate in whole-class discussions in English were quick to volunteer to read the definitions in Spanish and Vietnamese. This suggests that utilizing students' home languages in the classroom provided empowerment for engagement and participation for these students in a way that using English did not allow.

While I predominantly used English when giving whole class instruction, with the inclusion of both Spanish and Vietnamese during key moments, I typically approached checking in with students by using their home languages. Some students chose to respond in English if I initiate a conversation in their home language, such as Vũ, who has never responded to me in Vietnamese in our SDAIE ethnic studies class throughout the duration of our entire school year. While Vũ volunteered to read definitions in Vietnamese, he does not engage in 1-on-1 conversations in Vietnamese. This includes his interview with me for this project, where I asked him questions in a mix of Vietnamese in English, and he responded solely in English. However, when I see Vũ in our Vietnamese newcomer homeroom, he speaks to me in Vietnamese, which is the only time I have conversed with him in Vietnamese. This leaves me wondering if Vũ's choice to engage with me solely in English in our ethnic studies class but to use Vietnamese in our Vietnamese newcomer homeroom is due to him wanting to practice English, him feeling self-conscious about being only one of two Vietnamese students in SDAIE ethnic studies, or him feeling pressured to speak Vietnamese in the homeroom due to other students' preferences to speak Vietnamese in the homeroom.

Additionally, I noticed a change with Mariana's choice of language as well. Mariana transferred into our SDAIE ethnic studies class in February 2022, and I noticed that when I initiated conversations with her in Spanish, she would respond in English. However, on April

5th, after coming back from a weekend off school, she conversed with me in Spanish for the first time. I grew accustomed to speaking with Mariana in English, so I started out by asking in English, “How was your weekend?” To my surprise, she responded in Spanish “*un poco aburrido [a little boring]*”. We continued to converse a bit in Spanish about her weekend and her hobbies, and she told me that her sister sells enchiladas at a food stand. Mariana is pretty quiet and reserved, and doesn’t share much about her personal life. On this day, she chose to disclose more than usual. This could suggest a link between her use of Spanish and her increased openness in sharing about her personal life. It is possible that utilizing Spanish facilitated Mariana’s increased openness, thus making a case for incorporating students’ home languages into the classroom.

While it appears that translanguaging leads to observations of student engagement, openness, and relationships with their home cultures, there are a few challenges to implementing the practice. While I was fortunate that I spoke Spanish and Vietnamese and thus was able to comprehend all the languages in the classroom, it is not always possible for teachers to speak all the languages present in their classroom. Furthermore, I had a stronger grasp on the Spanish language than the Vietnamese language, and thus was more likely to switch to Spanish than to Vietnamese when translanguaging in a manner that was not intentionally planned. I also noticed that Spanish-speaking students engaged in translanguaging frequently, whereas Vietnamese-speaking students rarely engaged in translanguaging in the context of our ethnic studies class, but frequently utilized translanguaging within our Vietnamese newcomer homeroom. This leads me to question whether or not being a minority group in regards to language spoken leads to students feeling hesitant to practice translanguaging. Another challenge was that when students chose to share their ideas in Spanish, this communication was thus

inaccessible to newcomer Vietnamese students without me stepping in to serve as an interpreter. Thus, this created some challenges for partner work. While these challenges led me to identify a need for further study and practice of translanguaging in classrooms, it is clear that translanguaging also resulted in increased self-identity and openness in students.

### **Fostering a Transnational Identity**

Transnationalism refers to not only the physical movement of people between national borders, but also includes the flow of ideas, cultures, emotions, and relationships beyond borders (Jaffe-Walter & Lee, 2018). Transnationalism defies assimilationism by acknowledging students' dynamic identities shaped by both where they are from and where they live. Thus, recognizing and fostering transnationalism exemplifies culturally sustaining pedagogy by sustaining students' relationships with their home cultures. Guided by research indicating that acknowledging students' transnational identities result in increased sense of self-identity and belonging, I guided students to reflect on their transnational experiences and how they navigate both the identity and culture of their home country as well as their current country.

In my Vietnamese newcomer homeroom, during a daily check-in that asked students how they were feeling, one student shared that they were feeling excited to visit Vietnam. I shared that I was excited for them and that I hoped they had a great time. Then, many students asked me if I had visited Vietnam, how often I go, and if I would be visiting this summer. I shared about the times I've visited Vietnam and the activities I do when I visit. I was modeling my engagement in transnationalism by sharing about my various familial, emotional, and cultural ties to Vietnam despite living in the United States. The students' curiosity and engagement through asking many questions suggested that they had interest in learning more about my transnational experience as they were engaging in their own transnationality.

In my SDAIE ethnic studies class, students started off the second semester with a unit on migration. Students learned about the different reasons why people migrate, how immigrants navigate identity and trauma, and critiqued how the media responds and portrays various immigrant groups differently. One of the key concepts from the unit was transcultural identity, which was defined by Carola Suárez-Orozco as the combination of two cultures to create an identity that does not require a person to choose between cultures (Suárez-Orozco, 2004). In the classroom, I chose to utilize the framework of transcultural identity rather than transnational identity to be more expansive and show that culture can stem from many sources, not just one's nation. For example, I shared with students my experience of navigating the differences between the cultures of Long Beach, California and the Bay Area when I moved in 2020. I also chose to utilize examples of transcultural identities such as navigating being both a student and an athlete in order to make the topic more accessible and inclusive, because I wanted to include students who felt like they did not have a transcultural identity due to a lack of connections to American culture. In this lesson, students read Suárez-Orozco's definition of transcultural identity and were tasked with defining the concept in their own words, in English or their native language. Ainara wrote that transcultural identity means learning a new culture without losing one's original culture. This shows that students had a strong understanding of the concept. Students then listened to and read a short story by Indian American author Jhumpa Lahiri, who writes about her journey navigating Indian and American cultures. In the next lesson, students started class by writing a paragraph about what they will create a transcultural identity for themselves or how they will help a young person in their life navigate creating a transcultural identity. In her response, Roberta shared:

*“I will help my future nephew create a transcultural identity of being Hondureño and American. I will pass down Honduras culture to my nephew by cooking Honduras food for them to eat and celebrating Honduras holiday, teaching them cultural dance songs because even though they will live in the United States, I do not want them to forget their roots”.*

This demonstrates a strong understanding of the definition of transcultural identity and the steps needed to cultivate such an identity. Furthermore, Roberta’s response indicates that cultivating a transnational identity in her future nephew is very important to her, and the maintenance of her family’s heritage holds great significance. After students wrote their paragraphs and shared with a peer, they then engaged in a gallery walk to analyze different art pieces that represent transcultural identities and drew conclusions about the artists’ message relating to transcultural identity. At the end of the unit, when students were asked to share their favorite topic to learn about regarding migration, Ainara and Mariana shared that their favorite topic in the unit was transcultural identity. This demonstrates that students found value and enjoyment in reflecting on transcultural identity.

To close out our unit on migration, students wrote and presented a poem about the migration story of themselves, someone in their life, or a famous person. All students except one chose to write about themselves or a family member. I utilized a template created by poet Levi Romero, who was inspired by the poem “Where I’m From” by George Ella Lyon to create sentence frames that guided students on their reflection of the thing one leaves behind when they migrate, how immigrants find and create a new home, and how they navigate transculturalism. Students were asked to write about things such as food, traditions, holidays, and climate, which allowed students a structured way to reflect on their homelands and share their reflections with

their classmates. Students worked on the poems for about a week and a half, and each student verbally shared their poems.

The students' poetry demonstrated ways in which they've incorporated cultures of their homelands as well as the United States. For example, an excerpt of Maribel's poem reads:

*I'm from El Salvador and U.S.*

*From pupusas and pizza*

*From El Chavo del 8*

*To Billie Eilish*

The structure of the poetry, which weaves in elements of both students' homelands and the United States in a seamless way, attempts to reflect transnational identities by situating both the cultures of the homeland and of the United States as interwoven with each other rather than irreconcilable. This combats the assimilationist perspective, which claims that immigrants must give up one culture in order to fit in with their new culture. Instead, Maribel's poem showed that as she adapts to the culture of the United States, she sustains her relationship with the culture of her El Salvador. On the other hand, students also strayed away from the template of the poem to show resistance to adapting American culture. For example, the template of the poem suggested that students write "I am from [home country] and [where you live now]" to show that both of these locations are influential in their identity. However, in Vũ's poem about his mother, he chose to stray from the template and wrote "*She come from Vietnam and countryside. She lives at California*". Vũ made a conscious choice to deviate from the poem's template and write that his mom *lives* in California rather than being *from* California. This suggests that Vũ does not see California as being a strong enough influence in his mother's identity to equate it to being *from* California in the same way that his mother is *from* Vietnam. Thus, Vũ demonstrated agency in

sharing his mother's experience of transcultural identity by placing more emphasis on her ties to Vietnam than to California.

After each student read their poems to the class, I shared affirmations and what I observed in the poetry in regards to students' discussion of transcultural identity and the words they chose to associate with their home countries and the United States. After I shared my affirmations, I encouraged students to share affirmations with their classmates. One student read a poem that discussed spending time with family, and Roberta affirmed that she appreciated the mention of family because *"when people move they want to integrate into the culture of the new country instead of spending time with family, but it is important to spend time with your family and your culture"*. This suggested that Roberta sees assimilation as dichotomous from spending time with family, and that views spending time with family as synonymous to engaging with one's culture. This indicated that Roberta had been processing transnationalism and associated value with cultural persistence.

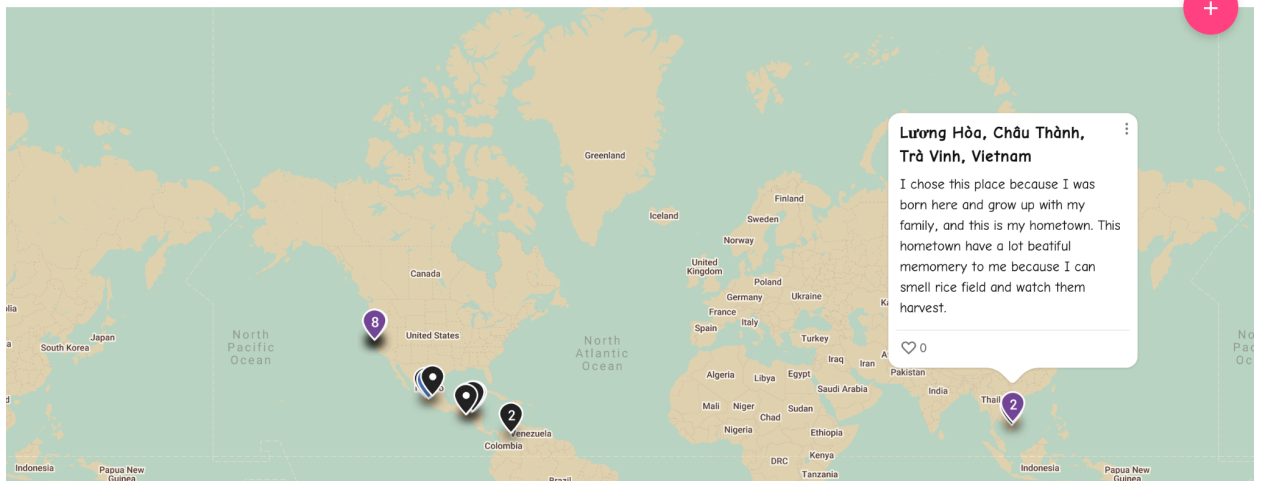
In my teaching, I sought to foster conversations about transnationalism not only during the unit on migration, but throughout the entire school year. During our last unit of the year, which centered on community cultural wealth, I invited students to engage in a collective mapping activity using an interactive online tool called Padlet. Using Padlet, I created an online map of the world that allowed students to zoom in and place geographical markers and notes in any part of the world. The interactive map was private to our classroom community but allowed for students to see the notes that other students wrote. To acknowledge student's transnational lives, I asked students to place a pin and note about a special place in their home country, as well as a special place in their current home in California. While I initially planned for this to be a 10-minute activity, I ended up allotting the remainder of class (45 minutes) for this activity



because of the engagement and interactions I observed. I noticed students showing their classmates different locations on the map and sharing stories and memories from their home countries. I saw students taking the time to read every note and asking each other questions about the locations that were pinned. While students usually are quick to start playing games on their computer, having social conversations, or do work for other classes when finishing an activity and awaiting a transition to the next activity, I observed every single student engaged in either verbal conversation or silently exploring the map during the remaining duration of class. After students finished placing the two pins required per the activity's instructions, students continued to look around the maps of their home and current communities and share stories about these locations. Most strikingly, I noticed students who often get distracted with off-topic conversations or phone use choose to engage deeply with this activity. This suggests a uniquely high level of engagement and interest that was not as present in other lessons. In my own conversations with students, I noticed more openness and excitement toward sharing personal memories, even amongst reserved students. I heard laughter and voices filled with excitement. The engagement with this activity suggests that students found enjoyment in reflecting on their transnational experiences as well as learning about the experience of others.

### Period 2 Community Mapping

Use padlet to share two community resources that are special to you on the map 1 community resource in your home country 1 community resource where you live now Examples of community resources: A place where you can gather with loved ones A place where you can buy things that you need A place where you can have fun A place where you learn Include: Name of the place Why it is special "This place is special to me because \_\_\_\_" A picture (can be a real picture of the place or a picture of what it represents)



**Figure 1: A screenshot of the online map with student-inputted pins and notes. The expanded note in this screenshot was written by Vũ.**

Thus, as I intentionally engaged students in explicit discussion and reflection around transnational identity, I noticed students' commitment and excitement toward sustaining their cultures. By providing students opportunities to learn more about and share about their homelands, I utilized culturally sustaining pedagogy through connecting students' school lives with their home lives. These techniques were implemented to actively combat harmful and subtractive means of assimilationist schooling, and served as an attempt to subvert the Master('s) Syllabus.

### Combatting Deficit Perspectives

Another way in which students experience miseducation is through schools explicitly or implicitly promoting deficit views of students' home languages and cultures. To combat these perspectives and sustain students' relationships with their culture, I utilized asset-based pedagogy to encourage students to reflect on and identify assets in their home countries, their families, and themselves.

For example, in students' aforementioned poetry about where they are from, many students reflected on and shared assets of their home communities. When introducing the poetry project, I did not say that students needed to write only positive things about their home countries. This is because I knew many students experienced a lot of hardship such as poverty and violence in their home countries, and while I wanted to combat deficit perspectives, I also wanted to grant agency to students to share whatever they wanted to share about their home countries. However, I did encourage students to think carefully about what they chose to include, and said "write as if your poem is the only way others will know about your home country. What will you share with them?" In the exemplar poem, which I had written about my mother's immigration journey, I chose to include only positive things about her home country of Vietnam. In my observations, I noticed that most students also chose positive descriptions. In the third line of the poem specifically, students were guided to write "I am from [3-5 word description of the country you came from]." Below are some examples of what students shared:

Gorge: *"I am from hard working peoples"*

Maribel: *"I am from where she felt free"*

Mariana: *"I am from the land of the best food"*

Vũ: *"My mom is from the Miền Tây, and environment in Miền Tây make you feel comfortable"*

Ainara: *"I am from the beautiful place and funny where everyone is friends"*

Roberta: *"I am from the complicated situation"*

In these excerpts, students shared words that they felt best described the country they came from. Themes demonstrating assets of students' countries such as work ethic, feeling unrestrained, feeling comfortable, having good food, and beauty arose. However, Roberta chose to describe

her country of Honduras as “the complicated situation”. As she was writing, I asked her to explain why she used the word “complicated” and she shared that there was a lot of violence in her country, but that it was also where she came from and that she loved it. These excerpts show that when students are asked to describe their country, they choose to use positive attributes. While Roberta chose to call her country complicated, the term encompasses both positives and challenges of her country, and allowed her to acknowledge her love of her country despite the challenges. Although I did not explicitly plan this activity to restrict students to sharing the assets of their countries, by modeling an asset-based perspective in my poem and not restraining students to utilize any specific perspectives, I observed that the activity ultimately combatted deficit-perspectives in that students were empowered to share their own descriptions of their home countries.

In the concluding unit of the school year, students were introduced to Yosso’s (2005) framework of community cultural wealth, which combats deficit perspectives by celebrating the unique skills and talents of people who experience oppression. Before introducing students to the framework, I primed students by leading a written warmup and discussion where students answered the question “Can you be wealthy if you have no money?” Students found the question very thought-provoking and were quick to share their opinions with the students sitting around them, some diving into long discussions over differing opinions. Before students started writing, I shared the definition of “wealthy” in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. I defined wealthy as “having a lot of resources; having valuable things”. The goal of the activity was to challenge students to reflect on the definition of wealth, and many students used examples from their own lives to answer the question. For example, Mariana wrote:

*“I think you can be wealthy if you don’t have any money because you have the people that you love. For example, to me, wealthy means having valuable things, and the family is very valuable”*

This shows that Mariana’s conceptualization of wealth expanded beyond materialistic measures, and that she recognized her family and social connections as sources of wealth. After students wrote their responses, I asked for student volunteers to share their opinions with the class. Ainara shared *“right now I don’t have a lot of money so other people may not think I am wealthy but I think I am wealthy because I have wealth in other ways”*. Roberta added on, *“I have the love of my family”*. These comments indicated that even prior to our discussion about deficit-based perspectives and community cultural wealth, some students had already identified factors such as family and social connections as sources of wealth.

On the other hand, some students disagreed and stressed that not having money was a severe limitation. For example, Vũ shared:

*“If we don’t have money people not respect. Wealth means rich. If someone is wealthy, they are become a boss and always have respect by everyone else, people who are not wealthy they cannot pay for foods, and house.”*

Maribel shared a similar perspective, writing *“if we want to eat we have to paid for that food”*. These comments suggest that some students associate wealth with material goods, and felt that the oppression experienced by people without money precludes them from experiencing wealth (defined as having resources and valuable things). To validate all students’ opinions, I affirmed the need for money in our capitalist society and the challenges people face when they do not have the ability to afford material necessities. I also pushed students to reflect on the ways in which people can get their needs met through non-material resources, such as having friends who

help them study for a test or neighbors who may help watch children while someone works. With this transition, I introduced students to the framework of community cultural wealth and defined the six cultural capitals outlined by Yosso (social capital, aspirational capital, navigational capital, resistant capital, linguistic capital and familial capital), while also empowering students to create their own illustrations to depict the definitions and to identify examples of these capitals in their own community. After students engaged in reading, writing, drawing, reflecting, and differentiating between the different cultural capitals, they were then tasked with writing a 3-5 sentence paragraph explaining how they possess one of the cultural capitals in their life. For the purposes of this assignment, students were asked to write their paragraphs mostly in English because they were also asked to share the paragraph with their peers, with English being the common language spoken by all members of the class. Vũ, who originally argued that one cannot be wealthy if they have no money, ended up going above and beyond the expectations of the writing activity. An excerpt of his 8-sentence paragraph reads:

*After my friend help me with the essay test I pass that class and I want to challenging myself to going SJSU to build myself and improve my ability in life, and everything else that I can use in the future. My family were support and encourage me. They proud me, and grateful my friend to try to help their son improve everything.”*

While Vũ only had to write about one form of community cultural wealth, in his paragraph he shared examples of how he possessed all six cultural capitals in his life. The excerpt above includes a discussion of social capital (his friend helping him with school), aspirational capital (his goals of going to SJSU), and familial capital (his family supporting him). This observed shift from Vũ arguing that one cannot be wealthy with no money to Vũ exceeding expectations of the assignment, writing the most detailed paragraph out of all his classmates suggests that the lesson

on community cultural wealth was influential to Vũ, and may have cultivated a change in his perspective on wealth. He started off writing about the deficits one faces when they are without money, but ended the lesson writing about the many assets he has in life that could not be measured by money. This suggests a change in this student's perspective from a deficit perspective to an asset-based perspective.

To learn more about how students felt about using asset-centered vs. deficit-centered frameworks in the class, I asked interview participants if they hear a lot of negative perspectives about their home countries in the news or in other classes, and how they feel when they hear these negative perceptions. Roberta responded as follows:

*“Yeah, I’ve heard people saying negative things. If we only talked about the negatives and never the positive, I will feel really bad. [...] That wouldn’t be fair. And I will feel really offended [...] I know that the people only focus on the things that are negative, because I’ve been passing for that too. But I think that it is good to focus in the things that are positive too. [...] If it was only negative, I think I will feel like really uncomfortable, I will just not come to class.”*

This suggests that students are aware of the perceptions of their home countries that are held by their teachers and perpetuated by the curriculum. Roberta's comments indicated that she would find great offense in a solely deficit-based discussion of her home country of Honduras, to the point where she would skip class if she experienced that. Roberta's willingness to skip class if the curriculum did not include asset-based discussion of Honduras exemplifies her determination to defy the Master('s) Syllabus and prevent herself from being miseducated by removing herself from the classroom. It is possible that this perspective is shared by other students, and that other newcomer students may be skipping class due to a dislike of deficit-based perspectives in their

classroom. This may contribute to the statistic that immigrant students from Mexico drop out two to three times higher than their U.S.-born peers. Roberta expressed an appreciation for activities in the classroom that highlighted the positive aspects of her home country, thus suggesting that incorporating an asset-based perspective of students' countries would benefit newcomer students.

Furthermore, utilizing an asset-based pedagogy not only results in affective improvements, but also contributes academic, linguistic, and cognitive benefits. In the activities described throughout this section, students were engaged in meaningful higher order thinking, practiced questioning standardized definitions, and grappled with different perspectives. I observed students appearing more confident in taking linguistic risks by communicating in English, which could have resulted from feelings of affirmation of their identities and backgrounds cultivated by these activities.

### **Names as Markers of Cultural Identity**

While I originally sought out to study students' cultural identity, while engaging in this project I also found myself reflecting on my own identity and implementing changes to my own identity expression. On the second day that my Vietnamese newcomer homeroom class met, as I was passing back papers to students, I noticed that most students wrote their names without the diacritics. In the Vietnamese language, these diacritics are tremendously important, as they dictate the pronunciation and meaning of the word. For example, *Hòa*, a popular Vietnamese name, means "peaceful and harmonious." Without the diacritics, *Hoa* means "flower." When using a different diacritic, the meaning also changes; for example, *Hóa* means "chemical." Given this observation, I did a short lesson about how diacritics impact the meaning of our names. Students shared that they did not write the diacritics because their teachers, who are not



Vietnamese, do not understand, and that they will mispronounce their names regardless. I shared that while others may not understand, it holds meaning to us and by writing our names the proper way, we are respecting our own identity. When students passed in their papers that day, every single student had written their name using the proper diacritics.

Additionally, names in Vietnamese culture are written using the following format “Family name Middle Name First Name.” For example, my name written in traditional Vietnamese formatting is “Nguyễn Hoàng Lan.” Because of the difference between this structure and the American system of writing names, many Vietnamese students end up having their names mixed up in the official school documentation. Thus, on teachers’ rosters, they see “Trần” and “Hoàng” and “Nguyễn,” which are common Vietnamese last names, listed as students’ first names. Many students, such as Vũ, chose to accept and adopt these names as their new first names rather than correcting the school and their teachers. On the first day of school, I immediately noticed that Vũ’s first name was listed as Trần, with his last name as Vũ. However, when he introduced himself to the ethnic studies SDAIE class, he said his name is Trần. I approached him and asked him if his last name is Vũ or Trần, and he responded that his last name is Trần but the school messed up his name and he decided to adopt the name that is written in the school roster. I asked him if he wanted me to help him change the name on the roster, and he declined. I also asked if it would be okay for me to call him Vũ, and he said yes, but only when in a 1-on-1 context. Thus, I refer to him as Vũ privately and use Trần when speaking in front of others. However, when Vũ entered the Vietnamese newcomer homeroom, during an activity where students introduced themselves to their peers, he introduced himself as Vũ rather than Trần. In the ethnic studies SDAIE class, where his name is officially institutionalized incorrectly on the roster, and in an environment with non-Vietnamese peers, Vũ accepts and

adopts the incorrect version of his name. In the Vietnamese newcomer homeroom, a space of all Vietnamese newcomer students that is more informal and where there is no official class roster, he demonstrates agency by introducing himself to his peers by his correct name. When I asked Vũ about why he uses different names in these contexts, he shared that he is okay with either Vũ or Trần. This led me to reflect on names as a reflection of identity, as well as my own journey with name and identity.

The constant mispronunciation of students' names, as well as the school's failure to accurately reflect students' names in their records is a form of subtractive schooling. Valenzuela argues that the incorrect representation of students' names "erodes the importance of cultural identity" (1999, p. 341). Thus, I attempted to remedy these subtractive acts of schooling by affirming students' cultural names while also acknowledging students' agency and referring to them how they wish to be referred.

These conversations with the Vietnamese newcomer homeroom also prompted a self-reflection of my own name and how it has been adopted away from its cultural roots. *Lan* means orchid in Vietnamese, and is pronounced *L-ah-n*. The letter "a" on its own does not make the "ah" sound in English, so it is tricky for non-Vietnamese people to properly say my name. I recall my first day of school, when teachers asked my mother how to pronounce my name, and she replied "*anything is okay*" out of fear of causing trouble at school. This attitude of not causing trouble for others led me to never correct anyone on how they say my name. At school, I've gone by "*Lynn*", "*Len*", and "*Lon*" throughout various ages, and to claim agency over my own name, I eventually adopted the pronunciation of *Lan* (*rhyming with "Dan"*) in order to have a consistent way of hearing my name said by others. The correct pronunciation, *L-ah-n*, requires a lot of training and I've found it exhausting to guide people through this practice, so I chose to

adopt a more American pronunciation (*Lan, rhyming with “Dan”*), to make my life easier. With this, people still often pronounce it as “*Lawn*.” I never correct them. While my students have never called me “*Lawn*”, some of them have referred to me using the name of their other Asian teachers, such as “*Ms. Lam*” or “*Ms. Tran*.” It took me months to correct them. After speaking with the Vietnamese newcomer homeroom about the importance of honoring our names, I realized that I was not honoring my own name. I see my adaptation of (*Lan, rhyming with “Dan”*) in non-Vietnamese spaces, while simultaneously using *L-ah-n* in Vietnamese spaces as a reflection of my own transnational identity. However, my conversation with the Vietnamese newcomer homeroom pushed me to commit to honoring my name by correcting people who do not use one of my preferred pronunciations. While my experience with schooling left me to erode my cultural identity by accepting an improper pronunciation of my name for many years, I commit to honoring students’ names and identities as I move forward in my teaching.

### **Students’ Sense of Positive Self-Identity and Belonging**

After implementing culturally sustaining pedagogies such as translanguaging, fostering transnational identities, using asset-based perspectives, and honoring students’ names, I examined students’ writing, verbal comments, and interactions to look for indicators of students’ sense of self-identity and belonging.

When I asked Vũ how he felt about the Vietnamese newcomer homeroom, our conversation transpired as followed;

Vũ: *“I’m feeling good. Because when I was come it was the first time I have the homeroom with the Vietnamese people. Can use our own language.”*

Me: *“What else do you like about it?”*

Vũ: *“Can meet the friends, speak our language, and be confident.”*

Me: *“How does it help you be more confident?”*

Vũ: *“Because they are my friend and they can understand me.”*

Here, it seems like Vũ associated the co-ethnic homeroom space as a space that contained a lot of potential for social connections, and that the ability to communicate in Vietnamese led him to be more confident. Thus, being around students of the same ethnicity and speaking his native language seems to be associated with Vũ achieving a higher perception of himself, and also contributed to his sense of community, as Vũ referred to his classmates as “friends”.

Similar observations could be found in an analysis of the data surrounding the SDAIE ethnic studies class. In an interview with Roberta, she shared that she experienced feelings of comfort in class.

Roberta: *“I feel very comfortable. Because this is the only class that I really participate. [...] So yeah, I think that in this class, this is the best class that I ever had in the school year. I think I feel free to do things, to share my opinion, to share with people, to share with teachers. [...] I just feel pretty comfortable with it.”*

Me: *“What do you think about this class makes you feel empowered to share your opinion?”*

Roberta: *“I don’t know. I just know that my teacher or the other students will not judge me because I said something wrong. [...] I just know that my classmates and teachers will not judge me because I said, my, like opinion. And sometimes maybe they don’t think the same as me, but they understand no, like, that is your opinion. Because maybe you have been passing for a lot of things or just because for your experience of life.”*

In this conversation, Roberta emphasized that she felt comfortable to participate and share her opinion in the SDAIE ethnic studies class, a feeling that she did not possess in other classes. She

emphasized that her feelings of comfort stem from her perspective that the class environment is a non-judgemental space. Furthermore, Roberta mentioned that classmates and teachers understand that students may have different opinions due to their prior life experiences. This connects to the tenets of culturally sustaining pedagogy, which argues that teachers should acknowledge how students' experiences outside of the classroom impact their identities and perspectives, and that these experiences should be invited into the classroom. Roberta shared that this CSP tenet, which I had worked hard to implement throughout the school year, fostered her feelings of comfort and empowerment to share her opinion. This suggests that when teachers acknowledge and invite students' cultural experiences into the classroom, this may lead to increased student comfort and empowerment.

Gorge echoed Roberta's sentiments about the classroom community. In a written reflection completed at the end of the school year about what students learned, Gorge shared *"When I think of ethnic studies, I think of community, relationship, friendship, etc. In the beginning, I thought ethnic studies was like history class or something like that. But now I think of ethnic studies as a community"*. This comment moved me to tears, as I reflected on my intentional attempts to build classroom community throughout the school year despite various language barriers, gaps in students' age levels, and diverse interests amongst students. Gorge's comment that he associates ethnic studies with community, relationships, and friendships suggests that he feels a great sense of belonging within the classroom community that we have built in our SDAIE ethnic studies class. This sense of community could have resulted from a variety of factors, but it is possible that the CSP techniques that I implemented contributed this sense of community.

In an attempt to combat the hegemonic nature of American schooling that leads students from oppressed backgrounds to feel ashamed of their identities, I intentionally designed a unit centered on oppression and self-love. This unit, introduced at the end of the students' first semester, aimed to familiarize students with the 4 I's of Oppression (institutionalized, internalized, interpersonal, ideological), share historical examples of how schooling was used as a tool of hegemony (such as Native American boarding schools), learn from listen to artists of color sharing their journeys of healing from internalized oppression, and lastly, empower students on a journey of self-love by writing a letter to their younger selves as a summative assessment. In this letter, students were asked to update their younger selves on where they are at in life, share advice for their younger selves if they were having trouble loving a part of their identity, and share words of affirmation and love for themselves.

In Maribel's letter to her younger self, she shared about initially wanting to change herself when first arriving in the U.S. While the other parts of her letter are written in both English and Spanish, she chose to share this portion of her letter solely in Spanish:

*“Cuando llegue a los estados unidos supe que quería cambiar pero no quería cambiar mi pasado porque es parte de mi historia siempre me a gustado tener buenas opciones la escojer en un futuro y me gusta la persona que soy ahora”*

Translation: *“When I arrived in the United States I knew that I wanted to change but I did not want to change my past because it is part of my history. I have always liked having good options to choose from in the future and I like the person I am now.”*

Maribel's use of solely Spanish, when the other parts of her letter were written in both Spanish and English, suggest that this portion was perhaps deeply personal and meaningful for her, in a way that could only be expressed in her native language. Here, she shared thoughts about

changing herself, while also wanting to resist change in order to acknowledge her history. This demonstrates an appreciation of her identity and the experiences she has been through, thus suggesting an association between this learning segment and a positive sense of self. Ainara also shared a statement of self-acceptance in her letter: *“Something I’m proud of is that over time I stopped caring what people think and also whether or not I enter a stereotype of beauty all those things, just live happy and be strong.”* This affirmation of pride for Ainara’s rejection of beauty standards also indicates a positive sense of self.

After students completed their letters to their younger selves, they completed an end-of-the-semester reflection to share what they’ve learned in ethnic studies throughout the semester.

**What is ethnic studies?**  
**¿Qué son los estudios étnicos?**  
 **nghiên cứu dân tộc là gì?**

- [Letters from former students](#)
- [Precious Knowledge documentary](#)
- [WCO Ethnic Studies Mission Statement](#)

Ethnic Studies is the interdisciplinary study of difference, it is based mainly on race, ethnicity and nation, but also on sexuality, gender and other similar marks, and power, as expressed by the State, civil society and the individuals.

This matters to me because I think it helps you to accept yourself and because we learn from new cultures.

What I have learned about ethnic studies this semester is that we should respect other people because each head is a different world and that we should all be proud of our cultures.

Nghiên cứu Dân tộc là nghiên cứu liên ngành về sự khác biệt, nó chủ yếu dựa trên chủng tộc, dân tộc và quốc gia, nhưng cũng dựa trên giới tính, giới tính và các dấu hiệu tương tự khác, và quyền lực, được thể hiện bởi Nhà nước, xã hội dân sự và cá nhân.

Điều này quan trọng với tôi vì tôi nghĩ nó giúp bạn chấp nhận bản thân và vì chúng tôi học hỏi từ những nền văn hóa mới.

Những gì tôi học được về nghiên cứu dân tộc học trong học kỳ này là chúng ta nên tôn trọng người khác bởi vì mỗi người đứng đầu là một thế giới khác nhau và tất cả chúng ta nên tự hào về nền văn hóa của mình.

La estudios étnicos es el estudio interdisciplinario de la diferencia, se basa principalmente en la raza, la etnia y el origen nacional, pero también en el género, el género y otros marcadores similares, y el poder expresado por el Estado, la sociedad civil y las personas.

Esto es importante para mí porque creo que te ayuda a aceptarte a ti mismo y porque aprendemos de nuevas culturas.

Lo que aprendí sobre estudios étnicos este semestre es que debemos respetar a los demás porque cada cabeza es un mundo diferente y todos debemos estar orgullosos de nuestra cultura.

**Figure 2: Ainara’s end of semester reflection**

In Ainara’s end-of-the-semester reflection (Figure 2 above), she listed the concepts that she learned about in the SDAIE ethnic studies class, and adds that “it helps you to accept yourself”.

She also wrote “we should all be proud of our cultures”. This indicates that Ainara associates ethnic studies curriculum with self-acceptance and cultural pride. Her use of Google Translate to share her ideas in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese (despite not speaking Vietnamese) also shows a concern for inclusion of all of her classmates, thus suggesting that she felt a communal bond amongst her classmates.



**Figure 3 - Gorge’s end of semester reflection**

In Gorge’s reflection (Figure 3), he included artwork that he found on the web that correlated with his perception of ethnic studies. One art piece contains images of community members of different races united in protest. The other art piece includes portraits of young people from different races, with the caption “Ethnic Studies Now.” Gorge shares that in the ethnic studies class, he learned about “true history,” and concluded that “What I have learned about ethnic studies this semester is to love myself more”. Thus, Gorge stated a direct correlation between the curriculum and pedagogical moves utilized in our SDAIE ethnic studies class and his feelings of loving himself more.



These newcomer students expressing love and pride for themselves, their experiences, and their cultural identities act as a direct counter to hegemonic schooling, which aims to miseducate students by teaching them to feel shame about themselves and their community (Woodson, 1933). Rather, the students in the SDAIE ethnic studies class proclaimed their self-love and shared that these feelings of affirmation were tied to the community and curriculum in our ethnic studies classroom. These powerful observations suggest immense implications for implementing culturally sustaining pedagogy and teaching newcomer students.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

### Summary

The objective of this project was to explore what I can observe about newcomer students' sense of self-identity and belonging when I utilize culturally sustaining pedagogy. I selected this population of students because they are often the most marginalized on school campuses (socially isolated from non-immigrant peers, linguistically excluded from mainstream communications, systemically forgotten about in school planning), and most appear most vulnerable to succumb to miseducation vis-a-vis assimilation frameworks. As a teacher, I sought to sustain students' transnational identities and cultivate self-love and community. As a researcher, I aimed to reflect on my practices and look for patterns, trends, and correlations that might inform my future practice and the practice of others in the field of education. Thus, I posed my research question for this project; What can I observe about students' sense of self identity and belonging when I implement culturally sustaining pedagogy? This topic was deeply personal to me, because in my own experience, I found that schooling led me on a path of distancing myself from my identities as a working-class child of refugees learning English as a second language.

For the duration of the school year, I implemented culturally sustaining pedagogy, with a specific focus on utilizing students' home language in the classroom, incorporating transnationalism into the curriculum, and focusing on asset-based perspectives. I utilized these pedagogical approaches with a goal of combatting the miseducation that students undergo in their schooling. I sought to analyze students' expression of their sense of identity and belonging, and collected data by writing weekly journal reflections, analyzing student work, and conducting interviews with student participants. In this chapter, a brief summary of the findings is

presented, along with the conclusions of the study and the implications for future research and practice.

Based on the findings presented in Chapter 5, students share experiencing positive views of themselves and their communities, and feel a sense of belonging when culturally sustaining pedagogy is implemented. Students shared feeling more confident and being empowered to share their opinions and experiences. Students also shared appreciation for utilizing their home languages, and that this incorporation of their home languages led to increased self-confidence. Students associated ethnic studies with learning how to love oneself and possess pride in one's culture. Lastly, students also shared feeling like they were part of a classroom community that cared and supported one another. These findings possess great implications for strengthening teachers' practices and for further research.

### **Limitations**

However, this project also contained limitations. The students who volunteered to be participants in the study and successfully completed the parent consent forms and the student assent forms are all students who have an "A" grade in ethnic studies, and are students who have consistent attendance and show engagement in the learning. This suggests that these students possess an excitement for ethnic studies and have the emotional capacity to engage in the content learning. I gained a lot of insights from students who were non-participants in this project, and also developed deep relationships with many of them, but unfortunately I was unable to include more specific learnings from these students in the written portion of this project. The project would have benefited greatly from the participation of these students, as they exemplified the profound power and impact of culturally sustaining pedagogy and ethnic studies. Many of the students who did not submit signed consent and assent forms to participate in this project

exhibited different characteristics from the students who chose to participate. For example, many of these students had inconsistent attendance, with consistent late arrivals and frequent absences. Many of these students had issues with attendance due to personal and socioeconomic challenges. Furthermore, students from whom I did not receive a consent/assent form also displayed more frequent phone use during direct instruction, group work, and independent work, which may suggest a lack of interest in the subject matter. However, over time, many of these students exemplified a drastic shift in their behavior and engagement from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, suggesting a change in their attitude toward learning the subject matter and toward the classroom community. Some of these students also shared in their written reflections that the class had a profound positive impact on them, and shifted their perspective of what schooling could be. Participation from these students would have resulted in a much more comprehensive study, and would have provided a more holistic overview of our classroom community. Nevertheless, I am thankful to have learned from all of my students.

### **Implications for Research**

While this study focused solely on newcomer students, I also teach one section of ethnic studies for non-newcomer students. To add to the existing literature about differences in how newcomer and non-newcomer students experience schooling, it would be interesting to analyze students' expressed sense of self-identity and belonging and how this expression changes as they are exposed to more culturally sustaining pedagogy, and if there are differences presented between the newcomer and non-newcomer students.

Furthermore, my experience with my students was unique in that I was able to use my linguistic abilities to speak with students in their home languages, and thus use this skill to form deeper connections with students. This is certainly not possible in every classroom environment,

as many newcomer classrooms have students who speak 5 or more languages. Since it is not realistic to recommend that teachers should be fluent in all the languages of their students, it would be important to study how teachers can strengthen students' relationships with their home languages if teachers do not speak this language themselves.

Lastly, I hold curiosity about how students who do not receive culturally sustaining practices view their self-identity and belonging. To further illustrate the impacts of culturally sustaining pedagogy, it would be beneficial to interview students who have not seen their culture reflected in school curriculums and learn about their self-identification and feelings of belonging.

### **Implications for Practice**

Educator and writer bell hooks shares that “learning at its most powerful could indeed liberate” (hooks, 1994, p. 4). When I started my training to become a credentialed teacher, I entered the field with a lot of bitterness and resentment. I was healing from my own traumas of possessing internalized oppression and being miseducated. I was ashamed that it was not until I reached the age of 21 did I learn that people who looked like me were forced into concentration camps by their own president. It was not until I took initiative and led an independent study project during my senior year of undergraduate did I finally learn the details of what Vietnamese refugees like my family had lived through. I still remember feeling so incredibly seen and validated when I learned about Yosso's framework of community cultural wealth, but I had to reach the age of 23 and enroll in graduate school at UCLA before receiving the opportunity to learn this. Learning about the history of my people, our shared struggles with other communities, and our collective journeys of resistance liberated me from the feelings of internalized oppression, shame, and guilt that I experienced. In this project, I sought to share with my

students the knowledge and frameworks that I wish I had when I was younger in hopes of facilitating what hooks describes as “education as the practice of freedom” (hooks, 1994, p. 4).

I cannot assert whether or not utilizing ethnic studies pedagogy and culturally sustaining pedagogy liberated my students. I can share that I noticed students sharing that they loved themselves and that they felt proud of their culture. I can share that students talked about feeling pressures to assimilate but feeling empowered to sustain their relationships with their homelands and cultures. I can share that students acknowledged that in ethnic studies they learned about topics that they do not discuss in other classes, but that they wish all classes utilized our approach to learning. I can share that students in both my Vietnamese newcomer homeroom and ethnic studies class labeled our environment as one of “community” where they feel safe, supported, and confident. In line with my ethnic studies pedagogy, I will not strip agency from my students by labeling their experiences for them. However, I will share this: my practices incorporating culturally sustaining pedagogy and my observations of students’ positive self-identity and feelings of belonging liberated me. By teaching students what I wish I knew when I was younger, I no longer felt helpless in a hegemonic system designed to turn students’ minds against them. I felt empowered to design the classroom I wish I had. By seeing students mend their relationships with themselves and sharing feelings of self-love, confidence, and belonging, I felt like I healed the inner child who lacked these feelings when I was my students’ age.

My hope is that as an educator, I cultivated a classroom space where students felt liberated. I am proud and humbled that students shared feelings of belonging, self-love, and empowerment. These experiences implementing culturally sustaining pedagogy and witnessing

students' reactions ultimately liberated me from my experiences with hegemonic schooling, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

**Appendix A - Transcultural Identity Lesson Plan**

<b>GRADE: 9-12 Lesson Name: Transcultural Identity Art Analysis</b>		
<b>UNIT:</b> Migration <b>ESSENTIAL QUESTION:</b> What is migration and what are the impacts of migration?		<b>DATE:</b> Feb 8, 2022 <b>LESSON DURATION:</b> 95 mins
<b>LESSON TITLE:</b> Transcultural Identity Art Analysis <b>CENTRAL QUESTION:</b> What is transcultural identity and how does it relate to my experience as an immigrant?		
<b>CONTENT OBJECTIVE</b>	Students will apply their knowledge of the vocabulary word transcultural identity by analyzing artwork engaging in partner discussions about how the artwork represents transcultural identity.	
<b>CA CONTENT STANDARD(S)</b>	CA HSS 9-12, Chronological and Spatial Thinking: 3. Students use a variety of maps and documents to interpret human movement, including major patterns of domestic and international migration, changing environmental preferences and settlement patterns, the frictions that develop between population groups, and the diffusion of ideas, technological innovations, and goods.	
<b>ASSESSMENTS</b>	<b>FORMATIVE:</b>  Warmup - students write about their own experiences with transcultural identity  Partner work - students will discuss symbols in artwork with their partners.	<b>SUMMATIVE:</b> Students will independently produce a written response about how each art piece represents transcultural identity.
<b>LANGUAGE OBJECTIVE</b>	Students will write a paragraph about their own experiences with transcultural identity as a warmup. Students will speak to their partners to share their ideas about symbols and their meaning while analyzing artwork. Students will write how each art piece represents transcultural identity.	
<b>CA ELD STANDARDS</b>	<a href="#"><u>ELD.P1.9-10.1.BR</u></a> : Exchanging information/ideas: contribute to a class, group, and partner discussions, sustaining conversations on a variety of age and grade-appropriate academic topics by following turn-taking rules, asking and answering relevant, on-topic questions, affirming others, and providing coherent and well-articulated comments and additional information.	



<b>ACADEMIC LANGUAGE</b>	Transcultural Identity Symbol Art Analysis
<b>SUMMARY</b>	This is part 2 of a two-part lesson. Students have already been introduced to art analysis lesson and have begun to engage in the art analysis partner activity. To wrap up the lesson, students will do a written warm-up where they reflect on how they will create a transcultural identity for themselves (or how they hope someone in their life will create a transcultural identity). Then, students will finish the art analysis partner activity.
<b>BACKGROUND</b>	In this unit on Migration, students have defined migration, learned about different forms of migration, and have analyzed the psychological impacts of migration. In part 1 of this lesson, students defined transcultural identity and read a short story about an Indian-American woman's journey creating a transcultural identity. Students have demonstrated an understanding of the vocabulary term by successfully defining it and applying it in a short-story textual analysis. Students will now be invited to engage in higher order thinking by applying the concept through art analysis.

<b>LESSON IMPLEMENTATION</b>			
<b>Lesson Components</b>	<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Scaffolding</b>	<b>Formative Assessment</b>
<p><b>Duration: 25 minutes</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> Students apply transcultural identity to their own lives  <b>Materials:</b> students write in their notebooks  <b>Key Academic Language:</b> transcultural identity</p>	<p><b>Step 1: Warmup</b>            Students will write an answer to one of the following prompts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How will you create a transcultural identity by incorporating American culture and preserving the culture of where you came from?</li> <li>2. How will you guide someone in your life</li> </ol>	<p><b>Scaffolding:</b>            Sentence starters and example   <b>EL accommodations:</b>            Sentence starters and example; prompt is translated</p>	<p>Check in with students as they are writing, invite some students to share</p>

	(niece, nephew, younger sibling, cousin, future children) to creating a transcultural identity by incorporating American culture while preserving the culture of where they came from?		
<b>Duration: 10 minutes</b> <b>Purpose:</b> Remind students of the structure of the activity	<b>Step 2: Art Analysis Activity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remind students of the structure of art analysis partner activity</li> <li>Model the activity (writing down a symbol and its meaning, asking a partner what they wrote down, writing down what the partner said)</li> </ul>	<b>Scaffolding:</b> Model the activity	<b>Formative Assessment:</b>  Students will move through a practice round while I go around and clarify any questions
<b>Duration: 45 minutes</b> <b>Purpose:</b> Practice speaking and listening in English while applying understanding of transcultural identity	<b>Step 3: Group Work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group work: Students will be split into three groups and rotate through different art stations. They will practice writing down their own opinions, asking a partner for their opinions, sharing their opinion with their partner, and writing down what the partner said.</li> </ul>	<b>Scaffolding</b> : Conversation prompts written on worksheet	<b>Formative Assessment:</b> I will rotate around groups to assess student knowledge and ask probing questions
<b>Duration: 10 minutes</b>	<b>Step 4: Closing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students complete a Know, Learned, Want to know chart</li> </ul>	<b>Scaffolding:</b> Chart for organization and example	

## Appendix B - I am From poem template

**I am from...**

**Poem template adapted by Levi Romer**

**Inspired by "Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon**

I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (an everyday item that is common in the country you came from)

From \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (things common in the country you came from)

I am from the \_\_\_\_\_ (description of the country you came from)

\_\_\_\_\_ (a detail about the country you came from - smell, taste, feel)

I am from the \_\_\_\_\_ (plant, flower, tree in country)

And the \_\_\_\_\_ (another plant or tree in the area)

Whose long gone limbs I remember

As if they were my own.

I'm from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (a family tradition and family trait)

From \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (name of family members)

I'm from \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (family customs)

And from \_\_\_\_\_ (family habits or customs)

I'm from \_\_\_\_\_ (reason why you moved to a new country)

I'm from \_\_\_\_\_ (a hardship that you overcome) and \_\_\_\_\_ (another hardship that you've overcome)

I'm from \_\_\_\_\_ (place of birth) and \_\_\_\_\_ (place currently living)

From \_\_\_\_\_ (a place you like to hang out in your current country)

From \_\_\_\_\_ (a food you from the country you came from) and \_\_\_\_\_ (a food from the country you live in now).

From \_\_\_\_\_ (a song or television show popular in the country you came from)

To \_\_\_\_\_ (a song or television show popular where you live now)

And this is where I am going.

I dream of \_\_\_\_\_ (goals/dreams)

In order to \_\_\_\_\_ (why you want these goals)

And I will get there by \_\_\_\_\_ (what you are doing to reach the goal)

**Appendix C - I am From Poem Exemplar**

***My mom is from...***

By Lan Nguyen

- 1 My mom is from motorbikes and chopsticks.
- 2 From rice hats and flip flops.
- 3 My mom is from the land of kind people.
- 4 The weather so humid that you don't ever need jackets.
- 5 My mom is from rubber plantations.
- 6 And the banana trees
- 7 Whose long gone limbs I remember
- 8 As if they were my own.
  
- 9 My mom is from praying to ancestors and talking loudly on the phone.
- 10 From Ông and Bà.
- 11 My mom is from cooking rice and not wearing shoes in the house.
- 12 And from cooking with fish sauce.
  
- 13 My mom is from wanting to escape the poverty that she experienced due to war.
- 14 She is from learning a new language at 28 years old and surviving people saying racist things.
- 15 She is from Vietnam and Long Beach, CA.
- 16 From the park on top of the hill.
- 17 From pho and el pollo loco.
- 18 From vietnamese opera
- 19 To "Hey There Delilah".
  
- 20 And this is where she is going.
- 21 She dreams of a better future for her children and grandchildren
- 22 In order to give them a better life.
- 23 She graduated community college and continues to work hard.

**Appendix D - The 4 I's of Oppression Unit Overview (includes self-love learning segment)**

<b>Unit Title: The 4 I's of Oppression</b>	
<p><b>Key Concepts: Students will understand that...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are different forms of oppression</li> <li>● Throughout history, people and institutions have oppressed people in different ways and for different reasons</li> <li>● There are strategies to resist oppression</li> </ul>	<p><b>Essential Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How have schools perpetuated oppression in history and today?</li> <li>● What are examples of different types of oppression throughout history?</li> <li>● What can I do to resist oppression?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Overarching Unit Question:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the different forms of oppression and how do I combat them?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vocabulary:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Internalized oppression</li> <li>● Interpersonal oppression</li> <li>● Institutional oppression</li> <li>● Ideological oppression</li> </ul>
<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the 4 I's of Oppression?</li> <li>● Native American boarding schools</li> <li>● Introduction to internalized racism</li> <li>● 1960's Chicano Walkouts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Measurable Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will be able to differentiate between the 4 I's of oppression</li> <li>● Students will be able to participate in a verbal discussion about how schooling has been used as a tool of oppression</li> <li>● Students will be able to write a letter affirming their identities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Formative Assessments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kahoot differentiating between the 4 I's of Oppression</li> <li>● Group work identifying examples of each form of oppression</li> <li>● Listening to spoken word poetry and annotating different forms of oppression</li> <li>● Graphic organizer of notes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Summative Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will write a letter to their younger selves which includes their experiences of each of the 4 I's of oppression, while also sharing love and affirmation to themselves.</li> </ul>

## References

- Anyon, J. (2010). "From Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work" in Colombo, G., Cullen, R., and Lisle, B. eds. *Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing*, 8th ed. Boston, MA: Bedford / St. Martin's. 169-186.
- Afro-American Student Union (1968). [Proposal for Establishing a Black Studies Program]. Comparative Ethnic Studies Archives, UC Berkeley (Archive Call Number: CES ARC 2015/1, Box 2, Folder 7), Berkeley, CA, United States.
- Baker, C. (2011). *Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism* (3rd ed.). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Baldwin, J. (1998). *Collected Essays*. The Library of America.
- Bartlett, L. & Garcia, O. (2011). *Additive Schooling in Subtractive Times: Bilingual Education and Dominican Immigrant Youth in the Heights*. Vanderbilt University Press.
- Basch, L., Szanton Blanc, C., & Schiller, N. (1994). *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach.
- California Department of Education. (n.d.). *Newcomer students*. Newcomer Students - Resources (CA Dept of Education). Retrieved May 19, 2022, from <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/newcomerstudnts.asp>
- Camangian, P. (2011). Subverting the Master('s) Syllabus. *Monthly Review*. 63(3), 128-135.
- Camangian, P. (2021). Let's Break Free: Education in Our Own Image, Voice, and Interests. *Equity and Excellence in Education*. 54(1), 28-38.

- Cammarota, J., & Romero, A. (2009). A social justice epistemology and pedagogy for Latina/o students: Transforming public education with participatory action research. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 123, 53-65.
- Collins, J. (2009). Social Reproduction in Classrooms and Schools. *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 38, 33-48.
- Constantino, R (1970). The mis-education of the Filipino. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*. 1(1), 20-36.
- David, E. J. R. & Okazaki, S. (2006). The Colonial Mentality Scale (CMS) for Filipino Americans: Scale Construction and Psychological Implications. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 53(2), 241-252.
- Halagao, P. E. (2010). Liberating Filipino Americans through decolonizing curriculum. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 13(4): 495–512.
- Haymarket Books. (2020, June 23). *Abolitionist Teaching and the Future of Our Schools* [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJZ3RPJ2rNc&t=16s>
- hooks, bell. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.
- Huber, L., Johnson, R., Kohli, R. (2006). Naming Racism: A Conceptual Look at Internalized Racism in U.S. Schools. *Chicana/o Latina/o Law Review*. 26(1), 183-206.
- Jackson, T., Kazembe, L., & Morgan, L. (2021). Internalized racism and the pursuit of cultural relevancy: Decolonizing practices for critical consciousness with preservice teachers of color. *Theory Into Practice*, 60(3), 291-300.
- Jaffe-Walter, R. & Lee, S. (2018). Engaging the Transnational Lives of Immigrant Youth in Public Schooling: Toward a Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy for Newcomer Youth. *American Journal of Education*, 124(3), 257-283.

- Kohli, R (2014). Unpacking internalized racism: teachers of color striving for racially just classrooms. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*. 17(3), 367-387.
- Kollective Hustle (2017, December 19). *Ethnic Studies: Saving Lives, Sacred Spaces & Solidarity* | TFCU Talks San Jose: Dr. Allyson [Video]. Youtube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gbXr4diMjU>
- Kong, S. (2019). Racial-Settler Capitalism: Character Building and the Accumulation of Land and Labor in the Late Nineteenth Century. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*. 43(2), 25-48.
- Ladson-Billings (1995). Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *American Education Research Journal*. 32(3), 465-491.
- Lee, S. & Walsh, D. (2017). Socially Just, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy for Diverse Immigrant Youth: Possibilities, Challenges, and Directions. In D. Paris & H. Alim (Eds.) *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World* (pp. 191-206). Teachers College Press.
- Love, B. (2019). *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*. Beacon Press.
- McDonnell, L. & Hill, P. (1993). *Newcomers in American Schools: Meeting the Educational Needs of Immigrant Youth*. RAND Corp. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED362589.pdf>
- Noguera, P. (2003). The trouble with Black boys: The role and influence of environmental and cultural factors on the academic performance of African American males. *Urban Education*. 38(4), 431-459.
- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice. *Educational Researcher*. 41(3), 93-97.



- Paris, D. & Alim, H. (2017) *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*. Teachers College Press.
- Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, (2000). *Overlooked & Underserved: Immigrant Students in U.S. Secondary Schools*. The Urban Institute. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED449275.pdf>
- Sleeter, C. (2011). *The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review*. The National Education Association. <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/84024/AcademicSocialValue.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Smith, A. (2004). Boarding School Abuses, Human Rights, and Reparations. *Social Justice*, 31(4), 89-102.
- Suárez-Orozco, C. (2004). Formulating identity in a globalized world. *Globalization: Culture and education in the new millennium*, 173-202.
- T'Shaka, O. (2012). Africana Studies Department History: San Francisco State University. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*. 5(7), 13-32.
- Tintiango-Cubales, A., Kohli, R., Sacramento, J., Henning, N., Agarwal-Rangnath, R., Sleeter, C. (2015) Toward an Ethnic Studies Pedagogy: Implications for K-12 Schools from the Research. *Urban Review*. 47, 104-125.
- Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*. State University of New York Press.
- Vasquez, J. M. (2005). Ethnic identity and Chicano literature: How ethnicity affects reading and reading affects ethnic consciousness. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(5): 903–924.
- Woodson, C. (1933). *The Miseducation of the Negro*. Oshun Publishing.

Yosso, T. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 8(1), 69-91.