9-27-2018

"You Can't Know Until Someone Tells You or You Experience Something": Talking back to Deficit Discourse with Digital Photo Stories and the NOT-ICE Teacher Discussion Protocol

Jennifer K. Allen
University of West Georgia, jkallen@westga.edu

"You Can't Know Until Someone Tells You or You Experience Something": Talking Back to Deficit Discourse with Digital Photo Stories and the NOT-ICE Teacher Discussion Protocol

Dr. Jennifer K. Allen
University of West Georgia

Abstract

This practitioner research study explored the use of student-created digital photo stories combined with focused teacher conversations guided by the NOT-ICE protocol to provide insight into why Latin@ students' talents may be overlooked by classroom teachers. Digital photo stories, created by emergent bilingual elementary Latin@ learners, were used to elicit the primary data from the study. Teacher co-researchers participated in small-group, collaborative discussion sessions to investigate and understand how schooling labels carry potential biases that obscure students' gifts and talents. Findings indicate that digital photo stories can act as counter-stories by disrupting teachers' commonly held (mis)perceptions about emergent bilinguals, emphasize students' strengths, and help teachers see how they might reach these students differently by providing them with challenging and engaging learning opportunities.

"Stories, parables, chronicles, and narratives are powerful means for destroying mindset. . . stories can shatter complacency and challenge the status quo. . . they enrich imagination and teach that by combining elements from the story and current reality, we may construct a new world richer than either alone." ~Richard Delgado (1989/2011, p. 2413-2415).

It was a Monday afternoon in late November, and Brooke, the gifted specialist, welcomed me into her classroom, which had become our meeting space over the last several months. Soon after, Hannah, the ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) teacher, ambled in with Mary and Virginia, the second-grade teachers, following close behind. Lura, the third-grade teacher, rushed in with Louise, the fifth-grade ELA teacher. Their warm smiles were no match for their yawns, evidence that they were weary after a long day's work. The time between Thanksgiving and winter break was always brutal for elementary school teachers. Yet, these dedicated teachers, tired as they were, honored their commitment to continue our work and engage in rich, productive conversations focusing on improving educational opportunities for underserved students.

Through our work together, critically discussing emergent bilingual students' digital photo stories, we could hear loud and clear the ways in which our beliefs and perceptions due to common school labels, such as English Language Learner, and their resulting policies often produce deficit discourses that work against these children as well as those labels they individually and collectively represent. Through narrating their personal photo stories, children ignited conversations that allowed themselves as

well as educators to talk back to and interrogate the dominant deficit discourses that are unfortunately alive, well, and thriving in their communities, schools, and classrooms, much like the discourses that are flourishing in schools and communities across the nation.

"You can't know until someone tells you or you experience something," Hannah, the ESOL teacher casually stated during this meeting. This seemingly off-the-cuff remark came as the elementary teachers and I talked about the need for culturally responsive pedagogy, truly listening to our students, and making meaningful attempts to validate and honor the experiences and linguistic competencies all students bring into the classroom. You cannot know until someone tells you or you experience something.

It was a modest statement with a bold impact. In all of its simplicity, this statement encapsulated the reason behind our work together. We needed to hear the stories of emergent bilinguals in order to know them more fully – to truly hear their individual and collective stories – so that we could teach, or better yet, reach them differently.

Purpose of the Study

In this article, I discuss a practitioner research study designed to investigate why the varied strengths, interests, talents, and capabilities culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners bring to the classroom are often overlooked, causing schools to become sites of struggle for these learners instead of sites of boundless opportunities (Lee & Anderson, 2009). Building on critical theory and Latin@ critical theory (LatCrit), this practitioner research study (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) engaged six elementary teachers in six small-group, collaborative discussion

sessions. During these discussions, teachers acted as co-researchers and used photographs and digital photo stories, previously created by elementary-aged Latin@ children, along with the NOT-ICE teacher discussion protocol (Allen, 2016) to discover how schooling labels carry potential biases that obscure emergent bilingual students' gifts and talents. Labels, which often carry assumptions with them, are tightly intertwined with how educators teach. Oftentimes mainstream educators categorize linguistically diverse learners as different or other, resulting in connotations of linguistic deficiencies instead of capabilities and academic restrictions rather than opportunities (Lee & Anderson, 2009, p. 182). For instance, because of the EL label often used in schools, teachers may focus more intently on these students' competencies with the English language instead of perceiving their home language and bilingual abilities as a strength. Teachers may refer to this as "the language barrier," which figuratively represents the "wall" that prevents teachers from seeing students' academic abilities that lie beyond their English language proficiencies (Allen, 2017). The high stakes accountability climate present in today's schools compounds this issue as teachers find themselves focusing on remediating perceived weaknesses rather than exploring and cultivating strengths (Baldwin, 2003; Ford & Grantham, 2003).

I designed this study to work alongside elementary educators so that we could reflect on our attitudes toward and assumptions about emergent bilinguals, specifically those of Latin@ heritage whose native language is Spanish. I wanted to encourage and help educators to see past the language barrier and look for potential and untapped strengths, interests, gifts, and talents in these learners; therefore, I crafted a practitioner research study (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) using photographs and digital

photo stories from Latin@ students' outside-of-school lives in combination with focused critical dialogue with teachers. Through this study, I hoped that the stories the students told through their visual images and narratives might yield productive conversations to help educators shift from any negative labeling they may be doing to truly honing in on the gifts and talents of emergent bilinguals. I wanted to involve teachers in the process because I believe that teachers can learn ways to transform most any aspect of the human condition as long as the condition is accessible and they have an open awareness of it (Heron & Reason, 2001). I used photographs because they can be useful tools for promoting acceptance of diversity by prompting educators to view situations from different vantage points, bridging connections and developing understanding of differences (Cook & Quigley, 2013; Lintner, 2005; Lykes, 2011; Serriere, 2010). Additionally, because stories are a primary means for understanding ourselves and others, the use of storytelling can interrupt complacency by helping both the listener and the speaker construct new understandings and sort through false and constraining perceptions of individuals and cultures (Delgado, 1989/2011; Espinoza & Harris, 1997/1998). Add in meaningful community dialogue, and the result is an experience that can engage and inspire educators in a powerful way (Cook & Quigley, 2013), allowing them to *talk back* to the misconceptions they may harbor and motivating them to act in order to create more equitable educational opportunities and outcomes for students from diverse backgrounds.

The overarching question driving my research – How can educators help improve access to gifted education, advanced programs, and/or more challenging curricula for CLD students? – has been addressed by other scholars in the field (Castellano & Diaz, 2002; Ford, 2013; Ford & Grantham, 2003; Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008; Frasier et al., 1995; Gonzales, 2002; Harris, Rapp, Martinez, & Plucker, 2007; Milner & Ford, 2007; Sisk, 2003); however, because these students continue to be underrepresented in gifted education programs, further research is necessary. The specific research questions that guided this study included the following: How do focused, critical conversations cued by Latin@ students' individual and collective photographs and digital stories help teachers become more aware of their social constructions of labels, such as gifted and English Language Learner, and their potential biases associated with them?

This specific research question ultimately helped us uncover and gain a deeper understanding of a global educational issue. Through our work together, we discovered that labels and deficit perceptions exist, that they can be detrimental to students in how they manifest themselves in the classroom and that talking through our beliefs and perceptions with fellow educators and truly hearing students' stories allows us to question the untruths we may harbor and shift our (mis)perceptions.

The site of this study was a Title I elementary school located in a southeastern state in a county experiencing steady growth in its Latin@ population, rising from 2.6% in 2000 to 6.5% in 2013 (U. S. Census Bureau, 2015). For this study, I worked with six elementary school teachers from the school site who had at least 5 years of teaching experience as well as experience working with gifted and/or English Learners. All teachers identified as White, monolingual, native speakers of English. I considered the teachers to be co-researchers because they collaboratively contributed to the gathering and clarification of data. I, also a White,

monolingual, native English speaker, was a participant in the study as well. While I planned parts of the study based on the study's purpose and goals prior to meeting with my co-researchers, our processes and procedures were flexible and adapted to the group's collective needs as the study progressed.

The study centered mostly around small-group discussion sessions where my co-researchers and I utilized the NOT-ICE teacher discussion protocol, a discussion tool I developed as a means for facilitating critical dialogue and reflection around still photographs and digital stories. NOT-ICE is intentionally divided to represent the idea that our (mis)perceptions do not have to remain frozen and static but instead should be fluid and dynamic. NOT-ICE suggests a melting away or thawing of our current (mis)perceptions about emergent bilinguals in exchange for more holistic, dynamic perceptions that capture students as whole learners and not simply language learners. The NOT-ICE Teacher Discussion Protocol guided us in answering the following questions:

- N - What Noticings can you make about the photos? (Used with the photographs only; after answering this question, play the digital photo story)
- O - What did you Overlook in the photos?
- T - How does this discovery relate to your Teaching?
- I - What Impact might it have on students?
- C - How have your initial perceptions Changed?
- E - In what ways can we use what we have learned through this process to ensure equitable referral opportunities and outcomes for students from CLD backgrounds?

The teachers found that the protocol facilitated rich and productive discussions because each question built on the one before in a logical, sequential format. Over a period of approximately two months, my co-researchers and I engaged in three critical discussion sessions using the NOT-ICE Teacher Discussion Protocol to discuss students' photographs and digital photo stories. We met after school in the gifted facilitator's classroom approximately once every three weeks, and each session lasted for about an hour and a half. Each session focused on one child's photographs and digital photo story, and these images and stories, along with the prompts from the NOT-ICE protocol, served as springboards for the discussion and helped teachers disrupt their commonly held (mis)perceptions about emergent bilinguals. In the following section, I will explain how Latin@ critical theory framed this study and allowed teachers to talk back to deficit discourses that abound in their classrooms, school, and community as well as those across the United States.

Using LatCrit to Question Educational Realities

Latin@ critical theory (LatCrit), developed from critical theory and a relative of critical race theory (CRT), addresses the intersection of race, class, gender, language, and immigration status to account for oppression (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Valdes, 1996). LatCrit illuminates the idea that while schools have the potential to free and empower individuals, certain populations of students are often marginalized due to the unquestioned structures, procedures, and discourses schools have in place as well as the deficit notions that continue to plague the classroom experiences of Latin@ students

(Darder & Torres, 2014; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Lee & Anderson, 2009).

Like critical theory and CRT, LatCrit challenges perspectives that view students of color as deficient and variance from the mainstream as problematic for teaching and learning; furthermore, it enables teachers and teacher educators to question their everyday roles and practices in order to uncover ways they may potentially marginalize their students (Nieto, 2002). When teachers become more cognizant of their unwitting participation in policies and procedures that may be harmful to their students, they can interrogate the structures that impede students' access to high-quality education (Nieto & Bode, 2012).

A long, rich tradition of storytelling infuses Latin@ culture (Stefancic, 1997/1998). Storytelling is often used as a tool to either inculcate or challenge dominant mindsets and realities, as stories remind us of how reality is socially constructed (Delgado, 1989/2011). As listeners and tellers of stories, we continuously shape our realities when we view the world from another's perspective or cause others to do the same. Counter-stories highlight the stories of those individuals whose experiences often remain silent (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). They are stories that challenge dominant understanding, can extinguish complacency, help us overcome difference, and discredit the prevailing story, thus paving the way for new stories with new possibilities for reality (Delgado, 1989/2011).

To illustrate, the education realm sometimes perpetuates the commonly accepted narrative that parents of Latin@ children are indifferent about their children's academic performance at school because they are not involved in ways that are recognized or valued by mainstream society (Valdés, 1996). A counter-story to help discredit this narrative would involve Latin@ parents who are intensely concerned and committed to their children's schooling and want them to be successful; who believe their role in helping their children succeed in school means fulfilling their own obligations to ensure their family's survival and teaching respect and obedience at home (Valdés, 1996). Another example of a counter-story might involve a Latin@ mother who regularly accompanies her children when they take part in a literacy study over the summer, even when it presents a hardship for her (Allen, 2016). These examples are obviously not representative of all Latin@s, but the individual stories help illustrate the flawed assumptions present in the commonly accepted narrative.

When using LatCrit, researchers must ensure they are accurately representing Latin@s as the diverse group of people that they are who have become part of American society in different but overlapping ways (Delgado, 2002; Espinoza, 2011; Valdes, 1996; Wildman, 1997). While Latin@s may have many commonalities and share some similar collective stories, there is significant value in hearing and honoring the variety of experiences expressed in their individual stories as well (Gallo & Wortham, 2012).

I used LatCrit for this study to provide insight into why the gifts and talents of emergent bilinguals of Latin@ heritage may not be recognized by their teachers and to investigate why mainstream educators often categorize emergent bilinguals in ways that yield connotations of cultural and linguistic deficiencies and academic restrictions (Lee & Anderson, 2009). Some elements of LatCrit that speak directly to this study include its commitment to a social justice research agenda, its pledge to validate diverse ways of knowing, and its unique way of highlighting

the lived experiences of students of color through storytelling (or counter-storytelling), narratives, oral histories, and the like (Delgado, 1989/2011; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). As a white female researcher, I am reminded that I cannot speak as a Latina or for Latin@s (Espinoza & Harris, 1997/1998). However, while remaining cognizant of my own White privilege, I, along with my fellow researchers, can call on LatCrit ideals to help us listen to and value the stories of Latin@ students, learn from their collective and individual experiences, and hopefully help other educators do the same.

Battling Deficit Discourse

For this study, I focused on emergent bilinguals of Latin@s heritage. Latin@s trace their origins to Latin America and sometimes the Caribbean or Spain (Delgado & Stefancic, 2011). Constituting approximately 16% of the nation's total population and 24.7% of the nation's public elementary school children, Latin@s are the largest and youngest ethnic minority group in America, and one of its fastest growing minority groups (Darder & Torres, 2014; Delgado & Stefancic, 2011; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Specifically, Latin@ students have reached a new milestone representing a record 23.9% of the total pre-K through 12th grade student population across the nation (Darder & Torres, 2014), and comprising 13% of Georgia's public school students (Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 2014).

For the purposes of this article, I use the specific term emergent bilinguals to represent those students commonly referred to in schools as English Language Learners or English Learners (ELLs or ELs; Garcia, 2009). I prefer the term emergent bilingual because it illuminates students' bilingualism

as a positive characteristic and potential resource to be developed, resulting in higher expectations for these learners; furthermore, it emphasizes potential instead of limitations (Garcia, 2009). While I advocate for the emergent bilingual term, I also realize that the ELL and EL labels are widely used in schools as they are often tied to ESOL services (Georgia Department of Education, 2015). Further, I recognize that these labels are problematic, and I do not support the deficit thinking that is often associated with them, but I use these labels when I cite scholars who use them in their work and when I reference teacher conversations in my study in order to honor their language and school discourse, which has become interwoven into their daily professional lives.

Labeling or defining people, actions, and things is often challenging because of the ever-changing connotations, varying degrees of acceptance, complex interconnectedness among labels, and the fact that certain labels carry assumptions and beliefs with them that often impose limitations on them (Castellano & Diaz, 2002; Lee & Anderson, 2009). Despite these challenges, however, choices in terminology must be made in order to enable collective understanding.

While terms and labels afford readers with common understandings, they also have the potential to reinforce spaces of deficit discourse, or negative dialogue. Deficit thinking involves negative, stereotypic, and counterproductive labeling of students that views difference as a disadvantage and sees diverse students as being deprived, low-achieving, or at risk, and results in lower expectations for these students (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Lee & Anderson, 2009; Nieto, 2002; Shaklee & Hamilton, 2003; Williams & Newcombe, 1994). In addition to the "Limited English Proficient" label officially used in the No Child Left Behind

Act of 2001, oftentimes, schools categorize students and give them labels, such as ELL or EL, and these labels highlight only students' abilities in relation to speaking or not speaking English, overlooking the varied strengths, interests, talents, and capabilities these students bring to the classroom (Georgia Department of Education, 2015; Lee & Anderson, 2009).

The beliefs and claims we espouse as a result of these categories can have harmful and lasting effects on students (Gee, 2015), which may very well explain why the academic achievement of emergent bilinguals continues to be disproportionately low at all educational levels (Gay, 2010). For instance, the misperceptions based on commonly accepted schooling labels often result in disproportionate numbers of diverse students, especially Latin@s and African Americans, being identified for gifted education because they are often not referred by their teachers for gifted evaluation (Baldwin, 2003; Cahnmann, 2006; Ford, 2013; Ford et al., 2008; Ford & Grantham, 2003; Frasier, Garcia, & Passow, 1995; Harris, Plucker, Rapp, & Martinez, 2009; Milner & Ford, 2007; Olthouse, 2013). Thus, a deficit view of diverse students contributes heavily to the fact that CLD learners are grossly underrepresented in gifted and talented programs as educators often operate from a deficit model that focuses on remediation rather than exploring and enhancing the positives (Baldwin, 2003; Ford & Grantham, 2003).

Ford (2014) cited that in 2012, according to the Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection Agency, Black and Hispanic students were underrepresented in gifted education programs across the nation by 50% and 36%, respectively. Numerically, these percentages translate into at least half a million underserved students

(Ford, 2010). In the state where this study took place, White students have nearly 4 times the opportunity of Black and Hispanic students to be identified for and served in gifted and talented programs (Realize the Dream, 2015). Thus, CLD learners in the state of Georgia and across the nation are disadvantaged because they lack access to gifted programming and its teaching methods, which are generally challenging, engaging, and rigorous (Ford, 2013).

This inequitable representation calls for empirical research to raise awareness about the issue so that educators can talk back to deficit discourse and work toward providing more equitable procedures, outcomes, and possibilities for underserved student populations. My study utilized participatory research methods that capitalized on the use of visual media – photographs and digital photo stories – to facilitate discussion and provide participants with opportunities to view situations from various perspectives (Allen, 2016; Cook & Quigley, 2013; Lykes, 2011; Serriere, 2010). Additionally, because stories are a primary means for understanding ourselves and others, we used digital photo stories, told through the eyes of local Latin@ children, to help us sort through false and constraining perceptions of individuals and cultures (Delgado, 1989/2011; Espinoza & Harris, 1997/1998). The reflective community dialogue that resulted awakened our minds to the biases and assumptions we often harbor due to labeling and deficit thinking (Cook & Quigley, 2013). In the sections that follow, I will elaborate on the details and findings of my study.

Research Context, Methods, and Analysis

In light of the significant barriers emergent bilinguals face in accessing challenging and engaging educational

opportunities in schools, I developed a practitioner research study (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) that involved teachers as co-researchers who engaged in professional collaboration to raise awareness about the issue of underserved learners, to better understand how schooling labels carry potential biases that obscure students' gifts and talents and impact gifted referrals, and to help them discover how they might enact change to create improved realities for their students. I support the proposition widely recognized by gifted scholars that giftedness exists in every level of society and in every cultural and ethnic group, even though traditional school measures and social/cultural norms may fail to validate it (Castellano & Diaz, 2002; Frasier et al., 1995; Grantham, 2014). I hoped that our work together, viewing, experience, and critically discussing Latin@ children's photos and photo stories, would illuminate how educators' perspectives and potential biases may work against certain student populations to unintentionally disadvantage them. Furthermore, I hoped that we could all learn to recognize, honor, and cultivate the strengths, interests, and talents students bring into the classroom and translate those capabilities into challenging and engaging educational experiences (Gay, 2010).

Research Design

This study evolved from a previous interview study I conducted with teachers, which illuminated the teachers' desire to raise awareness about the underrepresentation of CLD students in gifted programming, specifically for emergent bilinguals of Latin@ heritage, as well as a need for shifting teachers' unknowing immersion in deficit thinking and helping them to see past the language barrier (Allen, 2017). This study involved working with elementary teachers to engage in

focused, critical conversations inspired by photographs, digital photo stories where students wrote about and narrated their photos using VoiceThread® and the NOT-ICE Teacher Discussion Protocol (Allen, 2016).

The photographs and digital photo stories used in this study were created during a previous study where I recruited six elementary-aged emergent bilinguals of Latin@ heritage from my community to create student projects that would later be used as springboards for eliciting additional data. During this previous related study, I invited parents to take photos of their children that revealed information about their outside-of-school lives, including their interests, hobbies, and strengths. I also invited parents to initiate discussions with their children about the photographs taken so that the students would have ideas for what to write about during our one-on-one photo story writing sessions. I helped the children create, revise, and edit their photo story texts, and we transformed them into a digital format using VoiceThread®. I gave children the option to create bilingual photo stories if they wished, and three of the six children opted to do so.

My hope was that the stories students created, in combination with our in-depth, small group discussions, would stimulate us to think about the inequities in schools and help teachers trade in their deficit thinking for attribute or dynamic thinking, which involves positive and productive labeling, seeing diversity as a resource and students as self-motivated, effortful, resilient, and at promise, resulting in higher expectations for these students (Ford & Grantham, 2003; Ford et al., 2008; Lee & Anderson, 2009; Nieto, 2002; Ruiz, 1984; Shaklee & Hamilton, 2003; Williams & Newcombe, 1994). Participatory research methods that utilize visual media are

effective for professional learning because they offer participants new and reflective ways to perceive their world. Images and photographs act as a springboard for discussion (Serriere, 2010), adding a unique visual layer to research and prompting participants to pause, view a situation from a different vantage point, and begin to question and think critically about the situation (Cook & Quigley, 2013).

The following sections provide the details of my study and highlight findings that illuminate how digital photo stories acted as counter-stories when combined with critical discussions in that they disrupted teachers' commonly held (mis)perceptions about students, emphasizing their talent potential and placing them at promise instead of at risk (Boykin, 2002).

Site and Participants

The site of this study was a Title I elementary school located in a southeastern state with 9% of its inhabitants identifying as Latin@ (Pew Research Center, 2011) and a county where the Latin@ population more than doubled in just over a decade (U. S. Census Bureau, 2015). The demographic breakdown of the total student body by ethnicity as well as those students served in the school's gifted and talented program reveals that underrepresentation exists at this school. White students represent just under three-fourths of the student body but comprise almost 90% of the students served in the gifted and talented program. Conversely, Latin@ students make up just over 10% of the total student body but only roughly 2.5% of gifted identified students. These local data mirror the nationwide data regarding the underrepresentation of diverse students in gifted programming, where the nationwide underrepresentation of Black and Hispanic students in gifted education

programs has reached 50% and 36% respectively (Ford, 2012, 2014; Ford et al., 2008). While the underrepresentation of all ethnic minority groups is troubling, the scope of my study honed in on emergent bilinguals of Latin@ heritage who are learning English as a second or additional language (although they may not receive formal ESOL services).

Six elementary school teachers with at least five years of teaching experience agreed to be co-researchers for this study. These teachers had experience working with gifted learners and/or English Language Learners. My co-researchers consisted of the gifted facilitator, ESOL specialist, two second-grade teachers, one third-grade teacher, and one fifth-grade teacher, and all identified as White, monolingual, English-language native speakers. I, also a White, monolingual, English-language native speaker, was also a participant in the study. Table 1 provides additional details about each co-researcher.

Data Collection and Analysis

The primary data from this study were elicited by photographs and digital photo stories created during a previous study by elementary-aged emergent bilinguals of Latin@ heritage from my community. The photos and photo stories shared information about the children's outside-of-school lives. The photographs acted as springboards for discussion (Serriere, 2010), and the photo stories were a primary means for understanding ourselves and others (Delgado, 1989/2011).

When Latin@ students told their stories through photography and from their own perspectives, mainstream educators were offered multiple opportunities to "better understand and appreciate the unique experiences and responses of students of

Table 1

Study Participants

Participant (All Pseudonyms)	Years of Experience	Current Position	Reason for Participating
Brooke Hutcheson	8 years	Gifted facilitator	She wanted to make a more concerted effort to work with other teachers in the school to help them notice potential talent in ELLs.
Hannah James	10 years	ESOL specialist	She wanted to learn more about the gifted referral process so that she would be better able to notice gifts and talents among her students and better equipped to make gifted referrals.
Mary Byers	8 years	Second grade teacher	She has experienced the frustration of referring ELLs she "just knows" are gifted but don't qualify for services because of the standardized tests. She joined the study to learn more about how she can better support those learners in the regular classroom and in what ways she might advocate for changes in the gifted evaluation process.
Virginia Turner	8 years	Second grade teacher	She wanted to learn more about the most effective ways to cultivate the strengths and talents of her ELLs in the classroom. Also, along with the small group of ELLs she typically serves each year, she had recently welcomed an emergent bilingual student into her classroom whose language of preference was Spanish, and she saw this study as an opportunity to learn more about how to meet his needs.
Lura Hanson	5 years	Third grade teacher	She was frustrated with the number of advanced ELLs who had reached her third grade class having never been referred for gifted evaluation. She, therefore, saw herself in a pivotal role and wanted to learn more about the gifted referral and testing processes.
Louise Jones	16 years	Fifth grade ELA teacher	She wanted to improve her practice with ELLs. She joined the study to learn new ideas for connecting with students and providing them with challenging and enriching learning experiences.

color through a deliberate, conscious, and open type of listening" (Delgado Bernal, 2002, p. 116). Furthermore, their stories interrupted complacency – or our (unintentional) willingness to remain unaware that we harbor misperceptions – by helping us, the listeners, sort through false and constraining perceptions of individuals and cultures (Delgado, 1989/2011; Espinoza & Harris, 1997/1998). In the data that follows, it is evident that the meaningful community dialogue resulted in an

Table 2

Data Sources and Methods of Collection

Data Source	Collection Methods	Artifacts	Time Frame
Individual Interviews	1 per teacher	Audio recordings; interview protocol with written notes	30-minute interview; end of Aug. 2015
Introductory Teacher Workshop	Six teachers; one session to familiarize teachers with the NOT-ICE protocol and modify it if needed;	video recordings; teachers' comments and notes discussing the NOT-ICE protocol	1 - 1 ½ hours session; Sept. 2015
Critical Discussions	Six teachers; three sessions; NOT-ICE protocol;	NOT-ICE protocol notes; video recordings; transcriptions; reflective memos	1-1 ½ hours session; Sept.-Nov. 2015
Focus Group Interview	Six teachers; one session;	video recordings; transcriptions; "What I Learned" poems; emailed notes; reflective memos	1-1 ½ hours session; Nov. 2015
Meeting to Discuss Future Actions	Six teachers; one session;	video recordings; transcriptions; reflective memos	1 hour session; Dec. 2015

experience that engaged and inspired us to be more reflective about and interrogate the beliefs we carry as well as the instructional practices and decisions we espouse because of those beliefs (Cook & Quigley, 2013).

Table 2 provides an overview of the data sources and how they were collected. Following the table, I offer a more detailed description of each aspect of this study.

The study began with individual teacher interviews to gain insight into their experiences working with gifted learners and/or ELLs and making gifted referrals. Then, the co-researchers and I participated in a workshop together to discuss and refine the NOT-ICE Teacher Discussion Protocol I created and implemented it using a sample of photographs as well as a sample digital photo story from one of the participating children from the previous study. This workshop gave all participants an opportunity to practice the discussion protocol before launching it during a live critical discussion session.

Over a period of approximately two months, my co-researchers and I engaged in three critical discussion session focused on one child's photographs and digital photo story using the NOT-ICE Teacher Discussion Protocol. For each session, we viewed students' photographs and commented on the significant things we noticed. After listening to the digital photo stories, we used the mnemonic NOT-ICE as a means for facilitating critical dialogue and reflection around the photographs and digital stories.

Following those discussion sessions, I facilitated one follow-up focus group interview session with the teachers using a general interview guide approach to discuss topics that needed further exploration. We also created individual "What I Learned" poems (Hansen, 2012) to express our thoughts on the insight we gained from the study. Approximately two weeks after debriefing, our group reconvened to discuss future actions we might take to raise awareness among teachers in the school about the issue of underserved CLD students and plan strategies for helping to shift teachers' deficit thinking to more productive thinking. The group discussed how we might act as advocates for ELLs at the school and district level.

I invited my co-researchers to participate in the data analysis process to the degree they wished to be included. Because they are elementary school teachers, they have very limited amounts of time to contribute to data analysis. Therefore, I generally took the lead on most aspects of the data analysis process. All co-researchers were involved in member checking to validate the honesty of analytic categories, interpretations, and findings.

I drew on the Listening Guide method to guide my analysis process (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003). This approach involves multiple readings of interview transcripts due to the assumption that simultaneous voices may co-occur, and these voices may be in tension with one another, with oneself, with the voices of others, and/or with the culture or context (Gilligan et al., 2003). Each listening amplifies an aspect of a voice like listening to a piece of music and following a different instrument each time (Gilligan, Brown, & Rogers, 1990). I used this approach as a

mentor for my data analysis method, but my process took on a *voice* of its own.

I read through the transcripts to identify participants' initial assumptions and ultimate realizations. Additionally, I highlighted mentions of characteristics of learners, both gifted learners as well as ELs, and I noted discussions of personal and professional relationships and whether or not they revealed evidence of connections or disconnections (between teacher-student, teacher-teacher, student-student, parent-teacher, and the like).

I brought my analysis back into a direct relationship with the research questions and purpose of the study by listening for the multiple facets of experience being told (Gilligan et al., 2003). Here, I read through the tables I created in step one to tune in to a different voice, or layer of the story. I determined, through multiple listenings and readings, that the emerging voices were the voice of bias (labels, student characteristic), the voice of awareness (Aha! moments, realizations), and the voice of agency (gatekeeper, advocate).

Talking Back to Deficit Discourse

In this study, Latin@ children initially told stories through photographs. We responded with stories – stories laden with prevailing themes and assumptions reflective of established belief systems (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). A true dialogue began when the children shared their photo stories in their own voices – stories that countered the dominant narratives being told about them – and we listened and dialogued with one another, with the stories, within ourselves. While the voice of bias was alive and well in this study, as evidenced in the teachers' initial noticings and comments about the children's photographs which were

reflective of deficit thinking, the voices of awareness and agency ultimately triumphed as we questioned our beliefs and came to new realizations about emergent bilinguals. Furthermore, we deconstructed the untruths we harbored about these learners and discussed sound pedagogical decisions and changes we must make in order to provide these students with high-quality educational opportunities.

The children's counter-stories caused us to recognize and appreciate things we had overlooked all along (Delgado, 1989/2011). For the purposes of this article, I will highlight how the student-created photo stories acted as counter-stories when combined with our focused, critical discussions. I will focus on the voice of awareness – the Aha! Moments – our group experienced when engaging with the students' photo (counter) stories and subsequent critical conversations. These Aha! Moments illuminate how we talked back to deficit discourse and altered our interactions with students. These breakthrough moments of new understandings caused us to see students in a new light and think about how we might teach them differently – in a way that engages them and capitalizes on their strengths and interests.

Voice of Awareness: Aha! Moments

My co-researchers and I experienced Aha! moments because of the children's powerful stories combined with the safe discussion spaces we collaboratively created. We discovered that often times, the untruths we carry about people are not verbalized so no one ever has an opportunity to challenge our assumptions, and we therefore continue to harbor those untruths. Thus, it is important for us to have safe spaces to share our thoughts with others so that our assumptions

may shift. Our breakthrough moments served to help us realize the untruths we had been harboring all along regarding the communicative competence and family involvement of Latin@s.

The following exchange from our group's second critical discussion session highlights an Aha! Moment that resulted from one of the photo stories told in English by a 6-year-old boy from Nicaragua named Bennie. Though Bennie's photo story revealed hesitations and grammatical mistakes, it illuminated his expert communication skills in other ways.

> *Louise*: This is it! This is the WOW moment that we overlook because of the way he speaks, like his verbs, like the "-ed" like "I look-ed"…just by listening to him, like you just can't go by the conventions and grammar, I mean because he's got style, connections, enhanced vocabulary, expressive…
> *Brooke*: He used a simile
> *Louise*: Figurative Language…
> *Brooke*: He's confident… talking about himself being a sweaty kid and the underwear
> *Lura*: He had great expression too with the "Yee Haw!"
> *Researcher*: Yeah, expressive
> *Virginia:* And he's very smart, he like sequenced the jelly fish. First we did this and then we did this…

As Bennie narrated his photo story, he required some prompting, stumbled over his words at times, and had difficulty at times with verb tenses and pronouncing words correctly. For instance, when talking about the jellyfish he caught at the beach, he said that he and his uncle put water in the bucket "so it won't die" (instead of "wouldn't"). Later, when describing a past day at an arcade, he said, "I shoot so many baskets…"

(instead of "shot"). While sharing about his baseball team, he recalled, "One time, some kid threw the ball right on my leg, and it hurted like a jellyfish" (instead of "hurt"). However, in this example, Bennie talks back to the common narrative that Standard English must be used to communicate effectively with others. In this way, he ignited rich discussion that helped us shift our thinking to realize that expressiveness, style, vocabulary choice, figurative language, sequencing, a sense of humor, and confidence play a significant role in meaningful communication with others.

Another Aha! Moment came when we listened to Yuri's story. Yuri is a 9-year-old girl of Mexican heritage whose bilingual photo story radiated themes of family support and involvement as she shared about her wide variety of interests in cooking, sports, exercise, swimming, and church activities.

> *Louise*: [In response to the protocol question, How does this discovery relate to your teaching?] I said that she does have the family support, and a lot of times, we just assume that she would not be able to participate in extra-curricular activities, like Junior Beta. We know [from the photo story] that her parents would provide transportation…sometimes we overlook the kids that we think, "Oh, they couldn't stay after school." In actuality, she has good family support.

After hearing Yuri's photo story, the teachers consistently wrote in their notes that Yuri's family was extremely involved in supporting her interests. Yuri's story and our conversations troubled the myth that Latin@ parents are not actively involved in their children's lives and that they often do not take advantage of after-school academic opportunities for their children. From Yuri's story, the teachers realized that they may have been discounting certain children to participate in positive after-school educational experiences, such as Junior Beta Club, because of assumptions they harbored about familial support. While this instance may not represent a pure and true example of a counter story since the teachers still harbor a traditional mainstream view of what family involvement looks like, it certainly provided a lesson in not making assumptions about students and triggered a first step in teachers changing their thinking about the students they teach.

During our focus group meeting that followed the critical discussion sessions, we discussed our Aha! moments from the process of listening to students' stories and reflecting on them in a collaborative way. The following exchange illustrates the idea that when we truly listen to and observe students, we are able to more easily see the strengths they bring into the classroom.

> *Mary*: I think by seeing the videos [photo stories] you saw so much of them and what they can do [teacher emphasis], and how they verbalize things that you may not necessarily see in the everyday classroom. You saw a whole different –
> *Louise*: And the first time when we could only see the pictures, it's what we see in the classroom. And then when they were able to verbalize, that was a reminder to us to communicate with these students. Do what it takes to bring out the talents they do have [teacher emphasis].

In this exchange, Mary and Louise highlight the importance of creating spaces where students are able to share about their strengths and abilities so that they can be cultivated in the classroom. The key is inviting students to tell stories about

themselves that reveal their interests and talents – and truly listening to them – so that we can design learning opportunities around students' capabilities and interests.

The focus group ended when we shared our take-away learnings from the critical discussion sessions. Brooke shared that she learned to address her own flaws, presumptions, and perspectives because they "clashed with the truths that were revealed by the students." When she shared this lesson learned, all heads nodded in agreement. It is interesting what we can learn about students through a simple digital photo story; yet, these comments demonstrate our new-found awareness that when we listen to and thoughtfully reflect on children's stories, no matter what form they present themselves, we are able to intentionally confront the false assumptions we hold about students and recognize their potential by seeing the things they can do. Then, we are better able to teach into students' strengths in a way that maximizes student engagement and learning.

Altering Teacher and Student Interactions

Through our work together, we also discovered that our perceptions of students result in certain expectations we have of students and play out in the ways we interact with and teach those students. In addition to breaking down untruths we carried about the students, the digital stories and Aha! moments nudged us to think about ways we might alter our instructional approaches to reach these students differently and more effectively in our classrooms. These adjustments in teaching approaches resulted in changed realities for teachers as well as students. For instance, during our first critical discussion session, Ms. Turner, a second grade teacher shared how our initial workshop had nudged her to think differently about writing activities for her new Spanish-speaking student.

> *Virginia*: And for learners, like the little guy I have whose broken English is about the same as my broken Spanish. . . maybe having him write his story in Spanish first and then English, even if it takes more time, it would probably be a better quality.

Ms. Turner put her thinking into action and invited her student to write bilingual texts, beginning in Spanish, and later, with her help, translating his writing into English. Realizing that his – and her own – knowledge of both Spanish and English could grow through appropriate language scaffolding activities, such as hooking his English learning onto his current Spanish literacies, Virginia validated and nurtured the student's native language and second language abilities as well as his translation skills, thus cultivating his ability to be bilingual. In an era of teaching when teachers feel pressed for time, Virginia realized that her investment in this student's developing literacy skills provided him a better quality learning process and resulted in a better quality product in the end that showcased the student's ability to function between both languages.

During our second critical discussion session, we discussed motivation and engagement and the payoff that results for students when teachers build off of students' strengths in the classroom.

> *Hannah*: That's what I said [in agreement to another's response about motivation to the question, What Impact might it have on students?] …motivation and engagement because you can easily lose a student like that [whose creativities and strengths are not

capitalized on], and then they're gone, but if you keep them engaged in doing things that they like and that they're good at, then they can pick up those language skills as they go along. *Louise*: And I took it a step farther and said that it would help, of course we're talking about the things like in school, but like in other public places, he (Bennie) will learn when he gains that self-confidence that he can be that way [humorous, creative, expressive] at story hour at the library, if he's not already, or at the park…or he might go and take the art camps or get into little theater camps in the summer because that has been brought to his attention, you know?

This exchange highlights the idea that when teachers invite students to share about their lives through photographs and storytelling, they are better able to look beyond labels and perceived weaknesses and acknowledge gifts and talents among students. Subsequently, students can learn, with the help of a teacher, to seek outside-of-school outlets and extracurricular activities that will allow them to further develop their talents. In a world of standardized assessments and an over-abundance of quantitative data about students, qualifying them and nurturing their personal interests, strengths, and talents is key to helping students feel valued and successful. Other examples of instructional shifts include converting to an inclusion model to serve fifth grade ESOL (as well as other variously labeled) students for writing instruction, translating assignments into Spanish as needed, and inviting students to speak, read, and write (when appropriate) in their native language.

Tensions

While this study was transformative and brought about a number of positive changes, it was not without tensions. Some teachers had difficulty reconciling their newfound understandings within the standardized testing era in which our students and teachers currently live. Many of them struggled to recognize the value of qualitative data about students and felt that their voice was significantly overpowered by scores and numbers. The teachers discussed the idea of using photo stories and the NOT-ICE Teacher Discussion Protocol as assessment data, but they were unsure of how much value it would realistically carry in the eyes of local leaders and policymakers. However, we thought that introducing the idea to our local leaders might ultimately pay off since even they would agree that test scores often cause teachers to attend more to student weaknesses than strengths or make standardized decisions about their educational opportunities (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Perhaps, teachers can begin telling their own stories of how qualitative data helped them sort through constraining perceptions of students, which might change the narrative of what's accepted as data (Delgado, 1989/2011; Espinoza & Harris, 1997/1998).

Teachers also discussed the need for professional learning in the area of culturally responsive pedagogy, but they were somewhat disillusioned about how they might actually bring that professional learning to their school with so many other mandated initiatives. This disillusion speaks to the current culture of professional learning, in which professional learning is mandated from the top down as opposed to being initiated from within by the teachers and grounded in their daily classroom realities (Sagor, 2000; Stephens et al., 2000; Rogers et

al., 2005). Despite the current culture, I am hopeful that we can use our newfound awareness of our roles as advocates to be agents of change and bring more culturally sensitive instructional practices to our classrooms.

Finally, teachers were unable to devote as much time to data analysis as I had hoped. I had envisioned data analysis to be a collaborative process, but the teachers' understandable time constraints prevented that partnership.

Implications

Using digital photo stories in the classroom introduces teachers and students to an alternate storytelling approach and provides students with a means for sharing their (counter) stories (Delgado, 1989/2011; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Using these stories along with the NOT-ICE Teacher Discussion Protocol to cue reflective, collaborative conversation is useful in helping teachers expand their views of students in order to see that students' home languages, cultures, and interests are strengths and assets that promote learning as opposed to obstacles that impede it (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Nieto, 2002). Moreover, these photo stories help teachers see that while Latin@s may share similarities in their collective stories, the variety of unique experiences expressed in their individual stories can help counter common stereotypes teachers may harbor about them (Gallo & Wortham, 2012). Becuase teachers appear to be more likely to make cognitive and behavioral shifts when they witness colleagues they admire modifying their thoughts and behaviors (NCEE, 2015), collaborative endeavors that bring teachers together to focus on student work in authentic ways, such as through critically reflecting on and discussion students' digital photo stories,

is helpful in illuminating students' individual and unique capabilities.

Finally, because the practice of measuring students by test scores and numbers pervades nearly all educational settings, and the voices of scores and numbers are often privileged in telling stories about children, digital photo stories provide students with a genuine opportunity to contest those stories by qualifying students in a way that highlights and privileges their true lived experiences (Delgado, 2011; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Examining various and multiple sources and types of data about students can prevent us from allowing quantitative data to color our views of students.

While this study focused specifically on emergent bilinguals of Latin@ heritage, the approach of using photography, digital photo stories, and collaborative discussions guided by the NOT-ICE Teacher Discussion Protocol could be used to help teachers trouble the stereotypes they harbor about all students, including those students from other ethnic minority populations, students of low socio-economic status, students with disabilities, as well as students of all sexual orientations and gender identities. When teachers shift their thinking about students from deficit thinking to promising thinking, they change their expectations of students and thus engage with students differently, in a way that capitalizes on students' strengths and interests. This shift, in turn, results in improved educational opportunities for students.

As a former elementary school teacher, critical researcher, and teacher educator, I am deeply concerned with the unequal opportunities that exist in schools for emergent bilinguals. Equally distressing is the lack of awareness among teachers about

the issue of underserved CLD learners. Challenges with the English language should not be synonymous with limitations in the classroom. Students from diverse backgrounds have much more to offer than their language challenges may reveal. But we have to be willing to observe, listen, converse, and experience so that we can begin to see those hidden treasures. Because you cannot know until someone tells you or you experience something, I can only hope that the story of our work together, cued by the students' stories, will be shared so that we can shape what others hear, perceive, experience, and eventually come to know about emergent bilinguals.

References

Allen, J. K. (2016). Picture this: Practitioner research with digital photo stories and the NOT-ICE Teacher Discussion Protocol to help teachers cultivate gifts and talents in emergent bilinguals of Latin@ heritage. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Allen, J. K. (2017). Exploring the role teacher perceptions play in the underrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in gifted programming. *Gifted Child Today, 40*(2), 77-86.

Baldwin, A.Y. (2003). Lost and found: Achievers in urban schools. In J. F. Smutny (Ed.), *Underserved gifted populations: Responding to their needs and abilities* (pp. 83-91). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.

Boykin, A. W. (2002). Talent development, cultural deep structure, and school reform: Implications for African immersion initiatives. In S. J. Denbo & L. M. Beaulieu (Eds.), *Improving schools for African American students: A reader for educational*

leaders (pp. 81-94). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Cahnmann, M. (2006). Reading, living, and writing bilingual poetry as ScholARTistry in the language arts classroom. *Language Arts, 83*(4), 342-352. doi: 10.1080/ 02602938.2011.586991

Castellano, J. A., & Diaz, E. I. (2002). Reaching new horizons: Gifted and talented education for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (2009*). Inquiry as stance: Practitioner research for the next generation.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Cook, K. ,& Quigley, C. (2013). Connecting to our community: Utilizing Photovoice as a pedagogical tool to connect college students to science. *International Journal of Environmental & Science Education, 8*(2), 339-357.

Darder, A., & Torres, R. D. (2014). Introduction. In A. Darder & R. D. Torres (Eds.), *Latinos and education: A critical reader* (2nd ed.) (pp. 1-16). New York, NY: Routledge.

Delgado, R. (1989/2011). Storytelling for oppositionists and others. In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *The Latino condition: A critical reader* (2nd ed.) (pp. 229-240). New York, NY: New York University.

Delgado Bernal, D. (2002). Critical race theory, Latino critical theory, and critical race gendered epistemologies: recognizing students of color as holders and creators of knowledge. *Qualitative Inquiry, 8*(1), 105-126.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2011). The shape of the Latino group: Who are we and what are we talking about anyway? In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic

(Eds.), *The Latino condition: A critical reader* (2nd ed.) (p. 3). New York, NY: New York University.

Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2012). *Critical race theory: An introduction* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: New York University Press.

Espinoza, L. G. (2011). Latino/a identity and multi-identity: Community and culture. In R. Delgado & J. Stefancic (Eds.), *The Latino condition: A critical reader* (2nd ed.) (pp. 19-22). New York, NY: New York University.

Espinoza, L., & Harris, A. P. (1997/1998). Afterword: Embracing the Tar-Baby – LatCrit theory and the sticky mess of race. 85 California Law Review, 1585 and 10 La Raza Law Review, 499. Retrieved from http://latcrit.org/media/medialibrary/2014/01/lcprimeri.pdf

Ford, D. Y. (2012). Ensuring equity in gifted education: Suggestions for change (again). *Gifted Child Today*, *35*(1), 74-75.

Ford, D. Y. (2013). Multicultural issues: Gifted underrepresentation and prejudice –Learning from Allport and Merton. *Gifted Child Today, 36*(1), 62-67.

Ford, D. Y. (2014). Multicultural issues: Gifted education discrimination in *McFadden v. Board of Education for Illinois School District U-46*. *Gifted Child Today, 37*(3), 188-193.

Ford, D. Y., & Grantham, T. C. (2003). Providing access for culturally diverse gifted students: From deficit to dynamic thinking. *Theory into Practice*, (3), 217-225.

Ford, D. Y., Grantham, T. C., & Whiting, G. W. (2008). Culturally and linguistically diverse students in gifted education: Recruitment and retention issues. *Exceptional*

Children, 74(3), 289-306.

Frasier, M., Garcia, J., & Passow, A. H. (1995). *A review of assessment issues in gifted education and their implications for identifying gifted minority students.* Storrs, CT: The University of Connecticut, The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED388024.pdf

Gallo, S., & Wortham, S. (2012). Sobresalir: Latino parent perspectives on New Latino Diaspora Schools. *International Journal of Multicultural Education, 14*(2), 1-17.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College.

Gee, J. P. (2015). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Georgia Department of Education. (2015). ESOL and Title III resource manual. Retrieved on June 6, 2016 from http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/ESOL-Resources-Guidance.aspx

Gilligan, C., Brown, L. M., & Rogers, A. (1990). Psyche embedded: A place for body, relationships and culture in personality theory. In A. I. Rabin, R. A. Zucker, R. Emmons, & S. Frank (Eds.), *Studying persons and lives* (pp. 86-147). New York, NY: Springer.

Gilligan, C., Spencer, R., Weinberg, M. C., & Bertsch, T. (2003). On the listening guide: A voice-centered relational method. In P. M. Camic, J. E. Rhodes, & L. Yardley (Eds.), *Qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspectives in*

methodology and design (pp. 157-172). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Grantham, T. C. (2014). Syllabus for EPSY 7270e: *Recruitment and retention of ethnic minorities in gifted/advanced programs.* (Available from the University of Georgia Syllabus System, https://syllabus.uga.edu)

Hansen, M. (2012). Writing for justice: Persuasion from the inside out. *Rethinking Schools, 26*(3), 19-24.

Harris, B., Plucker, J. A., Rapp, K. E., & Martinez, R. S. (2009). Identifying gifted and talented English language learners: A case study. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 32*(3), 368-393.

Lee, J. S., & Anderson, K. T. (2009). Negotiating linguistic and cultural identities: Theorizing and constructing opportunities and risks in education. *Review of Research in Education, 33*, 181-211.

Milner, R., & Ford, D. (2007). Cultural considerations in the underrepresentation of culturally diverse elementary students in gifted education. *Roeper Review, 29*(3), 166-173.

Nieto, S. (2002). *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Nieto, S., & Bode, P. (2012). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Olthouse, J. (2013). Multiliteracies theory and gifted education: Creating "smart spaces" in the language arts classroom. *Gifted Child Today, 36*(4), 247-253.

Pew Research Center (2011). Demographic profile of Hispanics in Georgia. Retrieved March 9, 2016 from http://www.pewhispanic.org/states/st ate/ga/

Rogers, R., Kramer, M. A., Mosley, M., Fuller, C., Light, R., Nehart, M., & Thomas, P. (2005). Professional development as social transformation: The Literacy for Social Justice Teacher Research Group. *Language Arts, 82*(5), 347-358.

Ruiz, R. (1984). Orientations in language planning. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice, 8*(2), 15-32.

Sagor, R. (2000). *Guiding school improvement with action research.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Serriere, S. C. (2010). Carpet-time democracy: Digital photography and social consciousness in the early childhood classroom. *The Social Studies, 101*(2), 60-68.

Shaklee, B. D., & Hamilton, A. (2003). Urban gifted youth. In J. F. Smutny (Ed.), *Underserved gifted populations: Responding to their needs and abilities* (pp. 93-115). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.

Solórzano, D. G., & Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education, 36*(3), 308-342.

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. Critical Race Methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for educational research. *Qualitative inquiry, 8*(1), 23-44.

Stefancic, J. (1997/1998). Latino and Latina critical theory: An annotated bibliography. *85 California Law Review, 1509 and 10 La Raza Law Journal, 423.* Retrieved March 18, 2015 from

http://latcrit.org/media/medialibrary/2014/01/lcprimeri.pdf

U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). State and county quickfacts. Retrieved April 8, 2015, from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13/13045.html

Valdes, F. (1996). Foreword: Latina/o ethnicities, critical race theory and post-identity politics in postmodern legal culture: From practices to possibilities. *La Raza Law Journal, 9*, 1-31.

Valdés, G. (1996). *Con respeto*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Wildman, S. M. (1997). Reflections on whiteness and Latina/o critical theory. *2 Harvard Latino Law Review*, 307. Retrieved March 18, 2015 from http://latcrit.org/media/medialibrary/2014/01/lcprimeri.pdf

Williams, B., & Newcombe, E. (1994). Building on the strengths of urban learners. *Educational Leadership, 5* (8), 75-78.

DR. JENNIFER K. ALLEN has a B.S.Ed. in Early Childhood Education from the University of Georgia and a M.Ed. in Reading Instruction from the University of West Georgia. She holds an endorsement for Gifted Education, ESOL, and Reading Instruction. Dr. Allen taught elementary school students for 10 years, working in second-, fourth-, and fifth-grade classrooms and in the gifted resource setting. She earned a PhD in Language and Literacy Education from the University of Georgia and is now an Assistant Professor at the University of West Georgia in the Department of Literacy and Special Education.