



LATINA/OS IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION:  
LEARNING FROM THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

BY

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
AddRan College of Liberal Arts  
Texas Christian University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

August 10, 2012

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## Acknowledgements

As I reflect on my Ph.D. journey, I owe words of appreciation to many people in my life for their undivided support as I pursued one of my dreams. I must first thank Dr. Carrie Leverenz, my mentor and dissertation director, for guiding me to achieve success in my doctoral program at Texas Christian University (TCU). Dr. Leverenz, I am grateful for your appreciation of linguistic and cultural difference. Your Writing Program Administration class during my first semester at TCU was fundamental in my academic career—this course helped me find a place for my research questions and interests. Through your comments on my writing and our many conversations, I realized that my theoretical and pedagogical ideas concerning language difference have a place in academia. Dr. Leverenz, thank you for believing in my potential to succeed in this program despite my struggle to find a balance between my background and a new learning and teaching environment. I admire your dedication to your work and feedback to student writing; thank you for your useful and thought-provoking commentary on my dissertation. I am certain that if it were not for your support, guidance, and belief in my academic potential, I would not have successfully completed my Ph.D. program. Dr. David Colón, as I transitioned into a new role as student and instructor at TCU, I am grateful I had the opportunity to take your Latina/o Diaspora class. This class provided me with a sense of belonging and hope in my academic work. Thank you for always supporting the importance of my dissertation, and I appreciate your feedback. Dr. Francyne Huckaby, I am absolutely grateful I had the opportunity to work with you as a student and fellow teacher at TCU. Thank you for trusting me to co-teach your Foundations of Education course and for providing me with a space to share the benefits of language difference with your class—future teachers who will impact the lives of many

multilingual students. Dr. Huckaby, I appreciate your support of my dissertation. Dr. Melanie Kill, I am thankful I had the opportunity to meet you while you were at TCU, and I am especially appreciative you decided to continue to serve on my committee even after your move. Thank you for your genuine interest in my research questions, and thank you for guiding me toward effectively arguing for the value of language difference in English Composition. Finally, thank you to all my teachers and professors who have helped and guided me throughout my education and academic career.

Igual de importante como el apoyo de mis profesores ha sido el apoyo de mis padres, Hugo Cesar y Alma Guadalupe Cavazos. Mami y Papi muchas gracias por apoyarme mientras seguía uno de mis muchos sueños. Yo se que el dejarme ir a estudiar a un lugar lejos y desconocido no fue fácil pero quiero que sepan que los admiro mas como padres y siempre estaré muy agradecida por haberme dejado seguir estudiando. Mientras vivía sola en Fort Worth los extrañaba todos los días y hubo muchos días cuando pensaba que lo mejor seria regresar. Pero, la dedicación que ustedes tienen hacia su trabajo y responsabilidades me ayudo a seguir adelante. Yo he visto como ustedes nunca se han dado por vencidos en momentos difíciles y esto me ayuda a mi a seguir luchando sin importar los obstáculos. Gracias por sus consejos y apoyo ya que me han servido de mucho para poder alcanzar mis metas y sobrepasar obstáculos. Gracias por ser tan buenos padres y estoy muy contenta de ahora poder vivir muy cerca de ustedes. ¡Los amo! Gracias por enseñarme a rezar y pedirle a Dios que nos ayude en momentos difíciles y de felicidad. Siempre he visto que ustedes tienen una relación muy íntima con Dios y la Virgen de Guadalupe y esto me inspira a apoyarme en ellos durante momentos cuando cuestiono el propósito de mi vida y educación. Yo se que ellos me han guiado y revelado mensajes importantes en mi vida y tengo fe que lo seguirán

haciendo. A mis padres, gracias por siempre mantener a Dios en nuestras vidas. Diosito, Virgen de Guadalupe, y mis Ángeles, gracias por siempre estar a mi lado en momentos de gran desafío y duda al igual que en momentos de alegría y felicidad. Ustedes me guiaron a escribir esta investigación tan importante y les agradezco el nunca dejarme sola durante mis experiencias en TCU.

In addition to the support I have received from my professors, parents, and God, I am also grateful to my husband, Dr. Javier Cavazos-Vela. Thank you for supporting and encouraging me to pursue my dream of a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition. Javi, you are one of the main reasons why I decided to pursue this dream; I recall when we first discussed the possibility of a doctoral education. Thank you for your unconditional and undivided support. Thank you for your patience these past four years as I shared my worries and concerns about my ability to succeed and fear of failing to achieve—your words of encouragement and reminders of my initial desire to pursue a Ph.D. have been fundamental as I reach this goal. Despite struggles to maintain a long distance relationship, I am happy we remained together through our respective master's and doctoral degrees. You are an inspiration to me, and I love you with all my heart. I look forward to many years of happiness together. I am also appreciative of the support I have received from Javi's family. Thank you to Patricia Vela, my mother-in-law, for her milagritos and support of my doctoral education. I am also thankful to my grandmother-in-law, Mary Jo Vela, for always demonstrating a sense of pride in my linguistic and educational background.

Additionally, without the support of cherished friends at TCU, my struggles adjusting to a different environment would have been much greater. Michelle Iten, I am thankful to God for bringing you into my life during such a crucial time in my doctoral education.

Despite our different background, we share many interests, ideas, and beliefs. I admire your way of thinking, confidence, and intelligence. Your help with the visual representation of my Chapter 4 was invaluable as it helped me crystallize my arguments. Thank you for listening to me during times of sadness, confusion, and happiness. Michelle, I hope we remain friends for many, many years—we have to because you will *not* find another shopping friend like me! Angela Sowa, thank you for listening to my research and teaching concerns and inspirations, and thank you for your willingness to share different viewpoints and perspectives. Thank you for always agreeing to eat at my favorite place—Potbelly’s! Angie, thank you for being a lovely friend. I hope we continue to remain friends despite the distance. Sharon Harris, thank you for all your help during my time at TCU; thank you for your willingness to listen and always caring.

As a final thank you, I appreciate the opportunity to pursue a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition at TCU. Thank you to the Department of English for accepting me into the Ph.D. program and for providing me with spaces to share my arguments and interests. My ultimate dream is to see more Latina/os pursue higher education, but most importantly, I desire to see an education system that welcomes, values, and recognizes the cultural, linguistic, and rhetorical richness multilingual students bring into the classroom.

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If assimilation means that a person loses a part of him or herself in the process of becoming American, I have not assimilated. I am a hybrid [...] I discovered, through this odyssey into literacy, that I do not have to lose my cultural background. In fact, I have been successful in affecting change within my own cultural setting: what is expected of women, how identity is constructed, and what constitutes authority.

— Diana Cárdenas, “Creating Identity: Personal, Academic, and Civic Literacies”

Through my own narrative and the engaging of other narratives, I want to offer scenes and experiences that capture specific moments when literacy, race, and citizenship come to an intersection where we gain an understanding of how literacy and race have shaped our and their lives.

— Morris Young, *Minor Re/Visions: Asian American Literacy Narratives as Rhetoric of Citizenship*

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

I am from El Barranquito—a small rural ranchito<sup>1</sup> in Nuevo León, México. My first school was named Felipe Cavazos after the founder, a man who was my great-great-grandfather. When I attended this school, there were about 20 students in kindergarten to sixth grade, and there were only two teachers; in my grade level, there were only three students. My parents often worried about my education and were concerned about what would become of me in the future; they knew it would be difficult, if not impossible, to continue with my education in México. My parents decided to immigrate to the United States in 1992, and though I cried and asked every day when we would return to El Barranquito, I knew we would never return permanently.

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<sup>1</sup> I have chosen not to italicize Spanish words or phrases in my dissertation to avoid the marker of difference and illustrate that English and Spanish are languages intimately connected to a Latina/o academic identity.

I was eight years old when we arrived in California where we lived in an old, rusty white trailer. I began to learn the English language in fifth grade with Mrs. Wise; her patience and high expectations helped me improve my reading and writing skills in a new language. I still have an award presented by Mrs. Wise that says “Alyssa, wonderful improvement in speaking and writing English,” dated May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1995. Although Mrs. Wise guided my acquisition of the English language, she also valued my ability to speak, read, and write Spanish; she encouraged me to never forget my native language. Mrs. Wise’s support impacted my life in many ways, but unfortunately, this experience was not repeated in middle school or high school. As I reflect on these experiences, I remember that I always saw myself as an outsider, different from my peers. I did not speak the same language; I did not look like them; I felt out of place and I continued to beg my parents to return to our home.

Throughout my education in the U.S., I have encountered encouraging teachers, but I have also faced discouraging teachers who often conveyed their low expectations because I learned English as a second language. In high school, I continued to have the ESL label after my name in teachers’ rosters. The “label” did not bother me; it is the truth—Spanish is my first language and English will always be my second language. However, what bothered and continues to bother me are the preconceived expectations teachers and the school system have of students who speak languages other than English. After researching the area of language diversity, I wish my teachers had fostered an environment where my knowledge as a bilingual student would have been recognized and valued in the classroom. I experienced difficulty getting through high school; I did not have stellar grades; I was never in pre-advanced placement or advanced placement

courses. When I was a senior, I interviewed with my high school principal since I was applying for a part-time position to work in the front office, and when she read through my transcript, I remember she said that it was unfortunate I had not been encouraged to take upper-level courses. The college information I received came from friends—never from teachers or counselors. My educational challenges are not unique; there are many marginalized students who continue to battle the educational system for success and others who decide to drop out of school for various reasons. The fact that institutions make it hard for marginalized students to succeed is a problem, but often, school policies portray the problem as the students' fault through false assumptions about their capabilities.

In the preface to *The Latina/o Pathway to the Ph.d.: Abriendo Caminos*, the editors state, “at all levels, Latina/os lag behind their educational counterparts, yet they comprise a substantial portion of the population...” (xxiii). Based on the underrepresentation of Latina/o students, current school and national policies aim to close this achievement gap. For instance, the non-profit organization Excelencia in Education: Applying Knowledge to Public Policy and Institutional Practice recently developed a brief titled, “Taking Stock: Higher Education and Latinos,” in which Debora Santiago and Travis Reindl discuss the “current state of higher education,” highlight “critical policy considerations affecting today’s Latino students,” and identify action “steps necessary to accelerate Latino student success in higher education” (3). According to Santiago and Reindl, educational and policy objectives should not only focus on increasing the degree completion rates, but also on understanding how the experiences of Latina/o students can help us (re) define pedagogical and institutional practices.

Unfortunately, the “rhetoric of deficiency” often defines Latina/os’ academic abilities in higher education. Jonikka and Colin Charlton, professors at a Hispanic-Serving Institution, note that they often “hear students, teachers, administrators, and public documents giving voice to a rhetoric of student deficiency” (68). The authors counter such rhetoric when they state, “the students we see every day don’t seem particularly ‘at risk’ or ‘under prepared.’ That vision of our student body is not one we recognize” (69). The “rhetoric of deficiency” must be eliminated through better understanding of the Latina/o academic experience and their strengths with language diversity.

In order to reach the objectives identified by national policies and argue against the “rhetoric of deficiency,” it is important to understand the pressures Latina/o students often encounter in academia. In “‘The American Way’: Resisting the Empire Force and Color-Blind Racism,” Aja Y. Martinez shares:

I stand now as a graduate student, and, more important, as a college teacher who has experienced firsthand the disparities represented in academia...I know people like me are not represented in large numbers in the classes I teach or in the classes I take, and I understand the pressure this statistic places on the few marginalized peoples who do make it through the doors of higher education (585).

The “pressure” Martinez references might be connected to the diverse experiences and challenges bilingual Latina/os encounter throughout higher education. The pressure of the statistics Martinez mentions is troubling because the statistics refer to not only being perceived as “the savior of your people” or the “exception to the rule” but also as the

“representative” for an entire ethnic/racial group. This “pressure” will continue to exist if institutions of higher education fail to recognize linguistic and cultural difference as assets. As Martinez articulates, she hopes to educate her students about “color-blind racism,” which refers to the idea that not acknowledging difference due to race in social contexts is a form of racism; the belief that everyone possess equal access and opportunities toward success ignores the continued effects of racism<sup>2</sup>. The educational system should aim to understand the challenges Latina/o students encounter in order to strategize ways to alleviate the pressure as they navigate the system.

Reframing policies on Latina/o educational attainment requires an understanding of the statistics regarding educational completion rates for Latina/o students. Jeanett Castellanos and Alberta M. Gloria note that “out of 100 Latina/o elementary students, only 21 will go to college, 8 will earn a graduate degree, and less than .2% will earn a doctoral degree” (380). The authors also state that “[s]pecific to Chicana/os, the largest U.S. Latina/o ethnic group, only 15 of 100 students will graduate from college, and 4 will earn a graduate degree” (380). Additionally, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that in 2009, 17.6% of Latinos dropped out of high school compared to 9.3% of Blacks and 5.3% of Whites. Although studies of Latina/o students aim to discover how to narrow the achievement gap and how resilient Latina/o students manage to succeed, studies often do not focus on the role of language difference in relation to academic success. As noted earlier, Santiago and Reindl mention the importance of representing accurate profiles of Latina/os; they emphasize that “clarifying this profile of Latinos does

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<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed definition of color-blind racism see *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and Racial Inequality in Contemporary America* by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva.

not imply the issues of immigration, language acquisition, and high school completion are not important or relevant policy issues. In fact, these are critical issues to address” (6). Although the authors claim that most Latina/os are English language dominant, the issue of language difference is often undervalued and Latina/os language resources are not addressed in Latina/o scholarship. The challenges Latina/os may face in graduate school concerning the negotiation of language difference with academia writing can be traced, in part, to educational and systemic practices in the K-16 academic systems. The educational experiences of Latina/os in early education are often the result of challenges associated with “language and cultural issues, poverty, immigrant status, prejudice and discrimination, assimilationist modes of thinking, lack of political empowerment, [and] deficit thinking about Latina/o students” (Padilla 181). As Raymond V. Padilla argues, Latina/os’ experiences throughout the “educational pipeline” in the United States are important to recognize and understand not only “because they have an impact on the number of Latina/os attempting to enter the professoriate, but also because they influence the interests and attitudes which Latina/os bring to the academy” (181). Given these challenges, it is important to understand how language and cultural difference impact the formation of Latina/o identities in academia and how language difference contributes to academic success.

Because the field of Rhetoric and Composition focuses on language effectiveness, I am particularly interested in the multilingual experiences of future or current Latina/o scholars in Rhetoric and Composition. I am interested in discovering how bilingual Latina/o academics in Rhetoric and Composition achieve success. One of the reasons I am interested in this area is due to my personal experiences as a bilingual Latina



attempting to obtain a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition. The field of Rhetoric and Composition offers vast opportunities to welcome students' abilities with language difference as strengths—especially because the field is invested in how language functions in diverse contexts. However, the challenge lies in learning how to use language difference as abilities to negotiate academic contexts. To gain a better understanding about the relationship between academic success and language background, I discuss the main arguments addressed in previous research in the following areas: language background and pedagogy, mentors and coursework, and identity and language difference. Finally, I discuss how my study of the language experiences of bilingual Latina/o academics in Rhetoric and Composition addresses the need for future research in order to ensure the success of Latina/os in academia. I also provide a discussion on my methodology and data collection, followed by an overview of the project.

### Language Background and Pedagogy

Although research that addresses the challenges Latina/os experience throughout the educational pipeline provide useful information for students, faculty, mentors, and institutions regarding cultural and ethnic identity, there is minimal attention given to the role of language background in higher education for Latina/os, especially in relation to identity formation and academic success. Lea Ramsdell discusses the relationship between language and identity among Latina/os in “Language and Identity Politics: The Linguistic Autobiographies of Latinos in the United States” (2004). Based on an analysis of Ariel Dorfman, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Richard Rodríguez’s respective linguistic autobiographies, Ramsdell argues that “there is no universal Latino experience of

language nor is there a collective consensus on their political stance regarding language. What these writers do have in common, however, is the recognition that the evolution of a private and public self is conditioned by language” (168). Although we cannot assume that all Latina/os are fluent in Spanish, we can argue that the Spanish language, whether it is Spanglish, Tex-Mex, Chicano English, or any other variation, is an important characteristic of Latina/o cultural identity. Latina/os’ experiences with dominant and non-dominant languages contribute to the construction of their identities and the strategies they develop in order to achieve academic success while maintaining language duality.

Learning about the participant’s sense of community at home based on language is crucial to understanding how they negotiate identities and languages in academia. An exploration of the role of language background and linguistic experiences for Latina/os in higher education, particularly in Rhetoric and Composition, enhances our understanding of Latina/o academic experiences and contributes to pedagogical and institutional adaptations aimed at helping more Latina/o students succeed. In her study, Michelle Hall Kells argues that the South Texas Mexican-American discourse offers rhetorical, pedagogical value in the classroom; she conducted a qualitative research study with four Master of Arts in Spanish students originally from South Texas. All four students are fluent in English, Spanish, and Tex-Mex, and their “successful acquisition of academic discourse has been additive rather than reductive, increasing their linguistic and rhetorical inventories” (30). Her research revealed that “codeswitching indexes identity, a communicative strategy for enlarging and restricting social access. In other words, codeswitching functions as a boundary of belonging. What is more apparent from this exchange is codeswitching role in reinforcing solidarity. ‘Intimacy is the thing’” (36).

Because research reveals that language practices inform identities and create a sense of community, it is important to discover how Latina/o academics' experiences with language differences served as an influence in the construction of their professional identities and their Latina/o identities. The necessity of learning from linguistically diverse writers is articulated by the editors, Michelle Hall Kells, Valerie Balester, and Victor Villanueva, in *Latino/a Discourses: Language, Literacy, and Education* as they argue for the need to “know more about the speakers of [...] Spanish-based varieties of English and the contexts in which Latino/a students use literacy; we need better descriptions of what they can do and what they choose to do with language” (3). The editors and contributors emphasize how literacy practices of Latina/os often “become misdiagnosed as illiteracy when evaluated from an English-Only, academically privileged point of view” (3). Many instructors privilege English-only pedagogies because it is what students need to learn in order to become successful in the “real” world. Although I agree that learning English is important and necessary, I also believe Latina/o students and linguistically diverse writers engage with diverse languages every day in meaningful, rhetorically effective ways. Rather than dismissing these languages, educators should focus on understanding how Latina/o students' early language experiences shaped their identities.

Within a profession that is concerned with rhetoric and language, it seems evident that attention to language difference should be at the forefront of pedagogical and professional discussions. Kells, Balester, and Villanueva state “[w]e know of the Latinos and Latinas in our classrooms. We know of their linguistic complexity, but we haven't yet found ways to translate this knowledge into classroom practices that aren't still

founded on an assimilationist set of assumptions” (2). Learning from and understanding the experiences of Latina/o graduate students and scholars in academia is one way to translate their knowledge into classroom practice. The editors also discuss how “literacy education, both in English and in Spanish, systematically ignores, devalues, stigmatizes, or marginalizes Spanish” (2). One of the reasons why Spanish is often devalued in the composition classroom might be tied to English-only policies. In *The Politics of Language: Conflict, Identity, and Cultural Pluralism in Comparative Perspective*, Carol Schmid argues that “Spanish speakers are seen as the target of much hostility and are believed to gain most from language legislation” (7). Despite English being considered a global language, English-only advocates believe that because the majority of immigrants speak Spanish, English is threatened. Therefore, “most attempts to protect English, although neutral with respect to non-English languages, have been targeted at Spanish speakers” (Schimid 7). As Catherine Prendergast and Rosina Lippi-Green argue in their books, respectively, literacy education and language standardization is “white property,” as it focuses on upper-middle class white values. The emphasis placed on English as a defining characteristic of one “American identity” displaces the multiple identities that we all possess, especially in relation to language background. In order to understand identities, we must understand how experiences with language difference influence the construction of identities. We can argue that English-only policies have been one of the reasons why we have failed to acknowledge the richness that not only Spanish but also other languages might offer pedagogically in the composition classroom.

Because the composition classroom is a space often perceived as English-only, scholars have questioned the implications of such ideals for all students’ educational

experiences. Bruce Horner and John Trimbur in “English Only and U.S. College Composition” argue for the need to teach English in relation to other languages as a means to counter the assumption of English-only in the composition classroom. They propose “an alternative way of thinking about composition programs, the language of our students, and our own language practices that holds monolingualism itself to be a problem and a limitation of U.S. culture and that argues for the benefits of an actively multilingual language policy” (597). Paul Kei Matsuda builds on Horner’s and Trimbur’s arguments by discussing the myth of college composition classrooms, which assume an English-only ideology. He argues that the “image of the student” (639) is one that is English-only by default rather than multilingual. He believes that the myth of assuming linguistic homogeneity is detrimental to all students’ learning whether they are native or non-native speakers of English. In order to validate linguistically diverse students’ language skills as strengths in the classroom, it is necessary to understand how they became aware of the conflict between dominant and non-dominant languages in their early experiences with language and what strategies they began to identify in order to help them negotiate their language duality.

Rhetoric and Composition as a field is committed to helping students become competent college writers; however, this objective is often perceived in direct contradiction to language diversity in the classroom. In her article, Patricia Friedrich concludes that “serving linguistically diverse students in an academic environment begins and ends with accepting all forms of language as classroom assets rather than thinking of these language forms as if they were liabilities” (32). In order to achieve these goals, a multilingual pedagogy should be established—one that welcomes language differences as

ways to expand everyone's understanding of language and rhetoric in the classroom. Language diversity validation extends beyond "accepting all forms of language"; college instructors can accept all forms of languages, but this does not mean they recognize their rhetorical strengths. In order for teachers to value and recognize the rhetorical strength of language diversity in the classroom, it is important to understand their attitudes toward language difference. In "Language Diversity in Teacher Education and in the Classroom" Arnetha F. Ball and Rashidah Jaami' Muhammad discovered that future educators possess "very little tolerance for language variation and for the expression of ideas from diverse cultures" (77) in the classroom. Through an internet survey, the authors discovered that "few colleges or universities offer a required course dealing with language diversity, the course generally conceptualized language variation as 'dialect differences,' incorporating the topic in a broader, comprehensive course such as Introduction to English, History of the English Language, or Introduction to Linguistics" (79). Because the authors aim to counter the zero-tolerance attitude toward language diversity, they propose that all future educators should be required to take a "well-designed" course on language diversity, and they discovered that the few preservice teachers who do enroll in these courses "make significant positive changes in their language attitudes" (87). Language diversity in the classroom can take effect only when the teacher is trained and aware of his/her own attitudes and biases toward language difference. In order to view language difference as a strength in the classroom, teachers must attempt to both understand their students' early experiences with language and help them develop strategies that will assist them in achieving academic success while maintaining ties to their heritage language. Research emphasizes the strong relationship

between language background and identity construction among Latina/os (Ramsdell, hooks, Smitherman, Kells), but research does not address how multilingual students confront conflicts between dominant and non-dominant languages and develop awareness of how their experiences with language difference helped them achieve academic success.

### Mentors and Multiethnic Coursework

The presence of Latina/o mentors in academia conveys to other Latina/os a sense of identification and belonging—qualities that are essential for Latina/os to achieve success. In her study, Gail Y. Okawa interviewed Geneva Smitherman and Victor Villanueva about their experiences with mentors and being mentors. She also asked them to write a narrative about their experiences and asked some of their mentees to write a narrative regarding their experiences with Smitherman and Villanueva, respectively, as mentors. Okawa argues that “all mentees of color reveal the need for and appreciation of particular kinds of relationships for faculty who understand and validate their cultural views and values, such as their responsibility to family or heritage; for models of scholars with similar or related intellectual, social, and political concerns” (521). Latina/o mentors, who relate to students based on their background, set high expectations, and provide guidance and support is vital in academia. Latina/o mentors not only serve as a source of identification in academia but they can also mentor Latina/os in negotiating the challenges inherent in academia, especially as they relate to language background. Although research emphasizes the need for Latina/o mentors in academia, it is important to accentuate that non-Latina/os can also serve as mentors, especially if they care for their students’ academic success and aim to understand their cultural and linguistic

background. In order to increase Latina/o student success, it is essential that graduate courses not only address multiethnic education and culturally sensitive pedagogies but also aim to train all their students in mentorship strategies.

In addition to Latina/o role models in academia, the existence of multicultural or culturally sensitive curriculum is fundamental in fostering Latina/o student's sense of belonging and success in academia. However, there is a disconnect between prevalent composition pedagogies and the Latina/o experience. Coursework focused on the Latina/o experience in the United States helps Latina/o academics identify with the experiences of others because seeing their experiences reflected in course readings allows them to develop authority and confidence in belonging in academia. In "Ethnic Identity and Chicano Literature: How Ethnicity Affects Reading and Reading Affects Ethnic Consciousness," Jessica M. Vasquez conducted a qualitative study in a Chicano literature course in order to discover how coursework contributed to students' ethnic consciousness. Vasquez argues that Chicano literature provided a sense of identification for Latina/o students and awareness of the Chicana/o experience for non-Latina/o students. She also noted that Latina/o students in the course developed authority when discussing course reading, as they felt identified with the experiences portrayed in the literature. Paula Moya, in "Learning How to Learn from Others: Realist Proposals for Multicultural Education," argues for a realist view in multicultural education. She notes, "an educational approach that privileges the hegemonic culture actually presents an inaccurate conception of the world—a conception that is harmful to dominant and minority cultures alike" (174). In order to counter education focused on the hegemonic culture, she proposes a multicultural education because she believes that schools should



be “actively involved in training students and teachers to interact in culturally sensitive ways with peoples whose cultural traditions differ from theirs” (174). Literature indicates that multiethnic education benefits all students and not just “minority” or Latina/o students. Research emphasizes that Latina/os develop a sense of authority and belonging in academia through the mentorship of Latina/o faculty members and their engagement in multiethnic coursework (Okawa, Vasquez). However, less attention has been given to how individuals use their experiences with mentors and coursework to develop strategies that will help them achieve academic success while maintaining ties to their cultural and linguistic background.

#### Latina/o and Academic Identities: Language Difference in Academic Writing

In order to achieve success in academia, Latina/o academics should become aware of their resilient traits to not only counter challenges but also learn to negotiate languages and identities in academia without losing connection to their Latina/o background.

Resiliency theory, according to Bonnie Bernard, focuses on the strengths of people and systems rather than on weaknesses in order to counter challenges in education. Bernard argues that “we are all born with innate resiliency,” but home and institutions have the power to foster resiliency traits as well, such as social competence, problem-solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose. I argue that institutions of higher education can help Latina/o students and future academics become aware of their resilient traits and learn how to use them to their advantage. Because a consistent theme in the writing of Latina/os and other minority scholars is the constant challenges of language hegemony, hierarchical structures, and false assumptions about Latina/os’ languages and knowledge, resiliency theory can help Latina/o academics counter the challenges they face in

academia. When Latina/os become aware of their resilient traits they may not only develop a sense of belief in their academic potential but also knowledge of strategies that can help them negotiate language and cultural difference in academia.

Paula Moya, in *Learning from Experience: Minority Identities, Multicultural Struggles*, opens the introduction, “Identity in the Academy and Beyond,” with a short narrative regarding her experience when she interviewed with the dean at a university in the South. The dean questioned her level of comfort teaching in the Department of English in the English language because her areas of interests are in Chicano/a studies. Moya writes, “Apparently the dean needed to be convinced that the kind of scholarship I was doing was worth the dedication of a faculty billet” (2). Although the Department of English wanted to fill a position in Latina/os studies, Moya believes the dean did not appear to be eager about fulfilling the request. Moya’s experience revealed to her “the complex nexus of identity, experience, knowledge, and belonging that has concerned generations of Chicana/o writers and scholars before me” (2). Because the interrelation of these diverse forces influences the experiences of Latina/os, it is important to discover how they make sense of such complexity and what actions they take to alleviate the tensions that arise when these forces are at work. Because of her experiences, Moya proposes a “postpositivist realist theory” of identity, which she extends in one of the final chapters into a renewed vision for multicultural education. Latina/os are often faced with the need to challenge White hegemony because of the lack of cultural sensitivity to their multifaceted identities in the educational system, including their language difference. Latina/os in Rhetoric and Composition who challenge the dominant culture are of

particular interest considering that the field is often charged with imposing language hegemony.

In order to welcome students' linguistic, rhetorical knowledge, we can seek to understand the experiences Latina/os in higher education. For example, in "No Longer on the Margins: Researching the Hybrid Literate Identities of Black and Latina Preservice Teachers," Marcelle Haddix focuses on the tensions Latina and Black preservice teachers might experience between their home and academic discourses; additionally, the author also examines the construction of their identities in relation to their multilingual experiences. Haddix observed the participants during various events, such as religious events, social functions, teaching placements, and university classes; she also had weekly conversations with the two participants. She analyzed her data for "hybrid discursive practices" and focused particularly on "moments in the linguistic data where multiple discourses coexisted—where genre, Discourse, and style intersected" (107). Based on her findings Haddix concluded these two future educators had to make sense of their experiences and identities in hybrid, multiple terms. Haddix argues for "emphasis on valuing the cultural, racial, and linguistic perspectives that all teachers bring to the teaching and learning experience" (119). Most importantly, her findings reveal that teacher preparation programs are often focused on a homogenous representation of a teacher identity; they also assume that the needs of teachers are "universal for all teachers regardless of their race, class, gender, and/or linguistic affiliation" (119). Haddix argues that becoming a teacher and developing a teacher identity is connected in often positive ways to "Blackness, to bilingualism, to Latino/Latina-ness, to being working class, or to other markers of identity" (119). However, the key is to discover how Latina/o

academics use their hybrid identities and languages as strengths in their pedagogies and research. Many Latina/os might question their hybrid identities because they do not conform to the norm or standard and consequently fail to capitalize on their rhetorical and linguistic capabilities in their academic and pedagogical work.

The insecurity that multilingual instructors might feel is an effect of current attitudes and assumptions regarding language expectations in Composition courses. As Shirley Wilson Logan discusses in “Ownership of Language and the Teaching of Writing,” the issue of language diversity in the classroom is closely related to “an increasing number of international graduate students [...] enrolled in [her] English 101 teacher preparation classes” (185) who work as teaching assistants. Logan shares how “many are concerned about a loss of credibility once their students hear them speak with what they understand to be a ‘foreign accent,’ even though the information they provide will comport with programmatic requirements in all respects” (185). The sense of inadequacy some multilingual instructors encounter might be a direct consequence of the lack of attention placed in teacher preparation programs and courses regarding language diversity. Logan discusses how “it could be argued [...] that such teachers are better equipped to develop students’ ability to navigate the complexities associated with learning those conventions, whether the students are monolingual or multilingual English writers and speakers” (185). Pedagogical training on the benefits of language and cultural difference is necessary in order to increase the success of multilingual instructors.

Some scholars in Rhetoric and Composition have written about their experiences as Latina/o academics and how their knowledge of language difference factors into their identities and pedagogies. Victor Villanueva challenged White hegemony and

hierarchical structures through engagement with personal and academic language in his highly praised personal memoir, *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*. Writing *Bootstraps*, Villanueva states, offered “the possibility for opening the door wider for others of color to enter” (12), and it provides the exigency for valuing linguistic diversity through his very use of language difference. As Villanueva states, “Rhetoric [...] would be the means by which hegemonies could be countered. And the classroom is an ideal site in which to affect change” (121). Indeed, the classroom should be a place where students voice their experiences and analyze their own and others’ rhetorical strengths. Villanueva describes his personal experiences “to demonstrate how deeply embedded racism is, *systemically*” (120). With Villanueva’s understanding of the function of race in academia, I intend to understand how other Latina/os graduate students and scholars make sense of their experiences in academia and how they counter “America’s dominant ideology” particularly in relation to language diversity.

Juan Guerra is another Latino scholar who challenges dominant ideologies through a theoretical tool called “transcultural repositioning.” In “Emerging Representations, Situated Literacies, and the Practice of Transcultural Repositioning” Guerra combines academic scholarship with an analysis of his experiences as a Chicano in South Texas. Guerra shares that “my name, my first language, and my social and cultural upbringing prohibited me from interacting with Anglo students outside the classroom” (16). These experiences, Guerra notes, “limited my opportunities to interpret the oppressive conditions that we faced in our South Texas schools and *barrios*” (17). Though certain conditions have changed, Latina/o students continue to experience academic challenges attributed to social, cultural, and linguistic background. Guerra

shares how he was the only “Latina/o student in all of my English classes [...] I often felt implicitly dismissed by most of my peers as someone who didn’t belong” (17).

Linguistic, cultural, and social background are significant factors in Latina/os’ experiences in school. Guerra defines “transcultural repositioning” as a “notion grounded in the idea that members of historically excluded groups are in a position to cultivate adaptive strategies that help them move across cultural boundaries by negotiating new and different contexts and communicative conventions” (Guerra 299). “Transcultural repositioning” is a rhetorical tool that helped him not only negotiate language difference in order to fit diverse rhetorical contexts but also a tool that helped him make sense of his hybrid identities.

The tool of “transcultural repositioning” is further discussed by Diana Cárdenas in “Creating an Identity: Personal, Academic, and Civic Literacies.” She discusses how “if assimilation means that a person loses a part of him or herself in the process of becoming an American, I have not assimilated. I am a hybrid. I operate within two environments, and I look from two perspectives [...] I located myself in various rhetorical spaces” (124). The idea of *both/and* is a common value held by many Latina/os in relation to their identity; however, it appears that such realization occurs over a lifetime. Cárdenas concludes that through her interest in literacy studies, she discovered: “I do not have to lose my cultural background. In fact, I have been successful in affecting change within my own cultural setting: what is expected of women, how identity is constructed, and what constitutes authority” (124). Cárdenas’ description of her experiences reveal the extent of how specific social contexts influenced not only the construction of her identity as a Latina, but also the construction of her teacher and academic identity. Based on the

mentioned scholarship by Villanueva, Guerra, and Cárdenas, Latina/os in academia often encounter institutional challenges; however, the relationship between their challenges and their language background has not been fully explored. Understanding what strategies Latina/o academics employ to not only negotiate identities but languages could help improve pedagogical and institutional practices aimed at increasing Latina/os' academic success.

### Methodology and Data Collection

My research project consists primarily of personal interviews with established and new bilingual Latina/o academics in Rhetoric and Composition. I also asked participants to voluntarily submit syllabi, writing projects, and/or teaching philosophies. This study addresses how Latina/o academics in Rhetoric and Composition describe their challenges and achievements throughout their education; how their Latina/o identity shapes their academic identity and vice versa; and how their experiences with language diversity influenced their challenges, achievements, and formation of identities. In this study, I use the term “bilingual” broadly; I do not intend to suggest that all participants in my study are fully bilingual in English and Spanish, but rather, I use the term to refer to participants' knowledge of Spanish, Spanglish, Tex-Mex, Chicano English, and/or any other variation of the Spanish language.

As a way to distinguish among the Latina/o participants, I use the terms “established” to refer to participants who are published and have been in academia for over ten years and “new” to refer to participants who are either graduate students or recent composition instructors and who are, thus, beginning their careers in academia. My use of the terms “established” and “new” academics has the potential of

misrepresenting or not encompassing the degrees and variations to which the Latina/os in this study identify with these terms. As Juan Guerra argues, “any representation of the communities we portray is always already ruptured, not only because it is incapable of containing a complete picture of a community’s ever changing nature, but also because all of us [...] are invariably complicit in a system of oppression that benefits those who already have and continues to disadvantage those who still have not” (12). Although my analysis of the experiences of the established and new Latina/o academics might not fully represent their multiplicity of identities and languages, my analysis does provide a glimpse into the ways in which these participants negotiate difference within academia. My goal in representing established and new academics is not to create a sense of distinction between them or with those who have yet to join academia; rather, I am interested in learning how they respond to the challenges they encounter in negotiating multiple identities and languages, thereby, gaining insight into the possibilities for success of future Latina/o academics. At the same time, I am fully conscious that the experiences represented here are not fixed and do not encompass the experiences of all Latina/os in academia. My analysis is a representation of how the established and new Latina/o participants interviewed in this study merge identities and languages in academia in order to achieve success.

I use the term “success” as a way to represent the participants’ different levels of achievement; therefore, my use of the term will vary and change throughout my research study. For example, I consider established academics successful based on their status as tenured professors who maintain an active research agenda. On the other hand, I consider new Latina/o academics successful for the mere fact of being students in master’s and



doctoral programs and composition instructors—reaching such a high academic level is a sign of success considering the low number of Latina/os who continue with their education. My use of the term “success” also changes from chapter to chapter in order to encompass the participants’ success in becoming self-aware of the conflict between English and Spanish, achieving academic success despite negative mentors, and identifying strategies helpful in merging identities and languages in academia.

Another term I use throughout my dissertation is “language diversity” or language difference. I use these terms interchangeably drawing on Bruce Horner’s definition of cross-language relations: “students need to learn to work in their writing within, on, among, and across a variety of Englishes and languages, not simply (re) produce and write within the conventions of a particular, standardized variety of English” (3). When I use the terms language diversity or language difference, I refer to a wide variety of languages, dialects, discourses, or accents and the rhetorical agilities of navigating, intermixing, and employing multiple Englishes, languages, and dialects. Thinking about language difference in this way helps us understand English with an accent, a broken or pocho Spanish, Tex-Mex, Spanglish, or any other variation of the possibilities when two languages like English and Spanish mix as rooted in specific cultural, linguistic, social, and historical contexts. These variations should not be perceived as “inappropriate” because they do not adhere to standard English or standard Spanish; instead, they should be viewed as rhetorically sophisticated ways of using language. Based on this definition and my conscious decision to interview bilingual Latina/os in the field of Rhetoric and Composition who possess unique experiences and challenges in relation to language diversity, my research study is guided by the following questions:

- How do Latina/o graduate students, writers, and /or instructors describe their academic challenges and achievements in relation to language difference? To what do they attribute their challenges and successes?
- How have their experiences with language diversity influenced their academic identity and how has their academic identity influenced their Latina/o identity?
- What pedagogies might enhance success for Latina/o students, and how do institutions need to change in order to facilitate the success of these students?

One of my primary interests in conducting this research study is based on Paula Moya's objectives in *Learning from Experience: Minority Identities, Multicultural Struggles*. In the introduction to the book, she writes that through her work, she hopes to "show that while the experiences of Chicana/os is admittedly subjective and particular, the knowledge that is gained from a focused study of their lives can have general implications for all Americans" (3). Studying the lives of Latina/os in academia will reveal important knowledge that will benefit not only Latina/os who desire to pursue advanced education but also everyone who is in academia.

Before I conducted personal interviews, I obtained approval from Texas Christian University's Institutional Review Board in January 2011. To protect the participants' confidentiality, I gave them the opportunity to choose whether they preferred to be identified by a pseudonym. The established academics chose to be revealed in my project, except one established academic participant who provided me with the option to choose. The new academics preferred to remain anonymous and some chose their own pseudonyms. All participants provided me with written permission to publish any of their responses. I conducted the interviews strictly on a volunteer basis in order to learn about

the participants' experiences within academia. Given the nature and purpose of my study, I requested the participation of bilingual Latina/o graduate students or academics in Rhetoric and Composition via academic list serves or direct e-mails to potential participants (See Appendix A). The participants were bilingual or possessed some knowledge of Spanish, Spanglish, Tex-Mex, Chicano English, and/or any other variation of the Spanish language. During Spring 2011, I interviewed a total of 10 Latina/o academics in person or via Skype—five are established academics and five are new academics. The interviews lasted one to two hours. With the participants' permission, I recorded our interview in order to capture the representation of their experiences as accurately as possible. Additionally, I emailed each participant a copy of the completed transcribed interview, and they had the opportunity to approve the transcript and make corrections as necessary.

I utilized an open-ended qualitative interview approach in my analysis of participants' experiences. I based my interview questions (see Appendix B) on the *general interview guide approach* identified by Michael Patton in *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. According to Patton, a general interview guide approach allows the interviewer to have a general set of questions “within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Thus, the interview remains free to build a conversation within particular subject areas, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style” (343). Because I am interested in learning from the knowledge, thoughts, and experiences of Latina/os in academia, an open-ended, general interview guide approach allowed for a conversational interview focused on the participants' experience while following a general set of

questions addressed in all interviews. For example, I purposely asked about their early experiences with language difference, challenges they encountered in school and academia specifically related to language, and how they merge their identities and languages in academia. Although I did not specifically ask about the role of mentors in their professional lives, many participants discussed their positive and negative experiences with mentors in academia. In addition to personal interviews, I also collected teaching materials (i.e., syllabi, lesson plans, teaching philosophies) and other writing materials (i.e., conference abstracts, current journal articles/manuscripts, personal writing), respectively, from the interview participants. I requested these materials on a strictly volunteer basis. Because Latina/o academics are invested in contributing to the success of other Latina/os in higher education and beyond, participants were open about their experiences due to the exigency of the study.

I established rapport in order for them to view me as trustworthy and sympathetic to their experiences and knowledge. In *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction* Corrine Glesne discusses that “in qualitative inquiry, the nature of relationships depends on at least two factors: the quality of your interactions to support your research—rapport—and the quality of your self-awareness of the potential effects of self on your research—or subjectivity” (109). Therefore, in order for my study to reveal trustworthy research, I was particularly aware of the challenges inherent in establishing rapport and how to alleviate these challenges. Additionally, because I am personally, professionally, and pedagogically attached to the purpose of my study, I attempted to become aware of my subjectivity in order to lead to “not only more trustworthy research, but also greater understanding of [myself] and [my] psychological investment in [my]

research” (Glesne 109). As discussed by Janet Alsup in “Protean Subjectivities: Qualitative Research and the Inclusion of the Personal,” the researcher’s positionality in relation to the research subject has been debated in qualitative inquiry. Alsup writes that “researcher self-disclosure has become almost a generic conversation in qualitative text, but some researchers question whether this use of autobiographical narrative is a valuable practice in constructing and reporting qualitative or ethnographic research” (221). Alsup notes, “self-reflexivity adds to the trustworthiness of qualitative research by making known the researcher’s social and cultural position in relationship to the participants and contexts under study” (222). While the researcher’s self-reflexivity is valuable to the research, there is a risk that sharing personal experiences might result in “voyeurism, narcissism, or oversimplification of research participants or texts” (235). Because of the tensions in qualitative research regarding personal revelation, Alsup believes in a “more thoughtful, purposeful, and reasoned inclusion of it” (222). Therefore, she proposes “the concept of reciprocal nonunitary subjectivity as one way of using the personal in a more effective manner” (234). According to Alsup, when a researcher operates under the awareness of reciprocal nonunitary subjectivity she refuses a “single, unitary, easily definable set of characteristics” (234) regarding the relationship between her personal experiences and her research participants or texts. Because this research study emerged based on my personal background as a bilingual Latina in Rhetoric and Composition and my desire to learn how new and established academics balance their identities and languages, I decided to include only a short discussion of my personal background in this introduction in order to frame my study. While I identified with many of my research study participants’ experiences throughout the analysis of their transcripts, I also

understand that our respective experiences might vary based on our background and institutional contexts. In order to remain as objective as possible, I chose to focus solely on the analysis of their experiences.

I empathize with Morris Young when he writes about his connection with the research participants in his study: “I reflect on these experiences not for the sake of authorizing this study with a personal experience or to invoke identity politics [...] [r]ather, I read these events as the preconditions for considering the position of Asian Americans within larger American culture and within the site of my professional life, the academy, and specifically in the study of literacy” (2). Similarly, reflections on my personal experiences do not serve as a means to justify or provide a sense of “authority” to the current study; rather, my personal experiences provide the grounds and framework of the current study by understanding how Latina/os experiences with language affect their Latina/o and academic identities; how the knowledge revealed in Latina/o experiences might inform pedagogical approaches in the teaching of composition; and how the Latina/o experience in the academy might reveal pedagogical, programmatic, and mentorship knowledge toward the development of Rhetoric and Composition.

Based on suggestions provided by Sonja Foss and William Waters in *Destination Dissertation: A Traveler's Guide to a Done Dissertation*, I color-coded my interview transcripts based on units of analysis that emerged from my research question. I tested this technique on three different transcripts and identified the units of analysis by color-coding the excerpts and giving them a code on the margins. The following are the initial codes I identified: representation (role models), consciousness, enacting language difference, education, countering stereotypes, perception of language, and writing

success. From the color-coded sections, I developed a more detailed coding scheme to apply to the rest of the transcripts. The following are the themes for color coding subsequent transcripts: writing/language success, writing/language challenges, pedagogical goals, context (background), language use in different contexts, balancing languages/dialects, and self-identity. As I color-coded the interview transcripts, I provided a short descriptive phrase about the excerpt as recommended by Foss and Waters. I proceeded to cut the excerpts and placed them into appropriate piles based not only on the color but also on the short descriptive phrase as appropriate—some color-coded excerpts overlapped. I identified eight different piles: language background and multiple contexts, parents' role in language(s) learning, mentors and coursework influences, relationship between academic writing and language difference, challenging encounters (race, class, language, professors, personality), pedagogical views on language diversity, representation (role models and sense of belonging), and self-identity.

From these eight piles, I noted three major themes, which resulted in the loose chronological organization of my research project: early language background and community identity, mentors and coursework in academia, and negotiating identities and language difference in academic writing. When I analyzed my data under the language background category, I was looking for participants' references to their early experiences with language difference within their home, school, and community contexts, particularly what conflicts they experienced and who or what factors contributed to participants' experiences with language diversity. Under the mentors and coursework category, my analysis of data consisted of identifying factors that contributed to the participants' development of a sense of belonging in academia, specifically how mentors helped or

hindered their academic success and how experiences in multicultural coursework helped them succeed. In the final category, negotiating language difference with academic writing, I was interested in identifying the strategies Latina/o academics employ to balance their multiple identities and knowledge of language difference in order to achieve success in academia.

### Project Overview

My research aims to discover how Latina/os' experiences with language differences influenced the construction of their Latina/o and academic identity and their academic success. In Chapter 2, I discuss the participants' early language background, particularly the role of their respective family members, friends, and the community in exposing them to language difference. I argue that early awareness of the conflict between dominant and non-dominant language helped participants begin to identify strategies that helped them negotiate the conflict in order to achieve academic success. In Chapter 3, I discuss how participants' experiences with mentors and multicultural coursework contributed to the construction of their academic identities and success in academia. I conclude that Latina/o mentors helped participants develop a sense of belonging in academia; similarly, multiethnic coursework provided them with authority to discuss important issues concerning Latina/os in academia. However, the importance of these factors in the participants' academic success was threatened by stereotypes and assumptions concerning their background through negative experiences with professors and fellow classmates. Therefore, I argue it is imperative to offer training on mentoring strategies and coursework on multicultural education that will benefit not only Latina/o students but also faculty who work with culturally diverse populations. In Chapter 4, I



address the relationship between participants' identities and their negotiations between academic language and language difference. I discuss how established and new Latina/o academics achieved academic success by focusing on their resilient traits and identifying strategies that help them utilize dual languages and identities as an advantage. Finally, in Chapter 5, I discuss necessary institutional and pedagogical adaptations that could increase the retention and success of Latina/os in academia by valuing their knowledge of language difference and mixed identities.

“Spanish carries the values of the family and values of the neighborhood.”

–Diana Cárdenas

“Even though I might not be fluent with Spanish in certain ways anymore, I still have a cultural allegiance to it [...] Even though it is not speaking it or writing or understanding as much vocabulary as before, I am still culturally connected to Spanish.”

–Ana

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **DEVELOPING CONSCIOUSNESS OF LANGUAGE CONFLICT**

Identity is one of the primary factors that influences language practices. As Mari Haneda argues,

research has shown that young ethnic minority and ELL [English language learners] children engage in a range of literacy practices at home and in the community [and] their literacy practices are typically bilingual or multilingual in nature. Some of their out-of-school literacy practices are tied to religion and instigated by parental wishes; others are of a collaborative nature, involving a network of people beyond the family. (339)

The factors Haneda identifies as affecting language practice reveal that language use is connected to values rooted within one’s home and community. Within most Latina/o communities, Spanish or variations of Spanish and English is integral to individuals’ cultural identity, values, and beliefs. For example, in “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” Gloria Anzaldúa states that “for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castillian) Spanish nor standard English [they] create their own language[.] A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of

communicating the realities and values true to themselves—a language with terms that are neither español ni inglés, but both” (77). Anzaldúa identifies at least eight different languages Chicana/os speak; these languages represent a multiplicity of communities Chicana/os connect with through language. However, these non-dominant language practices create conflicts when the individual encounters the dominant language in school settings. For example, Anzaldúa grew up in the Rio Grande Valley during the late 1940’s and early 1950’s; she recalls “being caught speaking Spanish at recess—that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler” (75). When the school system denies students’ abilities with other languages, the system creates tension between languages, forcing students to choose the dominant discourse in order to aspire to succeed academically. To better understand how to see language difference as a strength in academic settings, it is important to understand how Latina/os in academia manage to maintain connections with their heritage language while achieving academic success. Before I discuss the experiences of the Latina/o participants in this study, I will first discuss scholarship that addresses the challenges and strategies people of color utilize to negotiate conflict between languages in their lives as well as scholarship on how schools can mediate such conflict.

### Challenges in Language Difference: Negotiating Conflict and Developing Pride

Latina/o and other faculty of color might experience shame regarding their non-dominant language practices. Ironically, faculty must often develop awareness of the conflict between languages in order to develop a sense of pride in their language and cultural background. Scholars like Lisa Delpit, Geneva Smitherman, bell hooks among others have addressed the conflict many African Americans experience between African-

American language and Standard English. In “Geneva Smitherman: The Social Ontology of African-American Language, the Power of Nommo, and the Dynamics of Resistance and Identity Through Language,” George Yancy provides an analysis of Geneva Smitherman’s beliefs in the rhetorical sophistication of African American Language (AAL). Yancy interweaves academic writing with AAL to demonstrate how non-dominant language practices enhance his argument and shape his academic experiences:

Docta G, ‘daughter of the hood,’ raised in Brownsville, Tennessee, was culturally immersed in the rich locutionary acts of Black folk (Smitherman 2000, xiii). Y’all wit me? I’m pointing to the significant links between Docta G’s biographical *location* and how this influenced her later theorizations about AAL [...] you betta act like you know. She fightin against African American *linguistic* erasure. Naw, even more so, she fightin *for* African American hue-manity. (278-279)

Yancy argues that Smitherman’s early language experiences contributed to her desire to prevent the erasure of AAL and the negative assumptions associated with the language. For many bilingual or multilingual individuals, their parents served as the primary source of motivation in the preservation of their home language. Geneva Smitherman, in *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans*, argues that AAL “is bound up with and symbolic of identity, camaraderie, culture, and home. And it ain goin nowhere” (19). Language practices are shared within a community that not only represents cultural values but also historical circumstances contributing to language usage. As Smitherman explains, “our language practices reflect a generational continuity that has stood the test of time and they continue to demonstrate the uniqueness of Black folks’ journey in this

land” (64). By using “our language,” Smitherman illustrates a continued relationship to AAL, reflective of struggles and communal unity.

Smitherman’s language communities helped her develop pride in her heritage language, which led her to advocate for its rhetorical and cultural significance. However, shame in one’s language practices can also arise, especially when society criticizes uses of language that deviate from the expected, standard use. Carmen I. Mercado reflected, “entering my cousins’ circle of friends, I discovered that the Spanish I spoke, a mix of English and Spanish, was stigmatized. Some interpreted my “Nuyorican” Spanglish as a deliberate devaluing of our mother tongue. Even worse, they viewed it as deliberate rejection of my Puerto Rican identity” (40). Her cousins’ friends perceived Mercado’s language use illustrated her rejection of her Puerto Rican identity, which influenced their criticism of her mixed language use. Due to her cousin’s friends’ assumptions about language, Mercado felt ashamed of her mixture of languages, which led her to “read more in Spanish in order to read and write well” (41). Mercado decided to learn to read and write in Spanish to develop academic knowledge of Spanish rather than embracing her Nuyorican Spanish. This decision was especially significant because it allowed her to serve as an example when she advocated for the benefits of bilingual education. Although Mercado’s path toward success served her well, the assumptions associated with Nuyorican Spanglish as a form of “deliberate rejection of [a] Puerto Rican identity” is troubling because it denies the ways an individual’s identity is shaped by the place where a mixture of languages and cultures occurs. Mercado’s experiences with her friends illustrate the role of social context in shaping one’s experiences with language. Mercado learned standard Spanish, but through her education, she also learned that there is a

“sociolinguistic explanation of Nuyorican Spanish” (42). Despite her experience with her cousins’ friends, Mercado views Spanish as an integral aspect of her life because her family continues to maintain ties to the Spanish language. She described, “Spanish, the language of my family and heritage, has formed part of how I have chose to define myself even though I have lived in New York City most of my life. It has shaped and defined me in ways I still don’t fully understand” (37). Mercado negotiated the tensions she experienced between her Nuyorican Spanglish and Spanish by studying and learning formal Spanish; at the same time, through her education, she learned reasons and explanation for Nuyorican Spanglish, which allowed her to remain connected to her heritage language.

For many bilingual or multilingual individuals, their parents served as the primary source of motivation in the preservation of their home language. For example, in “Words Were All We Had: Reflections on Becoming Biliterate” Josué M. González reflects, “reading instruction, in Spanish, began early. There were two reasons for this. First, my parents wanted us to be literate because they read Spanish [...] they wanted us to participate actively in religious activities” (27). As argued by Haneda, religion contributes to a sense of connection with the home language or community identity. Gonzalez developed a strong connection to his heritage language that led him to argue for the right for students to use their home languages in school settings. As a member of the National Honor Society, Gonzalez had an encounter with the faculty advisor of the organization, a Latino, who proposed an English-only policy during meetings. Gonzalez reflected, “I no longer remember the exact words I used, but they had to do with the symbolic rejection of our parents’ language and of the historic culture of which it was a

part” (30). A rejection of a language is also a rejection of the cultural values and history associated with the language. Gonzalez countered the conflict he experienced in school between English and Spanish by articulating the significance of Spanish in the Latina/o experience—an action facilitated by the strong bond he developed with his home language community.

The precise place where home and academic languages mix is where insight can be obtained regarding how people negotiate conflict in values, beliefs, and culture. In “Understanding the Rhetorical Value of Tejano Codeswitching,” Michelle Hall Kells reports on a study of four students working on their Master’s degree in Spanish. The students met every day at one of their apartments for breakfast; they called their daily meetings “the Breakfast Club.” Kells attended these meetings to study the students’ language practices through observations and interviews. Kells describes the setting as a place “where languages, literacies, and localities come together, where home culture and academic culture mix” (30). Because the four students created a community identity, the social location (their home environment) provided them with the freedom to express themselves in Spanglish and Tex-Mex. However, it is also important to accentuate that the students she studied were master level students in Spanish; the extent to which they were able to maintain ties to their home languages could also have been influenced by their area of study. Although the students were scholars of Spanish whose professors insisted on their use of proper Spanish, they all maintained ties to Spanglish or Tex-Mex and actively engaged in codeswitching during Kells’ observations. Kells concluded that, “for speakers of Tex Mex (and other stigmatized language varieties), codeswitching can be a symbol of marginality and alienation, a source of shame and ostracism. Yet

codeswitching can also operate as a sign of belonging and intimacy, a marker of social inclusion” (36). Despite the participants’ encounters with those who devalued Spanglish or Tex-Mex, such as professors, codeswitching was the language they used to remain connected to their home community and as representation of their solidarity. Kells reported, “codeswitching indexes identity, a communicative strategy for enlarging and restricting social access. In other words, codeswitching functions as a boundary of belonging. What is most apparent from this exchange is codeswitching’s role in reinforcing solidarity. ‘Intimacy is the thing.’” (36). As one of the participants shared with Kells, “intimacy” is what codeswitching represents—connection, belonging, and identity construction. In addition to the participants’ home environment, their friendship helped them maintain ties to Spanglish in the midst of becoming experts in academic Spanish.

The key to whether or not students are academically successful while maintaining their heritage language lies in how they counter the ridicule and shame associated with their use of languages and dialects that deviate from standard usage. As identified by previous scholarship, individuals maintain connections to their heritage language through their communities—family and friends. While the dominant language is taught in schools, the education system can play an important role in enabling students to stay connected to their home languages by respecting students’ heritage languages and, at the same time, facilitating their academic success in the dominant language. For example, in “No nos dejaremos: Writing in Spanish as an Act of Resistance,” Daniel Villa argues that sometimes students or teachers “deride [...] heritage language varieties and give them labels such as Spanglish, mocho, slang, Tex Mex, or some other variant, labels that



reflect an attitude that students' Spanish is some broke, ill-formed, meaningless mishmash unsuitable for everyday communication, much less academic work" (90). Villa identifies assumptions often associated with variations of Spanish, and one of his goals is to counter such attitudes in his classroom by allowing students to write in their heritage language in order to more effectively illustrate their stories and arguments. Despite students' continued "rejection, and in some cases derision, of their heritage Spanish language skills" (94), Villa hopes "to have shared with them some new ways of understanding the importance, and the beauty, of the language they have inherited from their family and their community, and of the value in maintaining it as a part of their cultural and linguistic heritage" (94). One of the goals Villa conveys to his students is the relationship between their home and community language practices and their academic success—a relationship that contributes to the development of their professional identities. For example, he reflected on the experiences of one of his former students, Jesus: "On the job he seldom, if ever, uses his mother tongue, in either the spoken or written form. However, his company sends him out into the community for outreach activities, and there he does speak Spanish with students in the public schools. Most important, his Spanish continues to maintain strong bonds with his friends and extended family" (92). Although Jesus hardly uses his knowledge of Spanish in his job, his knowledge serves him well to connect with students in the public schools through outreach programs. While community connections, family, and friends contribute to the preservation of individuals' heritage language, language practices also enable ties to the community.

Scholarship emphasizes that academic, home, and community settings play a crucial role in individuals' relationship to language practices. Scholarship also reveals that despite conflicts among languages and dialects, individuals counter conflicts and become successful users of language in a variety of contexts, such as home and school. Although the conflict in maintaining ties to non-dominant discourses while learning the dominant discourse is important to consider, emphasis should be placed on how individuals use awareness of their social location and conflict among languages in order to carve their own path toward academic success. It is important to understand how home and community shape individuals' language practices and their relationship with their heritage languages. hooks emphasizes the necessity for individuals to become aware of how their past shapes their present and future, but I propose that research is necessary to understand *how* an individual becomes aware and makes sense of the conflict or tension they experience between languages. For example, what strategies do they employ to understand the interconnections among social location, conflict surrounding language difference, and their academic achievement? In the interviews reported here, parents, the community, friends, and teachers respectively contributed to participants' ability to develop pride in their heritage language. These various factors functioned as both positive and negative forces in the participants' development of pride in Spanish and ability to negotiate both, home and school, languages. My analysis reveals that their sense of community identity, which included the use of Spanish or variations of Spanish at home and with friends, facilitated their continued connection with their heritage language and also their academic success. For the purposes of organization, I will first discuss the experiences of established Latina/o academics (scholars in Rhetoric and Composition

with associate professor or professor rank) and then new academics (graduate students and/or composition instructors).

### Language Background Among Established Latina/o Academics

The established Latina/o academics' initial community identity developed within their home and neighborhoods. Established academics became proud of their heritage language through diverse means, sometimes developing shame in their language first and then pride. They all became successful academics, but they developed different strategies that helped them negotiate the conflict they encountered between home and school discourses. Based on my analysis of interviews with established Latina/o academics, I argue that the following factors contributed to their ability to maintain ties to their home language while achieving success in the dominant language: family instilled values and pride in their heritage language, multiple communities outside the family facilitated connections to their heritage language, and awareness of the conflict between dominant and non-dominant languages yielded strategies for confronting challenges. Although each of the established participants in this study took different paths toward success, having a strong community identity and being aware of the conflict between English and Spanish were two of the primary means through which all participants became successful while remaining connected to their heritage language.

Pride in language passed on family is an important factor in participants' ability to become successful and retain their home language as argued by bell hooks. Victor Villanueva, Professor and English Department Head at Auburn University, shared during his interview that his home context served as a means by which he was able to connect

with language difference at an early age. He reflected: “how [my parents] raised me is that they tried to raise me as bilingual so they would say everything first in Spanish and then in English, so you know ‘dame eso,’ ‘give me that’ that’s how it would come out.” Villanueva was exposed to a bilingual education in his home, but his English did not reflect the dominant, standard expectation. He described,

my language education, until I went to school, was primarily English and Spanish although the English wasn’t quite precise. My mother would call this part [points] the forejed [Spanish accent, emphasis on the ‘e’]. I was raised bilingual, but my English portion had an accent. Sister Rhea Marie [...] comes to my parents’ home to tell them that they had to speak to me in English because my English has an accent. My mother told Sister Rhea that I have an accent because they speak to me in English [laughs].

Although we might laugh at this joke, the reality is that “in those days the ideology for success was assimilation,” as Villanueva affirmed; any deviation from the standard, unaccented English was a marker of difference that needed to be “corrected” in order to succeed. Because Villanueva’s parents desired their son’s success, they decided to speak only in English at home. Villanueva shared, “Spanish becomes what I hear around me but I am no longer allowed to speak it [...] my job at home was to teach English to my parents. It was for many years, there was a shame associated for not being as fluent in Spanish as I would have liked to have wished. I had to learn that this wasn’t my parents’ fault; this was society that we grew up in.” Villanueva became immersed in the English language even in his home context as he was not allowed to speak Spanish. Shame

associated with both his perceived lack of fluency in Spanish and his accented English are a reflection of how social and historical contexts influence language practices.

While family background and community contexts contribute to individuals' connection to their heritage language, the emphasis schools place on learning the dominant language in order to achieve success forces individuals to confront the conflict by either forgetting their home language or identifying strategies to retain their heritage language and still achieve success. In the case of Villanueva, he was introduced to the conflict between English and Spanish early in his home. He reflected on his use of Spanish: "I had receptive ability; I can understand it all, but lost all confidence in producing it until I was a much older man. I have regained it [...] as my father got older, he stopped speaking in English and my mother too; she hardly talks in English." As a child, Villanueva was forced to abandon the use of Spanish; however, one factor that facilitated his regained pride in speaking Spanish was his parents' decision to stop speaking in English. A second factor was his academic success. His parents' decision to stop using English facilitated Villanueva's ability to regain confidence in Spanish. He realized that certain phrases had a better effect in Spanish; he shared, "What I have found [...] these last few years maybe the last 10 years or so is that there are phrases and expressions that don't work in English for me that have to be in Spanish." In a follow-up e-mail, he shared some of the expressions he feels more accurately represent ideas in Spanish: "'soy una tumba.' I think that's great for saying 'my lips are sealed' or 'mum's the word.' There's nothing close in English to that. '¡ojala que...!' which is derived from the Arabic, so it translates to 'Allah be willing,' but I use the English too. Still there's a different 'feel' to 'God willing' and 'ojala que.'" His parents' pride in Spanish helped

him deal productively with the conflict between discourses. Villanueva was first told by those in authority he needed to stop speaking in Spanish to achieve academic success; Villanueva's parents made a conscious decision to stop speaking Spanish at home in order for Villanueva to assimilate by learning English. After Villanueva achieved success, he developed a sense of freedom to relearn Spanish, primarily because his parents stopped speaking in English, but also because his academic interests in rhetoric, such as Arabic rhetoric, led him to regain connections to the Spanish language. While Villanueva accepted the conflict between dominant and non-dominant languages, once he became successful and gained authority in his field, he challenged the conflict by claiming his authority as an academic and recognizing the rhetorical value in difference.

Support from home and community seemed to be key factors in the established participants' success in education and language learning; however, negative assumptions associated with educational attainment or negative attitudes toward different language practices are also factors, ironically, that can lead toward success. Juan Guerra, Associate Professor of English at the University of Washington, shared in his interview, "we weren't expected to do well in school; we weren't expected to do badly; we just were never expected to do anything [...] When I would show my report card to my mother, she wouldn't sit down and say 'ay mi'jito, this is wonderful; you got three As.' She just said, 'where do you want me to sign?' No one throughout my public schooling ever expressed any interest in my study, never said, 'oh good for you.'" Guerra's mother supported him attending school, but when Guerra states, "we weren't expected to do well," he refers to his socioeconomic circumstances and the discrimination that existed in his neighborhood against Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Despite his mother's indifference toward his

grades, his family never denied him literacy development in English or Spanish. He spoke Spanish at home and within the community. Guerra shared: “I was always reading [...] to the point where sometimes my mother would come and knock on the door, ‘Juanito?’ ‘what mami?’ ‘Que estas haciendo?’ ‘estoy leyendo, mami’ ‘ay mi’jito, te vas a lamistar los ojos’ ‘No, mami, esta bien; I’m not going to hurt my eyes.’ ‘ay, mi’jito no leeas tanto’ ‘It’s okay mami.’” As Guerra reports, his mother never overtly prevented him from reading; she was merely concerned for his eyes. His family supported his use of Spanish and did not discourage him from learning English. In addition to developing oral literacy in Spanish by speaking with his mother, Guerra described how he learned to read in Spanish at home: “the only book in our household was the Bible, and it was in Spanish, and that’s actually how I learned to read Spanish [...] I’d get curious; it had incredible pictures; it was beautiful, pictures of all kinds of historical moments in biblical times [...] Nobody ever said, ‘let’s study Spanish.’ I just would look at words. I loved to read.” The presence of the Bible in Spanish in his home contributed to Guerra’s connection with the language. Despite the lack of direct teaching in Spanish, Guerra continued learning Spanish; he identifies his curiosity and passion for reading as primary factors that influenced his early language learning experiences in both Spanish and English.

In addition to the role that his mother and books played in language learning, Guerra’s experiences with language within diverse communities helped him gain awareness of language difference. His awareness led him to develop strategies to negotiate different language situations. For example, Guerra learned how to hide his accent in order to avoid being marked as different. He reflected, “[as] a kid, I had a very

strong accent when I spoke English. My friends would make fun of me. I was so embarrassed [...] that I remember thinking ‘one day I’m going to speak English just like White people;’ I listen[ed] in class when the White kids would talk and the teachers, and I would go home and practice. I didn’t want to be marked by my language.” Guerra’s experiences with his friends led him to develop shame in his use of language. He reflected, “I did such a good job that most people would say, you don’t have an accent, at least not a noticeable one [...] sometimes, I regret that because it changed who I was and in a sense the different social, cultural forces made me speak in a way that I wouldn’t have otherwise if I wouldn’t have been made to feel ashamed of the way I spoke.” Guerra’s recollections reflect society’s negative assessment of language practices that deviate from dominant usage. Although factors out of his control caused him to feel ashamed of his language, this experience also led Guerra to learn early about the conflict between dominant and non-dominant languages. While Villanueva was forced to abandon Spanish in order to become successful in the dominant language, Guerra was never overtly told he needed to abandon his language. However, he was made to feel ashamed of his language. Because he communicated with his mom and family primarily in Spanish and needed to communicate in English at school in order to be successful, Guerra learned to confront the conflict by developing different language practices for different situations.

Similar to Carmen I. Mercado’s experiences with speaking Spanish with her cousins in Puerto Rico, the negative encounters with language that Guerra faced in certain parts of his community instilled in him sensitivity to and curiosity about language difference. He explained, “I was curious about the accents, how people said different



things, so I would listen. I was curious about how people switched languages, how we code-switched but our parents spoke only in Spanish. The kids, we only spoke in English; sometimes, we would switch back and forth. I always found that fascinating. I was always attuned to language and the subtleties of language.” Like the participants in Kells’ study who engaged in code-switching practices with one another, Guerra also became successful in higher education while maintaining ties to his home language due to his participation in diverse communities. For example, Guerra describes the different languages he utilizes:

[W]hen I go to the Valley, you know, it’s different. I don’t speak academic English. I use a different register of English. When I’m with my mother, we mostly speak Spanish. When I’m with my brothers and sisters, we mostly code-switch, but with some of my older sisters, we don’t typically code-switch; we either speak all in Spanish or all in English, but rarely code-switch. With my younger siblings, it’s constant code-switching. Then, I’ve been married to an African American woman who was poor, working class like I was and whose discursive practices are Ebonics based [...] I was constantly immersed in that linguistic, socio-cultural context.

His curiosity about languages and accents led to a desire to learn more about how language works. Guerra’s ability to engage in language use for different purposes and diverse contexts facilitated his connection to his heritage language as well as other varieties. His family and communities outside of his family fostered his awareness of language difference. His early experiences with language led him to further develop his

language negotiation strategies, as an academic, into the concept of transcultural repositioning (Guerra).

As bell hooks argues, the best strategy for negotiating conflict in academia is to become aware of how our cultural and language background shapes us. Established academics became successful in managing this conflict because they stayed connected to their family throughout their education. Diana Cárdenas, Associate Professor of English and Coordinator for the Technical and Professional Writing Program at Texas A&M University Corpus Christi, a Hispanic-Serving Institution, shared that despite the conflict she encountered in school between English and Spanish, she maintained ties to Spanish because she needed to communicate with her parents. Cárdenas' continued use of Spanish is an outcome of her experiences at home: "My mother was very articulate and my father too in the Spanish language. My mother and father always spoke [to us in] Spanish. In high school and college, my parents would speak to us in Spanish and we'd answer in English because my father was bilingual. My mother not so [much]; my mother always favored Spanish more." Cárdenas' parents instilled in her pride in being bilingual—being able to use both Spanish and English at home served as a tool that allowed her to confront the conflicts she encountered in school between the languages. In high school, Cárdenas felt her English was different from her peers: "my family brought us here when I was eight. So, I had to catch up with eight years of no English [...] my perception was that somehow my English was not as good as the English [of] the other high school kids." While Villanueva and Guerra were raised in the United States, Cárdenas arrived in the U.S. education system as an eight-year-old. Although her parents encouraged her use of both Spanish and English, at school her language was not treated

as positively, which led her to a “self-imposed” silence in English classes. Teachers and peers, thus, influenced her perception of her language abilities. She reflected, “the way [teachers] interacted with me. In high school, the differences were more profound. The Anglos knew where they were, although there were some social mixing. The racial mind was more evident. You’ve got the combination of ethnicity or race and language. Although we all spoke English, I didn’t think my English [pause] It’s a perception. It’s a feeling.” The negative association she perceived regarding her use of English that emerged from her teachers’ treatment contributed to her silence. However, her awareness of the tension between her ethnic background and her use of Spanish and English led her to identify strategies to negotiate difference.

In addition to the participants’ connections to Spanish through their family, they also maintained connections to the language through their community. For example, because Cárdenas’ father desired to promote social change, he “wrote letters to representatives of local government and directors of institutions” (Cárdenas 114). Given her father’s influence, Cárdenas became active within her community—a predominantly Spanish-speaking neighborhood—by encouraging citizens to vote. She reflected, “Spanish carries the values of the family and values of the neighborhood. Spanish is comfortable because I spoke Spanish to [the citizens in my neighborhood] and can converse with the older Hispanics who used to vote. I did a lot of political campaigning when I was younger in our precinct because we were a very active precinct. They might not have been college educated but they voted.” Because most of the citizens in the neighborhood where she lived spoke Spanish, she found Spanish to be the most effective language to use to connect with them. In a country where the dominant language is

English, Spanish is associated with the values of the family and neighborhood and, hence, a more effective way to make alliances within her community for civic purposes, but at the same time, Cárdenas' knowledge of English helped her in understanding important civic issues in order to translate them and make them available to her predominantly Spanish speaking community. The connection Cárdenas developed, through language, with members of her community allowed her to remain connected to Spanish as she helped them become aware of important civic issues. In spite of Cárdenas' awareness of the conflict with English and Spanish in school, her desire to help her Spanish-speaking community ultimately led her to view her language abilities as strengths—she discovered how to counter the tension by balancing her knowledge of both languages through interactions in diverse contexts.

Home and community neighborhoods provided my participants with the ability to develop strategies to remain connected to Spanish while becoming successful in the dominant language. Caridad, an Associate Professor of English at a large metropolitan university on the East coast, engaged in multiple language communities that afforded her the opportunity to remain connected to her heritage language. In the interview I conducted, she noted that her parents instilled the use of Spanish at home: “I spoke Spanish before I spoke English; I was bilingual very, very young. I came to literacy in English first, so I think that because I speak English without an accent, language has not been that much of a problem.” Because Caridad spoke Spanish first but came to English literacy before Spanish, this could have been a factor that contributed to her lack of conflict or struggle in balancing languages. Additionally, she reflected on how place influenced her use of Spanish, “sometimes, it depends on how immersed I am in the

language community; if I just came back from Miami, I'm going to be talking a lot of Spanish. But, if I've been just around North Americans, I might search for a word in Spanish that I can't find." Like Juan Guerra, Caridad developed rhetorical agilities that helped her use language in diverse community contexts.

In addition to Spanish within her home context, Caridad also used Spanish and other variations of English to connect with a community of neighborhood friends. Her friends influenced her language awareness; she shared, "my friends and peers were all bilingual Cubans, mostly Cubans. So, we always went back and forth between, we spoke Spanglish. We made fun of Spanish; we made fun of English. So, language for me was always fun." Playing around with language in these humorous contexts helped Caridad establish a sense of community language identity. Her communal language awareness functioned as another factor that might have made her language use less conflicted. She became aware of the possibilities of language difference; for example, she recalled some of the conversations with her friends: "I remember that we could speak Urban Black English [...] then, we could also speak as if we had a very thick Cuban accent in English or we would pretend we didn't speak English at all and say 'ecue me,' all the ways kids play." Caridad's ability to reposition herself in diverse contexts demonstrates her rhetorical language agilities—agilities she developed due to her peers' language play. Rather than allowing the conflict between English and Spanish to separate her from her heritage language, she engaged with both languages through humor and fun activities—a strategy that facilitated her academic success.

Scholarship on language background emphasizes the deep connections tying people to their linguistic and cultural identity. My study corroborates research findings on

how community identity influences language practices and how language practices link people to a particular community identity (Smitherman; Kells; hooks; Anzaldua). The act of denying people allegiance to their linguistic and cultural background not only forces the individual to choose the dominant discourse in order to assimilate but also denies them their right to develop a sense of community identification. All established Latina/o academics in my study became academically successful in the dominant discourse without losing ties their heritage language.

#### Language Background Among New Latina/o Academics

The language background of new Latina/o academics are similar to those described by established academics, especially in relation to the role of family and community language identity. Similar to established Latina/o academics, the new academics became aware of the conflict between English and Spanish early. New academics' experiences with language difference ranged in relation to the level of conflict they experienced; the range of experiences was primarily an outcome of their home and community environments, particularly their parents' role in their language development. The established and new academics' language practices were influenced by the same factors as established academics: family instilled values and pride in heritage language; multiple community language identities facilitated connections to heritage language; and awareness of the conflict between dominant and non-dominant languages yielded strategies to confront challenges. A comparison between similarities and differences between established and new academics reveals not only that the participants' social context, such as home and community environment, influenced their experiences but also

that attitudes and assumptions about language have not significantly changed despite different time periods and progress in education practices.

While most participants' pride in their heritage language emerged from the struggles associated with negotiating the conflict between languages, pride in language background can also emerge from academic success—an academic pride. Alex, a doctoral student at a major research institution in Arizona, recalls his parents' encouragement in his educational success and achievement in learning three languages. Alex's parents are English teachers; his father teaches English at a community college and his mother is an English as a Second Language teacher. Due to his family history, Alex's father encouraged him to learn German instead of Spanish: Alex shared, "my grandparents were that generation that said, 'we're not going to teach our children Spanish.' My father was the first of the family to go onto college. I can see my father's own inferiority complex saying 'learn German.' It's one of these languages once you learn, there's something about it. This bourgeois, cultural capital." Alex hints at a relation between his father's own experiences in not learning Spanish and encouraging his son to enroll in German instead of Spanish classes. Despite his family's historical background, Alex described his family as one who values and takes pride in the learning of other languages: "[my father] started taking German when I started taking German. He started taking Japanese at some point. Language diversity within our own family, I don't know if it was assumed, but it was sort of like yeah you learn another language; this is something, it's valued [...], of course you want to be able to speak with other people." Alex's reflections suggest that language learning was valued in his home for reasons related to academic status rather than preserving an ethnic identity pride. He shared, "my mother is

White but she taught in a predominately Mexican-American school, so she spoke Spanish better than my father did, which was sort of this strange irony. There was strange mixture interplay with my father promoting German but my mother having learned Spanish really well and them having studied in Mexico.” Through his mother, Alex developed pride in being a Spanish speaker and learning other languages. Because Alex’s parents are professional academics who instilled a sense of pride in language learning for academic benefits, Alex did not encounter conflicts between dominant and non-dominant languages that would prevent him from achieving success.

Alex approached value in language learning and cultural diversity from a success perspective rather than from struggle in contrast to both established and the other new academics whom I interviewed. Alex described his experiences when he worked in Costa Rica teaching English: “cultures overlapping in terms, ‘oh, that’s not a Mexican thing, that’s a Costa Rican thing; you’re Costa Rican now.’ It was an opportunity to learn about my culture even through this lens of the Costa Rican culture. The accent in Costa Rica is different from the Chicano Spanish or Mexican Spanish. I’ll start to speak, ‘what is that accent that you have?’ It’s not just a ‘gringo’ accent; it’s these other accents as well.” Because Alex’s parents are professionals, they provided him with the opportunity to learn other languages, and his value in language and cultural diversity arises from an academic pride and from a dominant cultural perspective because he has the means and is placed in the position to help others with language learning. Alex benefits from a positive attitude toward language difference as his experiences teaching English in Costa Rica reveal—Cost Rica helped him embrace other accents and dialects of Spanish. He embraces language difference because he did not experience conflict between languages in order to



achieve success as his family had the means and access to encourage learning other languages; they placed a value in language learning as a means to connect and communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds.

The participants in this study achieved academic success because their families advocate dual language and mixed identities. Because families encourage such duality at home, the child might experience less conflict between the dominant and non-dominant language at school. Ana, a doctoral student at a major research university in Arizona, remembers her grandmother reading children's books to her in Spanish. Similar to Josue M. Gonzalez's experiences, Ana also remembers her family encouraging Spanish literacy at home. She shared, "I remember before I started school both my grandmother and my mom, more my grandmother, would read to me books in Spanish, and I still have one that I cherish it; it's a large book with beautiful illustrations and it's in Spanish. I have memories of her reading to me these bedtime stories in Spanish." Because Ana continues to speak and write letters to her grandmother in Spanish, she maintains ties her heritage language while achieving success in school. While Ana's grandmother helped Ana remain connected to Spanish literacy, her mother understood the importance for Ana to learn English. Ana recalled the significant transition she experienced: "but then, the transition from that to my mom being very dedicated to teaching me English before school. The experience was different; there seem[ed] to be more pressure or urgency to learn English." Her mother's sense of urgency for Ana to learn English was based on her desire to see Ana become successful in school. Because Ana's mother focused on her daughter learning the English language, Ana did not experience major conflicts in

learning the dominant language as she maintained ties to Spanish—she was able to value both simultaneously through an effective transition to public education.

Language duality facilitates academic success, but the challenge lies in how individuals achieve such duality without negatively affecting their success in the dominant language or compromising their heritage language. Ana described the cultural traditions that helped her maintain ties to Spanish: “in addition to being able to read, understand, or speak more than one language, I also think of [language diversity] as maybe culturally. Even though I might not be fluent with Spanish in certain ways anymore, I still have a cultural allegiance to it. Even though it is not speaking it or writing it or understanding as much vocabulary as before, I am still culturally connected to Spanish.” Her ties to the language exist via cultural connections that are grounded within a community where language plays a crucial role. Ana explains,

[in] Spanish, there is the humor, the sort of joking around that is very familiar to me. I might not understand every single [...] word or saying, but I think just the cultural connection to the way language is used. I can tap into that; it feels familiar to me, and I can understand what’s going on, so if there’s a lot of teasing or what not, I know how to react to that.

The language of Spanish humor is familiar to Ana because she developed a community identity with the users. Humor in Spanish and dichos, popular sayings that represent life situations or convey morals, create a community identity among the users, which facilitates connections to cultural and linguistic traditions. For instance, my parents often say, “el que es buen gallo, en cualquier gallinero canta” and “el que madruga, Dios lo

ayuda.” The first means, the avid one will succeed in all places, but the dicho is literally translated as “the ‘good’ rooster will sing in any/all chicken coops.” The second dicho can be translated as, God helps those who rise before dawn. For many Latina/os, dichos form a part of their cultural values and beliefs. Ana shared: “I ask [my grandmother] questions, ‘que quiere decir eso, esa palabra.’ She’ll try to explain it to me. Sayings too, [...] a dicho that I really don’t know what it means, and sometimes she’s able to explain it and sometimes she says ‘no se como decirte’ and that’s the cultural background or experience that is difficult to translate.” By asking her grandmother questions about the significance of certain dichos rooted in cultural traditions, Ana not only developed her knowledge of Spanish but she also created a bond and community identity with her grandmother through language. While Ana, as she continued with her education, struggled to maintain a high level of knowledge of the Spanish language, she developed strategies, such as connections to Spanish humor and dichos, within her home community that helped her remain connected to her heritage language while achieving success in school.

Most families instill in their children pride in their cultural and language background, which provides the child with strength to confront conflicts between English and Spanish. With these tools, the individual possesses the ability to develop strategies to negotiate conflicts between languages in order to achieve academic success. A sense of community language identity usually first emerges in the home context as in the case of Dre, a composition instructor at a Hispanic-Serving Institution, who shared that her parents inculcated the need to be proud of her background. Her parents often told her, “you are Tejana; you be proud.” Dre reflected, “My parents were always, like, you need

to be proud of who you are, you're gonna speak Spanish. I would hate it. I don't want to speak Spanish; [laughs] no one else speaks Spanish." Because in Dre's early education context, a predominantly White school for Gifted and Talented students, English was the dominant language, she was embarrassed to speak Spanish. Dre decided to hide her accent and learn how to adjust her use of language in diverse contexts, but she experienced regret because in her adjustment of language, she denied her identity. Eventually, Dre became aware that her desire to hide her accent was not her fault, but rather a consequence of her school context. From first through eighth grade, Dre attended a predominately White school, and she reflected on her embarrassment in speaking Spanish: "I would be embarrassed, which I always feel bad about. How could I do that to my poor mom? It wasn't my fault; it was the situation I was put in. I had this privilege, this opportunity to be successful academically but it came with price, which was afraid of being who I am, a Tejana and embracing that." The school context facilitated her academic success but also contributed to her negative perception of herself in comparison to her peers. Often times, schools force students to choose between an academic identity and a home or neighborhood identity. Dre believed the conflict between her home and school languages would change when she decided to attend a predominantly Latino high school. She reflected, "even though I speak Spanish, I was picked on because they said I sounded, they called me coconut, too White. You have a newscaster voice [they said], which I developed because of [my] schools. I didn't want to sound different, so I learned to hide my accent. It made me think of Anzaldúa, 'ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity.' I am who I am. I don't have to explain myself to anybody." Dre's early education context led her to hide her accent in order to become a part of an academic

community where English was the dominant language, but the privilege of attending this school caused her to be marked as an outsider by her peers in a predominantly Latino high school, despite her knowledge of Spanish. Dre was left without a sense of community identity, first, in a predominantly White school community where she learned to hide her accent and then, in a predominately, Hispanic school community where she was marked as speaking “too White.” However, as a resilient and successful Latina, she ultimately came to accept both identities.

Those who give up or distance themselves from their home language due to circumstances in which they were implicitly or explicitly shamed because of their language difference suffered a sense of loss. Despite the double sense of loss Dre experienced in her two school contexts, she remained true to her language through her parents’ support and school activities that reinforced a Latina-Tejana identity. She described, “if my parents had not been, like, ‘you’re Tejana’ [...] I don’t know if I would have lost myself and tried to assimilate, which assimilation isn’t possible and it shouldn’t have to be because when you think of [Albert] Memmi, if you’re gonna assimilate, you’re denying yourself. I can’t do that. I won’t do that. The strong cultural background my parents gave me helped me succeed in college.” Dre believes her educational success is a consequence of her parents instilling pride in her cultural and linguistic identity. Dre’s refusal to assimilate was a direct consequence of her family instilling pride in their language and culture, which provided her with a sense of authority to counter conflict between languages. Additionally, Dre shared that as a folklórico and flamenco instructor, she developed pride in her heritage: “this is my culture; I’m proud. I could do the flamenco with the castañuelas; I could do the dancing, balancing stuff on my head with

folklorico. It was empowering [...] this is my culture; this is awesome. I would speak Spanish more because we would go to workshops in Acapulco or in Nuevo Laredo. It was eye-opening.” In addition to her home context, Dre also developed a community identity as a dance instructor that allowed her to connect with her cultural heritage and home language. With her parents’ support, Dre learned to embrace Spanish and challenged conflicts between languages by refusing to assimilate. She developed strategies to negotiate conflicts between languages in order to achieve success. One of her strategies, similar to Guerra, involved learning how to change her use of language to fit different contexts, and a second strategy included her involvement with a dance community that embraced her cultural and language background.

Because families understand that the education system will teach their children the dominant language, most Hispanic families emphasize and support the use of Spanish, as they do not desire their children to lose ties to their heritage language. Esmeralda, a Master’s level student and writing tutor at a Hispanic Serving-Institution, recalled her mother’s reasons for preserving the Spanish language in their home community: “She felt like it was important and her thing was you have to speak with your uncles and you have to speak with your grandma and I’m Mexican; it’s my language. You’re my daughter, that’s your language; you gotta talk to your grandma don’t you; you better talk to her in Spanish or you won’t be able to talk with her; you have to talk with her in Spanish.” Her mother’s exigence for preserving the Spanish language was influenced by her desire for Esmeralda to maintain communication with her family. Esmeralda reflected, “what my mother would do is that she wouldn’t answer me, if I talked in English. She would just ignore me; then, I would ask her in Spanish.”

Esmeralda's mother's strategy had an effect on Esmeralda as she reported implementing the same strategy with her own daughter.

Esmeralda's home context provided her with an opportunity to take pride in her heritage language despite the conflict she experienced. For example, Esmeralda's family in Mexico tells her that her Spanish is not the "real" Spanish. Esmeralda shared, "not that I can't communicate, but for them [it] is not real anymore. And, here, I speak in Spanish and people are like applauding; you speak so beautifully; I can't believe you maintain that." The perception that Esmeralda's Spanish is not "real" might be due to her family's lack of awareness of and sensitivity to the social and historical circumstances that influence variations of Spanish. Esmeralda is proud of her use of Spanish because she is aware of the punishments her parents endured when they spoke Spanish at school. She shared, "even through all of that, for them to retain any level of Spanish or any level of ties of that heritage or that culture, they are very, very proud of that. I don't know if I would say, oh, that's not real. For me, it's real, it's still a language. I think it still counts, even if it's Spanglish. It's the same value." Esmeralda confronts the conflict she encountered with her family members between dominant and non-dominant Spanish language practices through her *orgullo* in her parents' ability to maintain close ties to the Spanish language despite the discrimination they encountered. As a new academic, Esmeralda's pride in her use of Spanish is reinforced in the academic community, especially with other Latinas and Latinos. She reflected, "through academic conference[s], I am aware that what I call pocho Spanish, even [others are] proud of that. 'Hey, I did everything I could to try to maintain my language.'" Esmeralda views her use of language as a strength because she developed strategies in her home and academic

context that helped her challenge the conflict between dominant and non-dominant language practices. Esmeralda's strategies to maintain ties to her heritage language while achieving academic success consist of her awareness of her parents' history with the Spanish language and her mother's desire to help Esmeralda maintain ties to Spanish. A second strategy emerged later on in her life as a new academic—she developed an academic community with other Latina/os who reinforce her beliefs in valuing her language.

While family seems to be a key factor in most participants' connection to their heritage language and educational achievement, the extent of family involvement in helping the child achieve dual or mixed language identities in order to succeed academically varies. Rei, a Master's level graduate student at a Hispanic Serving-Institution in Texas, did not have her parents' support in her continued education; her historical and contextual realities are different from those expressed by previous participants. Rei reflected, "I didn't have my parents to push me for support. When I started going to [graduate] school, [my mother] told me that education had changed me and that I had forgotten my roots [...] I didn't have the support of my own family. Like she said [referring to her mother], education changed me, but when they need something, I'm the smart one." Rei's reflections on her family's lack of support is significant because she decided to continue her pursuit of an advanced degree despite her mother's lack of support. Rei's desire to pursue an advanced degree without her parents' support illustrates that factors outside of the home context, such as teachers, mentors, and her resilient qualities, contributed to her academic success. These differences in levels of Rei's experiences illustrate the constant negotiations between home and school life and



between English and Spanish. For example, Rei struggled in her early education, as she was not allowed to speak in Spanish at school; she shared, “[in] elementary, we were told we could not speak Spanish. If you could not speak English, you could not speak. That’s why I didn’t speak; I didn’t know English; when I did, they would laugh at me. I told myself, when I have kids, they are not going to learn Spanish. I didn’t want them to go through the embarrassment I went through. My kids don’t know Spanish; and now, I regret it.” Rei’s vivid memory of being punished or laughed at for not speaking the dominant language caused her to decide not to teach her children Spanish as a precaution.

Although Rei’s parents did not offer support in her education in English and her early education dismissed her knowledge of Spanish, Rei confronted the conflict between home and school and dominant and non-dominant languages by developing strategies that helped her achieve academic success. Although Rei encountered negative experiences with language, she now views her ability to speak Spanish as an advantage. She shared, “I do speak Spanish. So, that’s an advantage for me that I know English and Spanish. That’s an advantage for me.” Her pride in knowing and speaking Spanish is due to the multiple language communities she engages in daily, which led her to experience pride in and a sense of connectedness with Spanish. She shared that with her husband, she speaks Spanish: “he laughs at my Spanish because my Spanish is not as good as his.” Rei developed communal identity with her husband, despite their variations of Spanish. She reflected that she speaks with her parents, husband, and his family in Spanish, and with some of her coworkers and classmates in Spanglish. Rei recalled, “I have some girls here that we talk in Spanish and then English and then both and sometimes we code switch [...] you see, I have to change my language.” For Rei, language use functions as

inclusion rather than exclusion in a community identity, which led her to see Spanish and her language difference as an advantage. Rei began to develop strategies that helped her achieve success as she learned to accept both languages as part of her identity. Her ability to remain connected to the Spanish language further helped her learn English to as she learned to negotiate language difference in various contexts. Rei's ability, similar to previous participants, to integrate diverse identities to challenge conflict between languages is key to her academic success.

### Conclusion

Because participants' home communities helps them remain connected to non-dominant languages, it is critical to focus on the effects of teaching the dominant language to people whose home languages are non-dominant. People occupy multiple social locations, which might contribute to encounters in which they experience contradictory values, beliefs, and assumptions regarding language practices. In "Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction and What Is Literacy?," James Paul Gee defines primary Discourse as the discourse "we first use to make sense of the world and interact with others" and it is acquired "by being a member of a primary socializing group (family, clan, peer group)" (527); a secondary Discourse is acquired through institutions, such as "local stores and churches, schools, community groups, state and national businesses, agencies and organizations" (527). The relationship between discourse and language, according to Gee, is that "discourses (and therefore literacies) are not like languages [...] someone can speak English, but not fluently. However someone cannot engage in a Discourse in a less than fully fluent manner" (529). When an individual is in the process of learning a new discourse, they do engage in the discourse in less fluent

forms and often, less than fluent participation in a discourse marks an individual as an outsider or “non-member.”

Because home-based discourses and institution-based discourses differ in purpose, Gee acknowledges that, “some degree of conflict and tension [...] will almost always be present. However, some people experience more overt and direct conflicts between two or more of their Discourses than do others” (528). This conflict is due to the existence of diverse values within each respective discourse. Gee explains, “when such conflict or tension exists, it can deter acquisition of one or the other or both of the conflicting Discourses, or, at least, affect the fluency of a mastered Discourse on certain occasions of use” (528). Although Gee might be correct in that such conflicts have the potential to prevent an individual from fully engaging with a particular discourse, when the individual acknowledges the conflict between discourses and recognizes tension as a representation of their identity construction, they develop strategies that can help them achieve success in the dominant discourse while maintaining ties to non-dominant discourses. However, Gee claims that, “even though Discourses cannot be overtly taught, and cannot readily be mastered late in the game, the University wants teachers to overtly teach and wants students to demonstrate mastery” (532). The belief that discourses “cannot be overtly taught” is a consequence of perceiving non-dominant languages as lacking in the ability to help the individual join the dominant language. Conflict between dominant and non-dominant language practices should not be viewed as a problem but rather as a mechanism to help people make sense of experiences and define language identity practices.

Conflict between discourses with different values and beliefs is indeed inevitable, but this conflict does not suggest individuals are unable to join another discourse community or engage in interweaving discourses for larger rhetorical purposes. Students' and teachers' ability and willingness to accept the conflict rather than try to erase it can enable students to try to push against it in order to stay connected to both discourses. In "The Politics of Teaching Literate Discourses," Lisa Delpit is troubled by two of Gee's arguments. First, she does believe the dominant discourses can be taught, and second, she believes that if teachers see the conflict between Discourses as "inevitable," "their sense of justice and fair play might hinder their teaching of these discourses" (547). Delpit fears that "if teachers adopt both of these premises suggested by Gee's work, not only would they view the acquisition of a new discourse in a classroom impossible to achieve, but they might also view the goal of acquiring such a discourse questionable" (547). She acknowledges the existence of "conflicting values" within diverse discourses and claims that there are "many individuals who have faced and overcome the problems that such a conflict might cause" (547), but emphasis should be placed on how each individual confronts conflicting values and how their acceptance of conflict helps them remain connected to their heritage discourses while also freeing them to pursue success in the dominant language. Delpit claims that African Americans or any other underrepresented individual is successful because they acquire a dominant discourse. If teachers accept Delpit's claim that in order for an individual to become successful he or she must master the dominant discourse, teachers could dismiss students' knowledge of non-dominant discourses and question the purpose of valuing students' knowledge of other languages or dialects. Although teaching students the dominant discourse is important, my study

reveals that the rhetorical value of knowing and engaging in multiple discourses simultaneously is imperative for their success as students and professionals.

Because language enriches connections to family and community and language is a reflection of individuals' values, beliefs, culture, and identity, the individual must become aware of how their cultural and language background shapes them. In "Keeping Close to Home: Class and Education," bell hooks argues:

maintaining connections with family and community across class boundaries demands more than just summary recall of where one's roots are, where one comes from. It requires knowing, naming, and being evermindful of those aspects of one's past that have enabled and do enable one's self-development in the present, that sustain and support, that enrich. One must also honestly confront barriers that do exist, aspects of that past that do diminish. (130)

hooks calls for an awareness of how one's past shapes the present and acknowledgement of aspects of one's family and community that hinder success and shape the present. hooks also recognizes language as an important characteristic of one's past and present: "language reflects the culture from which we emerge. To deny ourselves daily use of speech patterns that are common and familiar, that embody the unique distinctive aspect of our self is one of the ways we become estranged and alienated from our past" (131). For hooks, expressing herself in her heritage language enables her to connect with her home and community. She continues, "It is important for us to have as many languages on hand as we can know or learn. It is important for those of us who are black, who speak

in a particular patois as well as standard English, to express ourselves in both ways” (131). hooks recognizes her multiple languages as a reflection of her current identity, which includes connections to her past home community and her present. She advocates a mix of languages, one of which represents her home, community, and cultural background. hooks argues for the value of knowing how to express oneself in multiple languages precisely because these variations represent cultural and familial connections. She identifies a strategy for maintaining connections to one’s past and language, arguing for an “ongoing acknowledgement of the primacy of one’s past, of one’s background, affirming the reality that such bonds are not severed automatically solely because one enters a new environment or moves toward a different class experience” (131). hooks calls for constant reflection on how cultural, class, ethnic, or linguistic background shapes individuals’ experiences in higher education, and she emphasizes that people do not have to break ties to their background in order to achieve in new contexts. Becoming successful in higher education, an environment that privileges the dominant discourse, can be enhanced when people are able to identify strategies that will help them utilize their cultural and linguistic background as assets in higher education.

bell hooks argues that people should become aware of those aspects in their past that both hinder and encourage their present and future; she argues that people should name those aspects in their lives. The established and new Latina/o academics in the current study are aware of and name the experiences that influenced their academic success. However, my study also expands upon hooks’ arguments. Although it is important to recognize, become aware, and name the aspects of one’s past that influence one’s ability to be successful or construct a coherent identity, it is even more vital to

discover how one becomes aware of conflicts and what one needs to do—what strategies are necessary to develop—in order to confront the tension between one’s heritage language and the dominant language. Each of the participants reveal different strategies to confront the conflict in their lives between dominant and non-dominant languages in order to achieve success while maintaining ties to their heritage language. Community identity, within participants’ families, friends, neighborhoods, and schools, functioned as a way for participants to counter the shame they experienced, engage in language practices with those who share their language, and eventually develop pride in their language and culture. For my participants, directly or indirectly, language practices in the home, neighborhood, or academic context always reflected ties to Spanish, which allowed the participants to develop a sense of identity connect to community.

The participants became successful in the dominant language because their home environment advocated dual language awareness and mixed identities. In the case of Dre, her parents stressed she should be proud of being a Tejana, and she identified groups, such as a dance community, that valued her cultural and language background. Because most families understand that schools will teach their children the dominant language, families often work to preserve the Spanish language at home through daily conversations, reading and writing, or oral traditions (Haneda). For example, Ana and Esmeralda were exposed to the Spanish language at home through family conversations and books. While families supported their children’s use of Spanish, many also encouraged them to succeed academically in the dominant language and some families did not encourage such academic success or language duality. While Ana’s grandmother read to her in Spanish, her mother insisted she learn English in order to ease her transition

into public education. Ana's strategy to remain connected to her heritage language consisted of writing letters in Spanish to her grandmother and realizing that ties to Spanish are also represented through cultural values, such as dichos or Spanish humor. In the case of Rei, although her parents believed education distanced her from the family's cultural and linguistic roots, they still valued her knowledge as she often provided them with help. Additionally, despite her parents' lack of support, Rei decided to pursue an advanced degree and became successful academically while remaining connected to her heritage language due to her interactions in Spanish with friends and family. When families place value or pride in Spanish, children are more likely to remain connected to their heritage language. A person's awareness of how these languages influence motivate them to find strategies to negotiate conflict between home and school languages.

Pride in language and cultural background and awareness of the conflict between dominant and non-dominant structures helps Latina/os identify strategies to cope with the conflict in order to achieve academic success in the dominant language and maintain ties to Spanish. Victor Villanueva was placed in the position to abandon Spanish in order to effectively assimilate into the dominant culture. His success as an academic came at the cost of losing his heritage language, but the authority he gained as a successful academic allowed him to regain connection to Spanish on his own terms. While Juan Guerra was not told to abandon Spanish, as it was the only language he could use to communicate with his mother, he experienced shame in his accented English—shame that arose from his interactions with fellow classmates. Guerra's strategy did not consist of forgetting Spanish, but rather, he became an attentive listener of language in diverse contexts; he developed knowledge of language variations, which led him to identify strategies that



helped him use different languages. Guerra became successful on his own terms by learning how to adapt his use of language. Similarly, Cárdenas also experienced shame in her English skills, as she perceived her English to be different from that of her Anglo-American peers. Cárdenas' father instilled in her pride in being American (Cárdenas 114), and her strategy to negotiate conflict arose from her desire to help the citizens within her community gain knowledge and awareness about important civic issues—her knowledge of both English and Spanish allowed her to not only effectively help her community but also remain connected to her heritage language. Finally, Caridad, like Guerra and Cárdenas, also developed an ability to negotiate language difference due to her investment in maintaining home and community ties; additionally, her ability to play with both languages, rather than fear the dominant language, helped her achieve success. The participants' exigence for maintaining ties to their heritage language varied, but early experiences made them aware of conflicts between home and school language that they would have to learn to negotiate in order to achieve academic success. Awareness and acknowledgement of the conflict along with a desire to hold on to both languages led them to begin to identify coping strategies that worked well for them in their respective contexts.

Established and new Latina/o academics' early language experiences led them to begin to identify strategies to negotiate the conflict they experienced between English and Spanish in order to achieve academic success without losing ties to their home language. Their early experiences with language described in this chapter played a major role in how they made sense of their experiences with mentors, coursework, identities, and language difference and academic writing that will be addressed in later chapters. Some

participants were able to implement the strategies they developed and reposition them in later contexts while others continue to struggle to discover how they can use their knowledge and awareness of language difference, which is where I believe the role of schools and universities comes into play. We cannot control the type of family a child is born into or to what extent their family supports or hinders their language duality. However, some of the strategies the participants developed can be fostered in school settings. As educators, we cannot control our students' experiences at home or to what extent their family influences their academic success; however, we can encourage our students to connect or reconnect with their home languages and identities as a strategy that can help foster their success in school. As I will discuss in the following chapter, mentors and multiethnic coursework play a significant role in helping Latina/o academics identify the tools and strategies they will need in order to successfully merge identities and languages in academia. As mentors who value language difference, we can guide Latina/o students as they identify the tools that will best help them challenge the conflict between dominant and non-dominant languages in education.

“The university is an alien place for many Latinos or African Americans, especially if in your family you don’t have parents who were college graduates [...] for many Latinos no path has been begun [...] the sense I was from the neighborhood made a difference in students who chose to take a step and enroll.”

— Diana Cardenas

“Reading literature and scholarship [and] being aware of the historical traditions was positive, the affirmation of cultural identity, but the painful aspect was learning the degree of discrimination, struggle, and the perception of Chicana/o culture in this country. My ethnic background helped me achieve in that class.”

—Ana

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **SUCCEEDING IN ACADEMIA: MENTORS AND MULTIETHNIC**

#### **COURSEWORK**

Community identity facilitates connections within a group of people who share language practices, values, and beliefs and supports the maintenance of cultural and linguistic bonds. As revealed in the previous chapter, the participants’ sense of community identity allowed them to remain connected to their heritage language and develop pride in their ethnic identity, even as they faced threats to their language or identity in school. When Latina/os or other underrepresented groups join academia, many experience a sense of loss of their ethnic, cultural, social, or linguistic backgrounds as academe does not always offer spaces where the values and beliefs of minority groups are validated as ways to enrich the knowledge and learning experiences of all. Being able to establish an academic community identity (i.e. an academic community that values cultural and language difference), through mentoring practices and multicultural coursework, for Latina/os or other underrepresented groups, is vital for their success in academia. Similar to the home and neighborhood community identity that the Latina/o

participants in this study described, an ideal academic community identity should offer the opportunity to maintain, connect, and enhance members' consciousness of their heritage background. This community should provide mentoring and guidance to Latina/o in order to collaboratively identify ways to merge discourses and identities in academia. Academia should not only create these spaces for the benefit of Latina/os but for all faculty and students; these spaces exposes everyone to new ways of thinking that can enrich knowledge making in academia.

### Mentoring Practices in Academia

An academic community serves as a way to ensure support and success for scholars; however, establishing such a community for Latina/o academics is complex. Juan Carlos González draws on Paulo Freire's concept of *academic socialization* to analyze experiences and challenges faced by Latinas in doctoral programs. One of the most significant findings in González's study is the necessity for policymakers and institutions to address the "cultural dissonance" for Latina students in master's and Ph.D. programs. González refers to "cultural dissonance" as challenges that Latinas experienced in their programs manifested as feeling "torn between family, community, and the academy" (358). The cultural dissonance that participants in González's study experienced was a reflection of conflicting values and beliefs as well as lack of mentoring practices and a sense of being understood. González writes: "it is critical for policymakers to begin thinking about the larger systemic institutional change that is needed as opposed to the traditional thinking that assumes Latina/o culture needs to be modified to address the cultural conflicts they have with higher education institutions" (361). His study also revealed that most Latina doctoral students experienced difficulties

in coping with their respective institutions while trying to avoid conforming to White hegemony. Gonzalez identifies mentoring practices as having the potential to help Latina/os negotiate their cultural and linguistic background with the academic context.

In order to address the “cultural dissonance” many Latina/o students experience in academia, an academic community identity for Latina/os is absolutely necessary especially given the low number of Latina/os in Rhetoric and Composition and the fact that mentoring often serves to acculturate new group members into dominant values. In “‘I don’t belong here’: Chicanas/Latinas at a Hispanic Serving Institution Creating Community Through Muxerista Mentoring,” Lucila Ek, Patricia Quijada, Iliana Alanis, and Mariela Rodriguez, explore benefits of Research for the Educational Advancement of Latin@s (REAL), a group composed of mostly Latina, tenure-track scholars. The group arose based on the authors’ perceptions of the need to create an “intellectual community,” specifically designed by and for Latinas. This collaborative, community group focused on engaging in “peer *muxerista* mentoring practice” (549). The authors created REAL based on their realization that traditional mentoring practices do not reflect negotiation strategies Latina/o academics must enact in order to achieve success in academia based on their identities and backgrounds. The authors describe REAL as “writing retreats where REAL members gather to share our work on individual and/or collaborative projects [...] retreats [...] provide time and space for us to push projects forward to fruition and to build community among the group. Retreats [...] are safe spaces to share ideas, offer encouragement, and provide academic critiques to members through our mentoring process” (548). In addition to serving as a source of community identity, REAL provides mentoring support strategies for new Latina/os in academia. The authors

expand on previous research as they redefined “‘womentoring’ among women in academia” into “‘muxerista mentoring’ to highlight how it is a process between and among Chicanas/Latinas and a product of these relationships” (545). Latina/o academics might feel ambivalent about sharing certain concerns or might feel their background and knowledge is not validated in a group that perpetuates dominant ideals.

Through a peer mentoring group, Latina/o faculty gain support and guidance, and they can express themselves in a comfortable and safe setting. For example, based on an interview with one of the members of the REAL organization, Ek, Quijada, Alanis, and Rodriguez wrote:

it is important to note that Lourdes speaks in an informal discourse rather than the formal discourses heard in official academic spaces [...] This informal discourse signals that REAL is a space where Lourdes can let her guard down and not have to perform the academic discourse and identity. The performance of academic identities can be exhausting, given that the acts, behaviors, and discourses of academia may counteract our core cultural values and practices (Quijada Crecer et al., in press). (546)

The participant in this study experienced comfort and belonging in a space where she felt it was acceptable to expose her experiences in informal language. Language practices are one of the key factors that connect most Latina/os to their home and community contexts, and when environments within academia are not receptive to alternative uses of language due to preconceived assumptions about language difference, Latina/o academics may experience a lack of belonging in academia as well as a sense of loss of their background.

When academia facilitates accessibility to an academic community that welcomes language and cultural difference, the chances for a Latina/o academic to succeed in academia increase because they will feel their languages and identities validated. For Latinas, groups such as REAL facilitate access to and success in an academic community. Academic communities like REAL, the authors argue, serve as a vehicle to learn how academics “found ways to persist in the academy” (550). The objectives of such groups expand beyond immediate benefits to its members and into identifying strategies current members utilize to navigate academia, while maintaining cultural and linguistic connections to their background. Although the authors argue for the benefits of such groups for Latina/os, it is important to emphasize that an academic community for Latina/so should not exist in isolation; in other words, linguistic, cultural, and academic knowledge Latina/os possess should be validated across the university rather than as something separate.

Addressing issues of cultural and linguistic diversity in academia is challenging because of the risk of addressing these issues in order to fulfill “diversity” expectations rather than for their genuine intellectual contributions to the university and diverse fields of study. Mentoring, “safe spaces,” and strategies to negotiate identities are factors that contribute to retention and recruitment of faculty of color as noted by Gregory A. Diggs, Dorothy F. Garrison-Wade, Diane Estrada, and Rene Galindo in “Smiling Faces and Colored Spaces: The Experiences of Faculty of Color Pursuing Tenure in the Academy.” The authors conducted a self-study of their experiences in negotiating personal background and academic identities. They identify a tension between their cultural

background and the academic culture as they attempted to construct their respective academic identities:

Cultural dissonance can be understood as the discomfort and discord that result from cultural differences [...] In order to resist full assimilation, we remind and support each other to be very intentional about creating our academic identities [...] we try to be thoughtful and deliberate about including our culture and values in our work and practice. The productive faculty of color want their work to be representative of superlative scholarship, and yet still reflect their cultural lens and values. (325-326)

The authors developed several strategies that assisted them in navigating academia. First, establishing a support system with those who share similar background provided a sense of belonging and solidarity, particularly because such groups were nonexistent in their university context. Their decision to connect their background to their intellectual work was conscious, deliberate, and functioned as a strategy to negotiate challenges inherent in navigating academia, but as noted by Diggs et.al. “because there are so few faculty of color who have been successful, there are few viable road maps or models for these types of negotiations” (326). Although there might be few faculty of color in academia, the authors argue that through programs that address diversity and representation issues appropriately and intellectually, the retention and recruitment of faculty of color may increase.

Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, and Galindo argue that faculty of color experience more challenges because they not only must learn to negotiate their academic identities with their own cultural background but are also placed in positions to address issues of



institutional representation. The authors state,

these issues related to establishing an academic identity and confronting issues of diversity in the academic workplace create additional burdens on faculty of color that majority faculty may be unfamiliar with. These can result in tension, because some faculty of color may be taking significant amounts of time to negotiate them, while still having to meet the traditional expectations of the academy: excellence in teaching, production of published research and service to a community of scholars. (327)

The additional burden that the authors identified can be mediated through mentoring practices and established academic support groups. The authors contend that in their own experiences “mentoring activities helped to establish a safe place where faculty of color could meet. We appreciated the support that came from sharing our perspectives [...] the safe place was a colored space; a space where minority faculty could relate to one another beyond the scrutiny of the dominant culture or the shackles of mainstream expectations” (328). The “colored space” the authors refer to provided an opportunity to feel comfortable in sharing experiences, successes, and challenges with a group of people who faced related experiences and shared similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The existence of collaborative groups, in which faculty can share personal experiences and not conceal their background, is a key strategy to ensure success. Diggs, Garrison-Wade, and Estrada shared, “we find that traditional approaches to faculty mentoring, which emphasize academic productivity and orientation to the school culture, remain as important supports. However, the creation of space for faculty of color to learn, think, socialize and process the academic environment among themselves may be worth

considering” (328-329). Based on their experiences, the authors shared, “the unofficial, informal space allows faculty of color to be ‘real’; to express themselves [...] in (cultural) ways that are not necessarily safe in the official, formal workplace [...] This may, in turn, support both recruiting and retention efforts aimed at diversifying the academy” (330-331). Although universities should try to establish strategies for inclusion of such an academic community mentoring group, there is also the risk of never making these diverse experiences known outside of the group. In addition to these collaborative spaces for faculty of color, strategies should also be in place to ensure that others know about the experiences of faculty of color and not view them as an academic anomaly. The challenge is discovering how an institution can create safe spaces while exposing their knowledge and concerns to others. Most importantly, the authors argued that in addition to mentoring, appropriate programs that welcome diversity should be implemented in institutions of higher education:

we believe that the real diversity work must represent more than events and activities [...] establishing program content that would help all students learn more about diversity in ways that would inform their teaching and counseling practices would help to change the system. We must go beyond the provision of generic courses in multiculturalism (325).

In order to develop programs that “go beyond generic courses in multiculturalism,” knowledge and awareness of how faculty of color engage in negotiations within academia must be visible and not only in “safe spaces.” This is where the challenge lies because literature demonstrates that “safe spaces” lead toward academic success, but I believe they can also hinder the potential for “safe spaces” in the mainstream. The academy

should welcome the diverse knowledge and theoretical lenses they contribute to their respective fields of study.

In “Diving for Pearls: Mentoring as Cultural and Activist Practice among Academics of Color,” Gail Y. Okawa interviewed Geneva Smitherman and Victor Villanueva, prominent scholars in Rhetoric and Composition, regarding their experiences with mentoring and being mentored. She also asked them to write a narrative about their experiences and asked several scholars’ respective students to also write narratives concerning experiences with mentors. Okawa argued that the academy, especially in Rhetoric and Composition, is “a culture that in many ways represents academic hegemony through language, that requires assimilation, linguistic and rhetorical, if not racial and cultural, and that privileges particular discourses to ensure that assimilation. Clearly, those who chart their way through this pipeline and the territory beyond must do so through some perilous waters” (508). Latina/os’ pathway toward academic success is more challenging because the academy’s privileging of the dominant discourse overshadows their heritage language and ways of knowing. In order for Latina/o and other minority academics to overcome challenges inherent in academia, they need role models and mentors who have managed to successfully merge their background within academia. As Okawa argued, “As scholars, both Smitherman and Villanueva have been academic pathfinders in their work, having taken risks particularly in their writing—in genre and discourse—largely without existing academic models. Fueled by their own mentors, an activist awareness of a community need, and a personal need for community, they have etched out spaces for themselves and those who would follow them” (518). Smitherman and Villanueva challenged the dominant discourse by identifying alternative

writing styles that represent their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Both scholars defied academic conventions and achieved academic success through the support of mentors who believed in their academic potential and set high academic expectations (Okawa). According to Okawa, Smitherman believed that “the mentor has traveled the difficult path before and can aid in access, set high standards, and provide guidance toward a larger, future goal” (512). Therefore, Latina/o mentors, who relate to students based on their background, set high expectations, and provide guidance and support are vital in academia, especially in instilling resilience in their students. Additionally, Latina/o mentors possess a unique perspective regarding academic experiences—a perspective that other mentors might not offer their Latina/o students. Based on Okawa’s research, she discovered that “all mentees of color reveal the need for and appreciation of particular kinds of relationships for faculty who understand and validate their cultural views and values, such as their responsibility to family or heritage; for models of scholars with similar or related intellectual, social, and political concerns” (521). The connection between mentees and mentors of color helps instill a sense of belonging in academia and can validate research interests and diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Facilitating success for Latina/os in academia requires mentoring from faculty who guide students through challenges inherent in academia as faculty of color. Okawa argues that “Academic mentoring, then, can serve as cultural and activist practice” (529). Because Smitherman and Villanueva engaged in “appropriating and adapting the discourse of the academy to their ends” (529), they shared personal rhetorical, cultural, and linguistic practices with their mentees of color in order to help them achieve success. Additionally, Okawa argues that Villanueva and Smitherman

also serve as examples for mentoring across groups; they not only cultivate intraethnic, intracultural, and same gendered relationships, but also encourage cross ethnic, cross-cultural, cross-class associations. In contrast to a generic mentoring of students into an assumed homogeneous academic culture, we can witness through these stories the process of mentoring as a form of activism. (529)

Mentoring practices with students of color, therefore, serve as a way to educate others on how to engage in mentoring roles that validate cultural and linguistic backgrounds while also acknowledging cross-cultural influences in academic work. While established academics such as Smitherman and Villanueva have accomplished success by challenging academic norms. Although Okawa's study was conducted almost ten years ago, my research reveals that Latina/o academics continue to experience a number of challenges, including experiencing a lack of belonging in academia and the need to counter false assumptions about Latina/os. While my research corroborates the fact that cultural and linguistic identification are characteristics that help Latina/os succeed in academia, my data also reveals the continued need to implement mentoring practices that validate cultural and linguistic difference across a university's context in order to support Latina/o mentors and students.

The presence of an academic community that values language and cultural difference is vital for Latina/o students' success; however, the question is how to develop such a community, especially when an institution might not value Latina/os' cultural and linguistic knowledge. Mentoring practices that recognize difference can assist in countering assumptions about Latina/os and increase awareness among non-Latina/o

faculty and students regarding the role of cultural and linguistic backgrounds in the construction of academic identities. However, concern lies in how institutions can make academia culturally and linguistically diverse for the benefit of all students, staff, and faculty. My research considers how established and new academics use mentoring as a source of support while navigating academia, as previous scholarship addresses, and how mentoring helps them take ownership and claim their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities as major contributors to their intellectual work.

#### Established Latina/o Academics: The Role of Mentors

For established Latina/o academics, mentors helped them develop a community identity within academia. The mentorship they received assisted them in taking ownership of their language and ethnic background. While the participants encountered positive mentors who guided them toward academic achievement, some Latina/o academics also faced negative experiences with mentors. Although experiences with negative mentors can provide some academics with a desire to prove them wrong, it seems likely that many more academics decide to give up on their academic pursuits. Because the participants of this study succeeded academically in spite of negative mentors, it is important to discover who or what else supported them in their education when some mentors failed them. It is possible that the participants in this study are academically resilient, able to persist through challenges, hence, their academic success. In “The Foundations of the Resiliency Framework: From Research to Practice,” Bonnie Bernard argues that resilience is not an innate quality but rather resilience in people can be fostered at home, school, and community. She continues, “these ‘protective factors,’ the term referring to the characteristics of environments that appear to alter—or even

reverse—potential negative outcomes and enable individuals to transform adversity and develop resilience despite risk, comprise three broad categories.” These categories include: “caring relationships [...] high expectation messages [and] opportunities for meaningful participation and contribution.” While negative experiences with some mentors led participants to become aware of their language difference, as a potential impediment to academic success, my study suggests that the participants are also resilient individuals because supportive mentors helped them develop conscious ownership of their cultural and language background as key strengths in their academic endeavors.

As research on mentorship suggests, there is not a clear “road map” toward success in academia for Latina/os due to the limited number of Latina/os in the academy. I argue that rather than one road map, the academy needs the representation of multiple and different types of Latina/o successes in academia. Limited representation and misrepresentation of Latina/os in academia can motivate established Latina/o academics’ desire to continue with their education, counter assumptions, turn negative support into motivation, and serve as mentors to other Latina/os. In order to understand the role of Latina/o mentorship in academia, it is important to recognize the relationship between Latina/o representation in academia and mentoring. While Latina/os representation may convey acceptance and belonging in academia, the word may perpetuate tokenism. Victor Villanueva shared:

What we have to be worried about is issues of representation; assumptions about who we are, what we do, and what our capabilities are; we are always having to resist, work against, and to use that expression from Black folks, ‘flip the script.’ That is what I ended up doing with my own

writing: you think my writing is not logical? No, it's Spanish logical and that's how I'm going to write for now on [laughs]. Identities yes, they are complicated; they're complex. We are in predominantly White situations [such as] the academy; we need to be able to be more conscious of the representations of the kinds of things that are laid on us.

Assumptions about Latina/os in academia is a consequence of the limited number of Latina/o role models who not only serve as an example in countering assumptions but also provide others with a more diversified view of what it means to be Latina/o. In institutions of higher education, faculty or students of color are often placed in the position to “represent” their race or ethnic background in committees, meetings, and other university or departmental events. Unfortunately, there are limited role models who serve as mentors and who attest to the reality of being treated as a representative rather than as individuals and share with other Latina/os how to overcome such challenges (Villanueva). Villanueva serves as a role model regarding how to resist and counter stereotypes about Latina/os' abilities. For example, he took ownership of his academic writing in order to resist assumptions about Latina/os in academia and proposed alternative uses of language. However, Villanueva's ability to counter assumptions is only one example of success; the Latina/o community in academia needs multiple examples in order to expand the significance of “representation.” Representation is not composed of one person who is Latina/o and who “represents” this ethnic background; representation is the validation of diverse experiences and characteristics of success within the Latina/o community, hence, the exigency for more Latina/o mentors in academia.



The lack of a diverse group of Latina/o academics affects the extent to which other Latina/os might be able to counter assumptions. Although taking a stance and resisting dominant models of language use for larger rhetorical purposes illustrates a strong sense of cultural and linguistic ownership, the limited number who have taken similar stances leads to constraints in achieving success. Caridad described her thoughts after she attended a colloquium on African Americans in the academy and traditional Black colleges: “we [Latina/os] don’t feel entitled [...] we have historically Latino Serving Institutions, but they weren’t created by or run by Latinos [...] I thought [at the colloquium] that’s a lot of people that have high expectations of you; expect you should be at the university, that you should be a professor, that you’re entitled. I was telling that story; we [Latina/os] haven’t had that.” Although Caridad became a successful academic, she also acknowledges that the lack of a Latina/o community similar to that of African Americans might present obstacles for other Latina/os who attempt to achieve success in academia. The failure of academia to emphasize multiple types of Latina/o achievements perpetuates a mentality that there is only one type of success in academia and that only certain academics should teach and conduct research in Rhetoric and Composition. Students often admire professors and aspire to be like them, but when Latina/o students only see Anglo American professors in front of their classrooms or one type of Latina/o role model, they may become discouraged and question their academic and career potential.

The relationship between Latina/o representation and its effects on mentoring are factors that influence Latina/os’ success in academia. Although the established academics interviewed here did not have Latina/o mentors in academia, their experiences reveal that

non-Latina/os also serve as mentors, especially if these individuals care for Latina/o success. Guidance from others helped participants become resilient by believing in their academic potential and sense of belonging in academia. For example, Juan Guerra recalled that when Frederick Stern, his mentor during his undergraduate career, found out he was working as a Clerk Typist III after he graduated with a Bachelor's in English degree, he told Guerra, “‘you see that building? SCL; there's a program there called the Educational Assistant Program and they're looking for writing teachers.’” His mentor's guidance and belief in his ability to teach writing enabled Guerra to find a job as a writing teacher; he reflected, “suddenly, I was a teacher with a Bachelor's degree at the University of Illinois-Chicago. I was like, trial by fire. I kept doing that and I ended up doing that for 18 years.” Guerra's initial guidance from his mentor opened the door for his future career as an academic. Additionally, he recalled that Carol Severino, a colleague, persuaded him to pursue a master's degree and a Ph.D. in English. Guerra shared, “Carol says ‘Juan, I'm going to go for a Ph.D. why don't you go with me [...] ‘Oh, I don't know.’ I was very resistant. ‘we'll work on this together; we'll take courses together; we'll study together.’ ‘Okay, I'll take one course and we'll see how it goes.’ Again, I took other courses and did all the exams; worked full-time all those years until right before I had to write my dissertation.” If Guerra did not meet Stern or was not friends with Severino, he might not have pursued advanced degrees. His mentors helped him increase his self-efficacy related to teaching writing at the college level and pursuing advanced degrees. Similarly, Jaime Mejia, Associate Professor of English at Texas State University-San Marcos, also expressed the important role of mentorship throughout his career. He shared,

I had a mentor at Pan Am, at North Texas, and at Ohio State [...] that caught me a long the way when I was fallen. Mentoring was important. Some of these people were important in keeping me in the business, keeping me in the game. There was a guy at Pan, Jerry, who would listen to me when I would go into his office and breaking down and crying, lamenting my circumstances [...] the fact that he would listen was enough to get me to the next day.

For Mejia, his mentor's simple act of listening to his concerns was enough proof that he cared for his academic success. Without mentors' belief in Latina/o students' potential, Mejia or Guerra might not have continued with their education and achieved academic success. When there is lack of support or motivation, students might not pursue higher education because they doubt their academic abilities or cannot see themselves as actual academics. However, when friends or professors serve as mentors and convey their belief to Latina/o students or academics, the challenges in succeeding academically become manageable.

The established Latina/o participants in this study succeeded academically in spite of negative mentoring some of them encountered. As some participants reported, the lack of sensitivity to language difference from mentors served as a source of motivation for their success because they learned to focus on the mentors who supported them. For instance, Villanueva described his teachers' lack of understanding of his struggles navigating different languages: "The ones who become English professors by and large are people who are good with the language required for teaching English [...] those who end up in front of these classrooms are like Dentists who never had a cavity; they do not

understand the pain of moving among different discourses [and] languages. I'm going through it and the teachers are not sympathetic to it." Villanueva's perception of his teacher's lack of support helped him understand the challenges faced by multilingual students in institutions that might not value their language agilities. Villanueva shared one of the difficulties he encountered: "I was a making a language change and unaware of it. One example would be scansion: how you read a poem and figure out its meter; I never I could. Of course, I couldn't; it wasn't an English rhythm that was in my head, but I was unaware of it." Although it is difficult to generalize about what enabled some academics to use negative experiences with mentors positively, there is the possibility that Villanueva's perception of his teacher's insensitivity to his language change led him to a conscious attention to his language struggles. As Villanueva reflected, "the ways in which the university operates and schools in general is to see those who come from another language as having some disadvantage, that is always the attitude." Villanueva's challenges had several functions, including assisting his awareness of an education system that failed to value language difference and contributing to his realization of how he could use language consciousness to his advantage. Although some participants use negative encounters with unsympathetic professors sources of motivation, it is important to take into consideration that they may have had support of other mentors, which helped them continue with their education in the face of adversity.

Although mentors might provide support to Latina/os through belief in their academic potential, if mentors fail to acknowledge language strengths, they can unintentionally promote dominant ideologies. For example, Diana Cardenas encountered supportive teachers but these teachers did not provide attention to her language

difference. She reflected, “Mrs. Jones, and all those teachers, Ms. Evans, and Ms. Brooks instilled in me this desire to speak grammatically correct, write grammatically correct [...] my first year of Freshman English, second year, and third year I took as many courses as I could with Mrs. Evans because she was such a positive influence on me.” Despite the challenges Cardenas encountered, such as the professor in college who told her that she would have received an “A” if Spanish was not her first language (Cardenas 118), she chose to focus on the professors who provided a supportive environment for her academic success. Cardenas valued those teachers who encouraged grammatical correctness due to the negative experiences she encountered with teachers who dismissed her academic strengths because Spanish is her first language. She recalled a feeling of indifference from her high school teachers and a college professor, “no one ever was overtly mean to me; the teachers weren’t mean to me. It was more what I considered an indifference. Indifference to me and because I was used to this nurturing from my English teachers, the perception I had was that the teachers weren’t interested in me, not like the teachers in middle school [...] It’s a perception. It’s a feeling.” The attention she received from supportive teachers, even when it was focused on grammar, led her to become successful despite the negative encounters with some teachers. Cardenas became resilient despite the indifference from some teachers. For example, she recalled her admiration for her doctoral dissertation chair: “I want to be like her and that’s Dr. Valerie Balester, so I went [to Texas A&M] for her and she became my chair. She was very positive and so were my other rhet and comp teachers.” Cardenas’ decision to focus on the teachers who desired to see her and other Latina/os succeed contributed to her strong Latina identity, which is an indication of her resilient qualities. Her maintenance of home

and academic language, although not emphasized in her formal education, was reinforced through her parents and community identity as revealed in the previous chapter.

The experienced academics' perception of institutions' failure to validate difference coupled with their experiences with positive and negative mentors contributed to their desire to serve as mentors to other Latina/o students and, hence, become successful role models. For example, Villanueva shared, "when [I] have a Latino, I have been nurturing and I've been kind and all of that." Because Villanueva understands challenges Latina/os experience in academia and the importance of mentorship in achieving success, he desires to provide a nurturing and welcoming environment for his students. Many Latina/os do not have opportunities to have Latina/o mentors throughout their education in academia, which might impact their sense of belonging and achievement. Similarly, Jaime Mejia shared that Latina/o students identify with him; he reflected, "typically brown students connect with me in ways they can't connect with their other professors. I'm sought after primarily on the basis of my appearance [...] there are a lot of factors why people seek you out, but ethnicity was always one of them [...] I'm directing theses now and the majority have been Mexican American female." More than a connection based on ethnic appearance, Mejia's students identify with him because he understands where they come from and serves as a role model for where they hope to go; his presence in academia creates a sense of belonging for future Latina/o academics.

When the faculty mentor is Latina or Latino, Latina/o students believe they also belong in academia; for example, Cardenas described connections she developed with some students who were from the same neighborhood where she grew up. She reflected,

I've had some students from the neighborhood I grew up; one Hispanic student told me his uncle had gone to junior high with me. In class, I talk about where I grew up. I think they consider: if she can do it or if there's someone they know [and] have a personal connection [pauses] I forget the academy, the university, is an alien place for many Latinos or African Americans, especially if in your family you don't have parents who were college graduates [...] [F]or many Latinos no path has been begun [...] [T]he sense I was from the neighborhood made a difference in students who chose to take a step and enroll.

Since Cardenas' students came from her neighborhood, they are better able to see themselves as part of the university. Because educational objectives might contrast with students' upbringing, academia can seem like a foreign and distant place. If a Latina/o student has a professor who comes from a similar neighborhood, who speaks their language, and who is Latina, they perceive attending and succeeding in higher education achievable. Cardenas further reflected on her identity as a Latina, English professor; she shared, "The fact I'm an English professor who happens to have Hispanic roots and is not hiding them [but] embracing them, showing difference, showing respect; it's good for [the students] because they see somebody else who embraces a multicultural [environment and] respects multiculturalism." Cardenas' students identify with her because she embraces the fact that she is a Latina, English professor; she recognizes the value of language and cultural difference in her experiences and in all her students. In order to convey a sense of embracing difference, institutions of higher education should validate what diverse faculty offer not only as role models and mentors to other

underrepresented students, but also in terms of their awareness of cultural and linguistic differences.

As my interviews revealed, established Latina/o academics became successful in spite of the lack of mentorship from other Latina/os, which is an indication that non-Latina/os can also become mentors for Latina/o students. At the same time, having mentors who understand Latina/os' cultural and linguistic background can clearly contribute to the academic success of Latina/os as revealed in the interviews with new Latina/o academics. Most importantly, mentors who are culturally sensitive and desire to see their Latina/o students succeed is important to Latina/o success in academia. Insight on this issue is revealed through new academics' viewpoints regarding their experiences with Latina/o and non-Latina/o mentors throughout their academic education.

#### New Latina/o Academics: The Role of Mentors

Because new Latina/o academics encountered at least one Latina/o mentor, their experiences with mentoring functioned as a source of empowerment and sense of belonging in academia through different types of support practices, such as belief in their academic writing abilities, stories of shared experiences, and understanding of language and cultural background. Although new academics encountered more Latina/o mentors compared to established academics, they also faced challenges with professors who made assumptions about their Latina/o students' background and academic capabilities, which signals the necessity to educate others on Latina/o issues in education. This is also an indication that without positive support from Latina/o mentors, it is possible the new academics interviewed here would have failed to continue with their education.



The new academics, similar to established academics, also expressed concern regarding lack of representation or misrepresentations of Latina/os in academia. While all new Latina/o academics interviewed in this study had Latina/o mentors, their concerns for Latina/o representation seemed more pronounced than established Latina/o academics. Although there seems to be more Latina/o mentors in academia, there are still problems due to the limited the number of Latina/o role models and the lack of affirmation of cultural and language difference in the university. Latina/o representation, especially in Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI), provides students with a source of identification in higher education. Dre, a Composition instructor at an HSI, believed that “If the majority of the faculty is not of color [pauses] it’s not that [White faculty are] racist; they don’t understand what is like to be someone of color; the barriers you face, the language, the appearance [...] It’s not to say White faculty aren’t qualified, but they don’t have that extra understanding that’s crucial to connect with these students at minority institutions.” Dre’s experiences exemplify one of the primary reasons for hiring academics of color, especially Latina/os, at HSIs. Non-Latina/o faculty might not always understand the struggles that a person of color endures, whereas a Latina/o might be able to connect with and understand their students. Further, Latina/o students encounter challenges when they are unable to connect with professors who do not understand their background or experiences. For example, Dre shared, “I feel that since I’m at the grassroots, I need to get an ally. Even the Latinos, the Latino tenured faculty, feel very strong; they feel like I do. They’re in a position where they’re tenured; they can help me whereas I am at the bottom; I’m just coming to this. I’m very young; I haven’t been in the academy very long, so I do need some guidance.” The more diversity in a university

environment, the more opportunities students will have to develop meaningful relationships with professors who they perceive as “like them.”

Increased Latina/o faculty representation can facilitate academic success of a new generation of Latina/os in academia. Alex described his experience with a Latino mentor and his ability to be a mentor to Latina/o students:

If you have that representation as an instructor, you can more easily see yourself moving into that role [...] If I am able to work with Chicano, Latino students and say, ‘hey this is totally normal you guys will be in college; you are going on to graduate school; you have all this potential,’ it’s much more easy for them to see [...] I think in that same way for me in having those same mentors as well: ‘of course, you’re going to do this, when you finish this, when you go on the job market.’ It doesn’t seem quite so foreign.

Alex emphasized benefits of Latina/o representation in higher education from two perspectives— as a Latino instructor and as a doctoral student. In his doctoral program, Alex has the opportunity to work with a Latino scholar whose mentorship allows him to believe in his potential to succeed in academia. Because Alex receives guidance, support, and high expectations from his Latino professor, he disseminates the same type of encouragement to his Latina/o students. For the participants, having Latina/o mentors who believe in their academic potential helped them achieve success.

Latina/o mentors served as role models to Latina/o students by establishing a sense of identification through shared experiences, pride in their ethnic background, and

support of their research interests and academic writing abilities. For example, Rei recalled an English teacher at a community college who was the only person who encouraged her to do well: “Ms. Mendoza was an English teacher, and dice ‘you got to give it animo;’ she was Mexicana.” Because Ms. Mendoza provided Rei with encouragement, Rei was able to continue with her education, eventually enrolling in an English Master’s program. She reflected, “[in] the graduate program I have a lot of support [names professors]. They are proud of being Latinas [...] they gave me that support; they gave me that confidence [...] that I knew how to write.” Professors not only instilled a sense of confidence in Rei’s writing abilities but also conveyed the importance of embracing their *latinidad*—their cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Through her professors’ sense of pride, they instilled the same level of pride in their students’ backgrounds. Specifically, Rei recalled support she received in her writing abilities from one of her Latina professors: “I wrote papers on the barriers I had in higher education [and women I surveyed], after I wrote it and after the semester was over, [the professor] told me to try to publish it.” Because the professor was Latina, she recognized the importance Rei’s findings and of supporting Rei’s research interests. Similarly, Alex had the opportunity to continue with his research interests due to support he received from a Latino professor in his doctoral program: “I’ve had the same research interests but the titles have changed a little bit because I’ve been doing a lot of work with [names professor]. I am interested in border rhetoric because Anzaldúa engages with these Nahua tropes as well.” It appears that Alex pursued his research interests with an expert Latino faculty member who legitimizes his research topics. In order to support a Latina/o

student's research interest/s, the faculty member does not have to be Latina/o, but they should have a genuine interest in his or her students' research agenda.

Based on interviews with new Latina/o academics, identification with professors based on ethnic background allowed them to experience a sense of belonging in academia and support for their academic writing. Ana shared that she identified with the faculty on a deeper level in her masters program than in her doctoral program due to lack of Latina/o scholars in the latter: "it was easier because there were more faculty of color. The Chicano literature professor was an advocate for the Chicanas in the course. Other faculty of color were also supportive. I didn't perceive the huge distance [pauses] even just how we look outwardly. I saw them in that position: somebody with similar cultural background—as a master's student that had a huge impact." Ana's connection with professors based on their cultural background facilitated her success in her master's program. Her relationship with Mexican-American professors allowed her to connect with them based on their cultural and language backgrounds: "I had two Mexican American professors in my graduate studies. Casually talking with them, some of the communication would be in Spanish; the joking around use of Spanish." As revealed in chapter 2, Ana developed a connection with Spanish through the use of humor—Spanish humor, as she mentioned, is familiar to her. Her ability to joke with professors in Spanish revealed the type of close bond she established with them—a factor that contributed to her success in her academic program. She further discussed her professors' expectations of her academic writing: "with writing, one of them was dedicated to working with his students; [he] emphasize[d] academic writing in the standard conventions. While he didn't discourage us from incorporating Spanish in our academic writing, he [didn't]

encouraged it as much as my other Mexican American professor. For one of them, the emphasis was on mastering academic language in English.” Although the academic writing expectations of her professors varied in terms of the use of Spanish in academic writing, both pedagogical views exposed Ana to diverse ways of thinking. While Ana realized that in order to please some of her mentors and achieve success in writing academic discourse, she needed to suppress her home language, she also established a sense of connection with mentors who shared experiences regarding the use of language difference in academic writing.

Supportive Latina/o faculty not only guide Latina/o students in their academic writing abilities, but also are role models who set an example through enacting an academic identity that valorizes non-dominant cultural values. Dre emphasized the encouragement she received from a Latina professor: “she was very proud [cheers] ‘Latina!’ She promotes Chicana literature; she teaches classes on Race and Rhetoric and gender. She is empowering. That’s what I want to do. She is not afraid to be herself. I’m glad I had that because I was getting discouraged. That’s not to say the faculty I had, we have a great English program, weren’t qualified. You have to have that connection.” Through identifying with her professor, Dre continued with her education in the face of discouragement. The sense of connection with another Latina/o legitimized being a proud Latina/o in the academy. Similarly, Esmeralda also reflected on her experiences with a Latino professor in her master’s program: “[his] direct way of teaching and using that tension; there was also an interest I hadn’t felt from any other professor. Not that they weren’t engaging in their classes or they weren’t available for office hours. But it was a little more personal and it was also a Chicano literature class.” Esmeralda’s professor and

the Chicano literature course legitimized experiences of being Latina/o in the academy, which allowed Esmeralda to experience a sense of connection with her professor, the course, and academia. She also noted that she initially disliked his direct pedagogical views, but she came to understand his reasoning. She recalled, “the button pushing or the tension is his style of doing things. There’s a reason for that to happen; it’s a measure of caring. As a student, I am quiet, reserved; I wait for things to happen. He force[d] me [to participate]; he’d make me have something to say or he’d make me consider something [...] You have an idea, you’re going to say the idea.” Esmeralda’s professor conveyed his belief in her academic potential by encouraging her to verbalize her ideas rather than sitting passively in his graduate course. Because students react differently to diverse modes of teaching, a variation in Latina/o faculty/mentor representation is vital. Diverse images of Latina/os mentors not only create more opportunities for identification for Latina/o students but also more awareness about different types of Latina/o experiences in and outside of academia.

The support new Latina/o academics received from mentors allowed them to achieve success in their respective programs of study; however, participants also encountered challenges with professors who did not support them. As with experienced Latina/o academics, the negative experiences of new academics also served as motivation to achieve success. The challenges participants encountered indicate the need to make others aware of Latina/o cultural and linguistic experiences in diverse contexts. Rei shared a negative experience with her linguistics professor: “she told me I wasn’t going to pass this class [and] she didn’t know how I gotten this far in the program. I believed her; I dropped it. [...] I retook it and I struggled again. She [said], ‘you’re going to make

a C again; if I were you, you can drop it.' I told her, I am not going to drop it, even if [I get] a C. After we wrote a paper, she accused me of plagiarism." Despite Rei's struggle in her linguistics class, the professor did not offer to help her achieve success. Rei perceived this professor as discouraging her due to her language and ethnic background. Within the span of Rei's enrollment in her master's program, she encountered professors with at least two opposite and contrasting views of her academic writing abilities. One professor conveyed the importance of her work as worthy of publication, while the second professor accused her of plagiarism and refused to assist or guide her in effective academic writing. Rei was able to discount the negative experience with this professor by choosing to focus on the previous encouragement she received from other professors in order to continue with the course and program. Similarly, she recalled a director at a community college who told her to return to the workforce as she was not going to make it in college; she reflected, "the director for the reading [at the community college]; I use him as my inside motivator because I'd hear his words and I'd say, 'I will prove him wrong.' This is what I'm doing now [with my linguistics professor]; I am going to prove her wrong. [Professor] who told me to publish this paper; she told me she likes who I am because I'm so determined." Rei used negative encounters as a source of strength while focusing on professors who supported her academic writing ability. Based on interviews with new and established academics, this is a common occurrence in how they choose to deal with negative encounters with mentors. The participants in this study appear to be resilient as they persevere through negative experiences because they choose to focus on positive external support (Bernard).

In order for Latina/os to succeed academically, the presence of a professor or mentor who takes interest in their academic achievements is vital. As Ana shared, she identified with professors in her master's program; however, as a doctoral student, Ana had a different experience due to her ethnic background in a predominantly White setting. She reflected, "my ethnic background marks me as different—being different in any sense presents challenges. Starting out in that position is a challenge because there are so many other challenges in graduate work that that's another one that builds in and it's difficult to talk to people about in a way they understand because people in the program, they are not marked in that way." The primary source of Ana's challenges is lack of a community in her doctoral program where she can develop a sense of identification. As noted earlier, the opportunity to develop a sense of identification with a community through shared experiences with other Latina/os in academia allows Latina/os to counter challenges and become successful; most importantly, such identifications convey that Latina/os belong in academia. Ana reflected, "in my Ph.D. program there are no faculty of color; I'm the only Ph.D. student of color. I would like more people of color in the faculty and colleagues. The faculty are supportive; they encourage my research interests, but there is a difference between that kind of support and having faculty of color around and having that connection [of] shared experience as being people of color in the U.S." As the only Latina in her program, Ana does not identify with fellow graduate students based on ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Although the faculty support her research interests, the presence of a Latina/o faculty member might further facilitate her success and ease challenging aspects of academia.



Latina/o mentors in academia help counter resistance toward language and ethnic difference, and their presence, especially in Rhetoric and Composition, allows Latina/o students to see their ethnic and linguistic background as assets in academia. When I asked Ana how the presence of a Latina/o mentor might assist her, she responded:

I would feel so much less resistance, more of a sense of belonging and less of being different. I mean, gosh, how would you describe that feeling of belonging [laughs] or that feeling of [pauses] not to say that being different is necessarily negative, but again in the context of graduate school and professionalization, there is so many other areas where that is the case in the movement of becoming a professional that language difference is yet another that is deeply tied to identity. It makes the experience [...] harder when there are not other people experiencing along with you and you're the only one. If there was more of an emphasis or awareness or interest in language difference and how that affects identity, especially in the context of composition and rhetoric, then that distance would be closed in that sense.

The lack of Latina/o faculty in academia who address issues of language difference and identity contributes to challenges related to resistance or lack of belonging. Identification with Latina/o faculty or fellow colleagues who possess similar language and cultural experiences can lead toward academic success. When Latina/os' experiences with language variation is validated by a Latina/o professor, they not only feel their identity is validated, but also that they belong in academia, especially in Rhetoric and Composition, a field that often focuses on academic language.

## Multicultural Coursework

In addition to Latina/o mentors in academia, Latina/o or multiethnic coursework<sup>3</sup> can help Latina/os overcome challenges, develop a sense of belonging, and establish identification within academia. The interrelation between language and culture is especially significant to scholars in Rhetoric and Composition since the field is concerned with language use; therefore, Latina/os in Rhetoric and Composition need an opportunity to study the relationship between their language and culture. The exigence for coursework that aims to convey a better understanding of Latina/o experiences is highlighted by Edward Delgado-Romero et. al. in “Developmental Career Challenges for Latina/o Faculty in Higher Education” who suggest the necessity for “institutional agents [to] understand Latina/o faculty in terms of the multiple cultural contexts that influence us” (280). Although understanding multiple cultural and linguistic communities Latina/os participate in is important, it is only the first step toward creating better educational and career opportunities; the second step involves understanding how cultural and linguistic differences are an asset to the university, colleagues, and students. In order to accomplish these objectives, cultural and linguistic influences among Latina/os should be addressed in courses that include reading and writing assignments that can facilitate Latina/o students’ sense of belonging in academia and make others aware of the contributions of Latina/os. In *The Majority in the Minority: Expanding the Representation of Latina/o Faculty, Administrators, and Students in Higher Education*, Jeanett Castellanos and Lee Jones conclude that “a multicultural programmatic perspective will generate a more

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<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of discussing multiethnic coursework in this section, I define multiethnic coursework broadly, as any course in rhetoric, composition, or literature that addresses cultural and language difference.

culturally sensitive paradigm and as a result, be of great benefit to higher education, all ethnic/racial minorities, and the Latina/o community” (291). Many scholars who study Latina/os in higher education seem to agree that one of the most pervasive problems for Latina/os is lack of cultural sensitivity in academia.

In order to ease the “cultural dissonance” Latina/o academics encounter in academia, more opportunities to discuss cultural and language difference is needed in graduate coursework. In “Hispanic Representation in Literature for Children and Young Adults,” Arlene L. Barry notes that many educators address the importance of “seeing oneself—one’s history, culture, and experiences—in the books one reads.” She also argues that multiethnic literature allows students to discover contributions of their culture in the history of the United States, thereby facilitating their sense of belonging and identification. Barry affirms that while ethnic literature is important for the educational enrichment of all students, it is vital to avoid the representation of an entire cultural or ethnic group through one book; instead, a variety of books with diverse experiences, class, language, and social backgrounds should become a part of course discussions. The benefits of coursework that facilitates Latina/os’ sense of belonging and identification is further addressed by Jessica M. Vasquez in “Ethnic Identity and Chicano Literature: How Ethnicity Affects Reading and Reading Affects Ethnic Consciousness.” Vasquez was a participant observer in a Chicano Narrative course, and she interviewed Latina/o and non-Latina/o students in order to discover the effects of Chicano literature in their lives. She discovered that readings in the course helped Latina/o students feel connected to texts: “Many Latinos [...] referenced poverty, youth gangs, and intermingling Spanish within the primarily English texts as mechanisms that inspired a sense of identification

with the texts. This recognition of similarity of hardships led the Latino students to feel as if they were ‘not alone’ in their position on the periphery of mainstream society in the United States” (908). Participants also developed ownership and confidence in their ability to interpret the texts. Vasquez writes, “Latino students read the Chicano texts and discovered that Latinos do in fact have an abundance of cultural capital, just not the cultural capital reified by the United States educational system [...] [t]he Latino students referred to this overflow of cultural capital as ‘ownership of the text’, meaning that they were finally the ones with the inside knowledge, and this flowed into a new-found sense of ethnic validation” (909). Although the educational system might not validate cultural and language difference as valuable knowledge, the participants realized that they could contribute to class discussions through inside knowledge. Course texts helped Latina/os not only develop a sense of identification but also validated their ethnic identity.

Based on Vasquez’s study, the Chicano Narrative course helped Latina/o students feel connected as they identified with stories, language, and social circumstances. For non-Latino students in the course, the texts functioned as way for them to become aware of injustices and identify areas of commonality. Vasquez argued that “Ethnic literature serves an important social function in breaking open antiquated curricula and infusing readers with refreshing perspectives that celebrate diversity while still stressing some commonality” (919). Ethnic literature has potential to provide legitimacy to experiences while serving as a source of identification for Latina/os while at the same time making others aware of social, cultural, and linguistic realities. Vasquez wrote, “While studying counter-hegemonic literature in a heterogeneous setting can produce misunderstandings, anxiety over misreadings, and defensiveness, my data show support for marginal

literature as a valuable tool for the educational system and its students” (919). Although Vasquez’s study focuses on positive outcomes of ethnic literature, the reality is also that course discussion in such courses can produce stereotypical critiques, racial comments, and defensiveness. In a footnote, Vasquez noted, “while the effects of reading multicultural literature reported to me were overwhelmingly positive, they ranged in type and intensity. Only one interviewee complained of not wanting to read Chicano literature in the future, issuing grievances against the literature and the professor’s teaching style” (921). Although only one participant made a negative comment regarding Chicano literature and the professor of the course, it is important to consider how to facilitate discussion when students make racial remarks regarding ethnic literature. Tolerating such remarks in class can negatively impact genuine understanding of diverse cultural values as well as interactions with those from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, Latina/o and non-Latina/o students should be trained in how to properly address Latina/o and other minority issues in respectful and learning-enriching ways.

As Paula Moya discusses in “Learning How to Learn from Others: Realist Proposals for Multicultural Education,” most assume that multicultural courses benefit only minority populations when in reality the courses provide everyone with a better understanding of minority experience in the U.S. Paula Moya argues that “if schools are to serve as a vehicle through which we promote the creation of a better world, we must insist that schools be actively involved in training students and teachers to interact in culturally sensitive ways with peoples whose cultural traditions differ from theirs” (174). The purpose of such courses is to convey to others the function of cultural identification among Latina/os or minority groups in order for them to better respond to others’

experiences. Moya's argument is grounded in the idea that the representation of only dominant traditions, values, and ways of thinking are an "inaccurate conception of the world—a conception that is harmful to dominant and minority cultures alike" (174). Therefore, Moya proposes a multicultural education that "privilege[s] the perspectives of members of non-dominant groups" (173) in order to "get enough information to produce more objective knowledge" (173). She argues that multicultural education should be deliberate in its objectives, aiming to help students learn from others' cultural and linguistic experiences. An accurate representation of the world and U.S. society is to focus on the minority experience in order to learn to interact with others and identify objectives that focus on academic success for all students (Moya 173). The literature seems to indicate the importance of multiethnic education for all students (Moya, Vasquez, Castellanos and Jones). Literature also indicates the necessity to discover how existence of multiethnic coursework influences Latina/o students' success in academia.

#### Established Latina/o Academics: The Role of Multicultural Coursework

In addition to supportive mentors, established Latina/o academics reflected on how multiethnic coursework influenced their academic interests. For participants, multiethnic coursework provided a sense of identification and pride in their language background. The courses served as a way to connect back to their community while trying to become a part of an academic context that privileges a dominant discourse. Although established scholars were rarely exposed to Latina/o literature, they established connections with literature by authors from other cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The sense of difference from the dominant culture appeared to help participants connect to texts by minority authors; it provided them with a sense of confidence and legitimacy of

their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Although most multiethnic texts were in literature courses, participants made connections to how rhetoric provided them with more opportunities to analyze the language and social contexts within the texts they read. The relationship between literature and rhetoric allowed participants to not only identify with situations and language in texts relating to cultural difference but also contribute to knowledge-making.

Because participants had a strong sense of multicultural identity, they immediately identified with the language used and experiences represented in multiethnic texts. Caridad's interest in English emerged through experiences with literature of people of color: "I loved the work of African American women writers. I started to get into the literature of people of color through African American Women, then Native American Women, and then Asian American Women. I didn't even know there were Latina women publishing at that time." Caridad recalled speaking urban Black English and moving between dialects within her community; her background helped her establish a sense of identification with texts she read in classes. These texts helped Caridad reinforce her connection to her community identity. Eventually, Caridad was exposed to Latin American literature through a university program during her graduate studies; she recalled, "they had a Latin American Studies program; it was a Latin American/Caribbean certificate for graduate students. I [took] political science, literature, social science classes [...] that was my first education in Latino/Latin American studies because there were no Latina Writers classes." Caridad's language background allowed her to continue to remain close to her first language and develop a Latina/o literature course when she began to teach.

Literature by people of color is, thus, a contributing factor in participants' academic success as they identify with the literature, which leads them to possess self-confidence in their abilities to make academic contributions rooted in their cultural and language backgrounds. For instance, Victor Villanueva reflected on how his language background influenced his initial interest in English as a first-year college student. He shared: "what I grew up [with] was a Puerto Rican Black English [...] When I was a first year student, the English course that caught my eye was not so much the literature but African American literature because that too is a part of how I grew up; it was a black and Puerto Rican neighborhood; the English I heard was not academic English; it was what we now called African American language." The language used in African American literature triggered a sense of familiarity for Villanueva. The familiar language allowed Villanueva to respond to texts with a sense of authority and confidence; his connections to texts helped him to take ownership of his Latino academic identity. Villanueva shared, "if it weren't for these experiences in language, I wouldn't be a language person. It's part of what's exciting about rhetoric as opposed to literature; rhetoric allows me to think about language. It doesn't have to be English language; it's about language and language use." His early experiences with language through literature texts allowed him to develop an interest in language and language use; rhetoric functioned as a way for him to further connect with the multiethnic texts he read. His realization that rhetoric provides opportunities to think about multiple languages contributed to his academic success because it provided him with a space to enter this work as an academic who eventually challenged dominant discourse through his language use.



Multiethnic coursework helps Latina/os and non-Latina/os better understand the relationship between language difference and academic writing and facilitates connections between literature and rhetoric, especially in relation to language use. Such coursework thus allows Latina/o academics to contribute to knowledge-making and to succeed in academia. Jaime Mejia shared implications of having coursework on Latina/o experiences, particularly Mexican American literature: “If you read Mexican American literature or [...] history, that helps you situate who you are and [...] understand where you come from, it’s just an exact opposite where you are in the course that doesn’t do that, that creates pictures of the United States that [do] not mention the presence of Mexican Americans. I think that translates into a negative portrayal.” Multiethnic coursework allows Latina/os and all students to have a better understanding of the experiences of diverse racial groups in the United States. Mejia pointed out that Latina/o academics in Rhetoric and Composition must have knowledge of Chicano Literature; however, knowledge of all Latina/o literature is equally valuable. Mejia shared, “as a minority in rhet comp studies, we have a lot to contribute. I would say that people who don’t have background in Chicano literature and in Chicano culture studies, and if you are a Latina and you don’t have this background [...] I don’t think you have the strength or power or background that I think is as rich culturally as the person who does have that as an academic background.” Latina/o and non-Latina/o academics in Rhetoric and Composition should be exposed to Latina/o literature at all levels as well as non-literary works in order to have a better understanding of influences of Latina/o culture in the U.S. and academia. Mejia perceived his success in academia to be a result of knowledge of the relationship between Chicano literature and Rhetoric and Composition: “I think there’s a

great need for people like us in the field. I think it's this type of background that I wear this type of badge, this type of identity, I think I've had success in the field." Mejia claimed that his ethnic identity as a Chicano academic is a result of his awareness of Chicano history. Exposure to how culture and language shape identities through multiethnic coursework facilitates Latina/o academic success, as they learn that their cultural and linguistic background has a place in academia.

While exposure to Latina/o literature is important in order for Latina/os to develop a connection between their cultural and linguistic backgrounds and their academic work, another exigence for multiethnic coursework is that it enables Latina/os and non-Latina/os to develop a better understanding of diverse cultures and thus to effectively mentor, guide, and support Latina/o students. In order for Latina/os to claim their cultural and linguistic identity openly, multiethnic coursework that welcomes a sense of identification with home cultures and authority because of that identification is imperative; additionally, having Latina/o faculty teach these courses and serve as role models because of their willingness to claim both an ethnic and academic identities can contribute to Latina/o's academic success.

#### New Latina/o Academics: The Role of Coursework

As noted by previous research, multiethnic coursework helps Latina/os connect with the readings through their cultural and linguistic background. Like established academics, new Latina/o academics' experience also reveals that multiethnic coursework helped them develop a sense of identification and belonging in academia. In addition to feeling connected to the texts, the participants also shared that multiethnic texts

influenced their writing objectives and led to a desire to counter false assumptions and stereotypes about Latina/os either in texts or during class discussion. Because multiethnic coursework provided Latina/os with a sense of identification, they developed self-confidence in challenging assumptions made by their classmates concerning Latina/os in course readings.

Unlike established academics, new Latina/o were exposed to literature by Latina/os, which gave them a sense of belonging in academia and higher consciousness of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Ana became intrigued by language in her Chicana/o literature class. Ana shared that the class helped her develop a “strong foundation” as she began her graduate coursework, allowing her to develop a stronger Chicana identity. She reflected, “reading literature and scholarship [and] being aware of the historical traditions was positive. The affirmation of cultural identity, but the painful aspect was learning the degree of discrimination, struggle, and the perception of Chicana/o culture in this country. My ethnic background helped me achieve in that class.” The course facilitated a cultural identity amidst the pain of learning about Chicana/os’ struggles. She also shared that reading Chicana/o literature, “put the focus on language difference back in my awareness [...] it [was] with few faculty of color or the one faculty of color where I had experiences [where] I could think about Spanish and think about how that related to identity and culture.” The Chicano literature course provided Ana with affirmation of her cultural identity, and the readings allowed her to think about the relationship among language, culture, and identity. Finally, the course served as way to interact with Chicano professors who became her mentors and instilled a

sense of authority in her academic work—factors that led to success in the course and her master’s program.

In addition to establishing a sense of identification for new Latina/os academics, multicultural coursework also ignited their critical thinking skills and academic writing abilities. Esmeralda reflected on how Gloria Anzaldúa influenced her writing. She described, “Anzaldúa, she use[s] phrases in Spanish and [does] not always find it necessary to explain [them]. She said, you’re just gonna have to meet me half way. This is my language, I am my language. [...] I think about how that has influenced my writing and I find it has helped [me], even though I am writing in English.” For Esmeralda, Anzaldúa’s work ignited a connection to her heritage language—a sense of identification that provided legitimacy of diverse language choices. Anzaldúa’s language choices demonstrated, for Esmeralda, how to assert power over language, especially in relation to academic writing. When Latina/os see their heritage language in print or as part of a course, it provides them with a sense of validation and recognition of their languages. Recognizing language diversity through course readings affirms the value of the language as a way to make knowledge in the course. These examples are especially useful as new Latina/o academics attempt to achieve success in academia and academic writing.

Coursework on multiculturalism functions as a source of ethnic identity and language difference and as a forum where students and teachers may challenge assumptions about Latina/os’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds. New Latina/o academic participants in the current study felt strongly about countering false assumptions or stereotypes about Latina/os; these assumptions sometimes appeared in textbooks while others emerged during class discussions. In both cases, participants’

strong desire to challenge stereotypes fueled their writing discussions. While some might perceive their reactions as “defensive,” the reality is that in order to educate others about Latina/o issues and breakdown stereotypes to ensure success for all Latina/os, it is vital to foster, through support and guidance, such discussions. Rei shared several seminar papers, particularly a paper in a Visual Rhetoric class that sought to break down stereotypes. She described: “This [paper], ‘How Much Does a Book Cover Say?.’ We had to read [points to book—the book cover shows Mexican children from a low socioeconomic background]. What I didn’t like is that pusieron puros Mexicanos and the background. The background looks like people from the poor side of town; this is what drives me to write this, and there were other covers; this one [points] and it just bothers me that they put puros Mexicanos in the background.” Rei is from a low socioeconomic background, which influenced her distaste in the portrayal of poor Mexicans or African Americans in deplorable economic conditions. For Rei, the images of poor Mexican students in need of literacy conveyed a negative portrait of Latina/os in the United States. Particularly, Rei was bothered because the writers and editors of these books were not from the same ethnic or cultural background as the students represented. Through critical analysis, Rei succeeded in the course because she had a sense of authority to critique and challenge assumptions. She continued, “the kind of people, the kind of background they are showing, pobre Mexicanos [...] look at this; it bothered me. This class bothered me. [Book editors/authors] are putting down los Mexicanos y son bolillos [Anglo Americans] writing it. Negrita look, with no furniture, no nothing. [My professor] tells me, you have a lot to say. She tells me to write.” Because Rei’s experiences might have been similar to those children in the books, she possessed knowledge and awareness to provide a critical

analysis of the texts, and the course and her chosen emphasis (i.e. her emphasis of analysis focused on how Anglo Americans wrote or edited the books yet they chose to represent Mexicans as poor and illiterate on their book covers) contributed to academic achievement in the course as her professor, a Latina, encouraged her to continue writing.

Coursework on Latina/o issues not only functioned as an opportunity to counter negative Latina/o representation in textbook, but it also ignited class discussion where participants were often placed in the position to challenge negative commentary regarding work by Latina/os. Dre described an incident in her literary theory course that happened during a class discussion on postcolonial theory and Anzaldúa. Her experience reveals why it is important to expose all students to diverse uses of language and ways of thinking: “[a] White guy says, ‘Anzaldúa isn’t relevant anymore’ The four [Latinas in class] were just [silence]. No, you don’t understand [...] we were just [gasps] what do you mean she’s not relevant? We’re reading her; she’s in this book, of course she’s relevant. You wouldn’t understand. He was upset because she doesn’t translate her Spanish. It really upset me. I couldn’t say because I didn’t want to look [pauses]. I felt like we’re already stigmatized within the program because we are so few.” The White student’s comment affected Dre, and while she tried to defend her position and justify the relevance of Anzaldúa’s work today, she was unable to assert both her Tejano and academic identity as she wished in the context of class discussion. Because there are few Latina/os in the program, Dre perceives that her Latina colleagues and her are marked negatively as they speak in Spanish and possess a strong Latina identity. Even though Dre did not feel capable of taking the stance she desired due to her perception of how she is marked in the program, the fact that they did not allow his dismissal of Anzaldúa stand

made him aware that there were Latina/os in the room that did not agree with his position. I believe that when discussions in class target people in a very personal manner, it is often difficult to defend or justify or articulate one's position. Although Dre was unable to articulate her thoughts at the moment, the experience revealed to her the necessity to expose all students to literature by people of color.

In addition to countering Latina/o stereotypes in books or class discussion, the new academics in my study also faced challenges when professors overtly conveyed their own stereotypical assumptions about Latina/os. Dre experienced imposed expectations for Latina/o students in her master's program: "even though they are predominantly White, most of them are very understanding. They did do some tokenization, but wasn't [pauses] out of prejudice. [W]hen comprehensive exams come around, they [asked] 'you're taking *Borderlands*, right?' I got tired; I would tell them, 'no I'm not doing *Borderlands*.' 'Okay, so this project you know, you can tie into your comps, if you're doing American lit or *Borderlands* [emphasis placed on *Borderlands*]." Even though Dre expressed her research interests, which was American Literature at the time, some of the faculty expected her to focus on *Borderlands*, an exam area, which they perceived as more aligned with her interests due to her ethnicity. In her sociolinguistics class, Dre also described imposed stereotypes:

we had to do schemas of events [...] my professor [said], 'you should do a quinceñera or hitting a piñata.' I don't think [she] realized it was offensive. I never had a quinceñera; I went to one but I didn't have one. Hitting a piñata. It was so stereotypical. I think it's just because they [think] 'you know about this culture.' I don't like speaking for the whole

culture; that's not my job; we're all different. I'm a Tejana [...] It was uncomfortable, but I don't think they understood it.

To assume that all Latina/o students possess the same degree of familiarity with culturally relevant events such as quinceñeras or piñatas is imposing a generalized belief and discarding the cultural, context specific significance of these events. Dre processes her experience by stating that her professors might just not understand, but she is able to take this stance because she developed a strong Latina identity due to the guidance she received from her Latina mentor. However, it is important to recognize that such imposed expectations or stereotypes might adversely affect the academic success of Latina/os. Due to Dre's early language background as a proud Tejana, which was facilitated through her multiple language communities, she has become a successful academic despite the tokenism and stereotypes she encountered. Additionally, she is driven by the need to expose students to diverse cultures and ways of thinking. She reflected, "I studied British and American White men. I can see how they are part of the canon, but as an academic, we need to expand [...] there's Frederick Douglass and M Butterfly for gay/lesbian and Asian Americans; it's just not representative of the U.S. I'm going to pursue a Ph.D. because we need to close the gaps. We need more Latina faculty; I want to be part of the solution and not part of the problem." Dre's consciousness that readings in literature often times do not represent the diverse racial, cultural, and worldviews within the US not only helps her achieve success within her program but also facilitates her decision to pursue a Ph.D. in order to increase Latina representation in higher education.

### Conclusion



Many academic contexts do not provide a sense of belonging for Latina/o academics, especially when language and cultural differences are not viewed as strengths within academia. Mentoring practices and coursework functioned as a way for Latina/o participants to develop an academic community that welcomed and valued their desire to merge their linguistic and cultural backgrounds with their intellectual work. The participants in the study developed a strong sense of ownership and consciousness of their ethnic identities, thereby helping them identify strategies to negotiate academia. My analysis of the participants' experiences suggests that mentors and multicultural coursework were key factors that contributed to their negotiation of academic contexts. While supportive mentors offered various kinds of support to some participants, such as in their writing, research topics, shared experiences, and language background, others encountered mentors who hindered their academic progress. However, these mentors also served as sources of motivation, especially in terms of participants' desire to counter low expectations. Additionally, although many participants expressed a sense of belonging and authority in academia through multicultural coursework, others faced challenges countering negative assumptions associated with their background. Despite participants' diverse experiences with mentors and coursework, my study revealed that these were instrumental factors that not only contributed to Latina/os asserting their linguistic and cultural identities in the academy but also developing their awareness of strategies that facilitated their negotiations in academia.

Coursework on multiethnic literature and rhetoric serves two purposes: one, as a source of connection and identification among Latina/os, and two, as a way to make others aware of Latina/o experiences. While in "Diving for Pearls: Mentoring as Cultural

and Activist Practice among Academics of Color” Okawa argues that others can learn from the mentoring practices among academics of color, Okawa fails to take into account that graduate programs must teach students how to engage in mentoring as cultural and activist practice and why such mentoring is beneficial for all students. Latina/os encounter mentors or professors who might not know how to respond to their needs or how to guide and support them, so it is important to educate all faculty who mentor about Latina/os and other minority issues. Particularly, it is important to emphasize how non-Latina/os can learn from Latina/os and vice versa in order to challenge or dismiss assumptions and stereotypes. Emphasis should be placed on how to educate all students about Latina/o issues, how to teach and discuss multicultural works, and how to teach and mentor with sensitivity and receptivity to language difference and language diversity as real and legitimate places in academia and academic writing. In order to achieve these objectives, it is important to understand the resilient qualities that successful Latina/o academics in Rhetoric and Composition possess and how these qualities helped them identify useful strategies in order to negotiate diverse identities and languages in academia.

My Latino identity and my academic identity are the same. They are one thing; they must necessarily be tied together.

-Victor Villanueva

There are different ways to consider yourself close to a Latina identity; for me, it has been language. Yes, an oral tradition, with food, dance [...] these things influence, but [...] my identity as a Latina, Chicana identity, language has been what I use to tie myself to that.

-Esmeralda

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **NEGOTIATING LANGUAGE DIFFERENCE IN ACADEMIC WRITING**

Bilingual Latina/o academics often encounter challenges in reconciling their identities and non-dominant languages in the academic community due to the emphasis placed on academic writing. English monolingualism in composition, as many scholars argue, deemphasizes the benefits of other languages toward enriching knowledge-making in the field (NeCamp, Horner, Donahue). Bruce Horner and John Trimbur identify one of the primary reasons why speakers of languages other than English might experience challenges in academia: “[J]ust as in the English Only debates, the boundaries separating one language from another are imagined as fixed, so in representations of students, the language of the academy is seen as discrete from the language of the outside, associated with students’ home neighborhoods or ethnic, class, and racial identities” (614).

Academic writing is often perceived as the language of intellectuals. If one does not possess access to or is not able to replicate academic writing, one does not belong in academia. The language of the academy conflicts with peoples’ diverse backgrounds primarily because “[d]ominant institutions promote the notion of an overarching, homogenous standard language which is primarily white, upper middle class, and midwestern” (Lippi-Green 65). For Latina/o academics, balancing their ethnic and

language background with the values and beliefs of the academy can be distressing. The devaluing of other languages in academia might cause the individual to forget his or her native language as Suresh Canagarajah experienced. He writes, “throughout my life, I have been so disciplined about censoring even the slightest traces of Sir Lankan English in my own academic writing that it is difficult to bring them into the text now” (613). Canagarajah was forced to “censor” his language as a result of institutions and academia privileging standard American English. As Rosina Lippi-Green argues, “access to education itself is controlled and disciplined, in part on the basis of language variety and accent; the educational system may not be the beginning, but it is the heart of the standardization process” (Lippi-Green 65).

Failure to permit or accept language difference in academic writing is due in part to perceiving the language outside of the academy as something separate. hooks notes “the use of a language and style of presentation that alienate most folks who are not also academically trained reinforces the notion that the academic world is separate from real life, that everyday world where we constantly adjust our language and behavior to meet diverse needs” (129). Believing that academia is separate from real life is problematic on multiple levels. First, it implies that the knowledge people make outside of the academy is inadequate in meeting the expectations of “academic knowledge.” Second, it conveys that there is only one, dominant way to communicate ideas—standard, academic English. And, most importantly, such a view of academia fails to consider the ever-changing world in relation to the multiple languages and Englishes people across the world and the United States know or are exposed to. As Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur argue, “[t]he growing majority of English speakers worldwide—including substantial numbers within

the United States—know other languages, and, through interaction, the Englishes they use vary and multiply. Traditional approaches to writing in the United States are at odds with these facts” (303). Understanding and acknowledging that academic writing or traditional approaches to the teaching of writing displace other languages is the first step toward identifying strategies to counter dominant ideologies. For example, Beverly Moss writes,

my path into the academy also provides me with perspective from which to question long held racist, sexist, and classist assumptions and practices that have traditionally been perpetuated by the academy. I question those practices through assignments that ask students, and consequently the academy, to expand their definition of what counts as literacy, what counts as text, what counts, as scholarship—ultimately, what counts as valuable.  
(163)

For Moss, awareness of racist, sexist, and classist assumptions in academia is an opportunity to invite students to question such assumptions, primarily through expanding definitions or redefining traditional writing practices. For those who might be seen as outsiders, the ability to challenge traditional views of writing in academia in terms of language can be facilitated through an individual’s resilient qualities. People who fit in academe can still question traditional values but it requires more resiliency from those who are least powerful to challenge dominant assumptions about language.

### Resiliency Theory

Resiliency theory can provide insight into how Latina/os in academia manage to achieve academic success while maintaining ties to their cultural and linguistic background. Resiliency theory, according to Juan Carlos González, “is defined as a form of theoretical understanding and problem-solving that focuses on the assets of people and systems, rather than on the deficits” (292). Resilient traits provide the individual with the ability to succeed despite adverse circumstances. Additionally, Bonnie Benard, argues that “we are all born with innate resiliency,” but home and institutions foster resiliency traits. According to Benard, there are four main components of resiliency: social competence, problem-solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose. First, social competence focuses on individuals’ responsiveness, cultural flexibility, empathy, caring, communication skills, and sense of humor (Bernard 3). Second, the components of problem-solving include planning, help-seeking, critical and creative thinking (Bernard 3). Autonomy focuses on peoples’ clear sense of identity, self-efficacy, self-awareness, task-mastery, and the ability to distance themselves from negative circumstances (Bernard 3). Finally, sense of purpose emphasizes an individual’s ability to imagine a successful future and includes characteristics such as goal direction, educational aspirations, optimism, faith, and spiritual connectedness (Bernard 3). These traits are especially useful in academia when students with non-dominant languages and cultural backgrounds experience conflict with academic writing and academic culture. As Benard argues, everyone possesses “the innate capacity to develop the traits associated with resilience; however, outside forces, such as families, schools, and communities must serve as “‘psychological homes’ wherein youth can find mutually caring and respectful relationships and opportunities for meaningful involvement” (Benard 6). In terms of this

study, awareness that institutions, courses, and faculty can create an academic environment that fosters Latina/o students' resilient traits and values language and cultural difference is key for the academic success of Latina/o students. Faculty members like Beverly Moss creates space for students to challenge dominant academic values and, hence, develop resilient traits:

my goal is to value what students know when they come into the academy, build on that knowledge by exposing them to multiple literacies, traditional and nontraditional, and challenge these students to blur the boundary lines that keep some out and others in. As educators, we can provide an opportunity for students to gain tools that they can use to empower themselves. Whether they use those tools to do so—to challenge boundaries or question traditional academic values—is up to the students.

(164)

By guiding her students to become self-aware of their multiple literacies, she helps them develop resilient traits, such as autonomy and a sense of purpose. As individuals develop awareness of language difference, they enhance their sense of autonomy and purpose because awareness places them in a position to question and challenge the norm through conscious and rhetorically specific language use. Because students are empowered, they can choose how to use rhetorical strategies in academia.

In “Surviving the Doctorate and Thriving as Faculty: Latina Junior Faculty Reflecting on Their Doctoral Studies Experiences,” Juan Carlos González identifies the resilient traits that help Latinas achieve success in academia as doctoral students and as

faculty. González concludes that his participants “maintained their resiliency mostly because they had a strong sense of purpose” (298), and he further argues that “it is the responsibility of institutions and institutional leaders to take advantage of Latina resiliency and their intellectual and cultural knowledge and create structures to facilitate their success” (298) by supporting their resiliency. For the purposes of this study, I am particularly interested in the following three resilient traits, especially how the participants make use of them: problem solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose.

According to Gonzalez,

For Latinas at institutions of higher education, independence and control involve expression of their ethnic and bicultural selves [...] having a sense of purpose is characteristic of resilient individuals. The Latina interviewees spoke a lot about their sense of purpose as it related to educational attainment, success, and diversity awareness. (295-297)

Having a sense of purpose and autonomy as well as the ability to problem-solve help Latina/os achieve success despite adverse circumstances. Based on his study, González discovered that “despite the challenges of racism and sexism, Latina interviewees found a way to articulate and justify their continued existence in the academy through their sense of purpose, which included the long-term advancement of the Latina community” (297). Additionally, problem solving and autonomy traits further helped them maintain a sense of purpose within the academy. I will analyze how these resilient qualities are evident in the existing scholarship about Latina/os in academia.



Academics of color must often try to identify strategies that will help them negotiate difference and challenges in academia related to their cultural or linguistic background. Christine A. Stanley, in “Coloring the Academic Landscape: Faculty of Color Breaking the Silence in Predominantly White Colleges and Universities,” provides a detailed analysis of autobiographical narratives included in the book *Faculty of Color: Teaching in Predominately White Colleges and Universities*. The participants, faculty of color, were asked to describe their experiences teaching in predominately White universities and providing recommendations to other faculty of color and administrators. In her analysis, Stanley identified the following themes as areas of concern for faculty of color: teaching, mentoring, collegiality, identity, service, and racism. For the purposes of this chapter, I am particularly interested in the theme of identity. Based on her analysis of these narratives, Stanley argues “negotiations of one’s identity in the academic setting is a continuous process [...] faculty of color, like most faculty members, represent multiple social and cultural identities” (716-718). Because academia tends to focus on the values of the dominant culture and on academic language, faculty of color must learn to negotiate multiple identities and languages in academia. Stanley provides the following recommendation based on her analysis of the narratives:

[F]aculty of color should strive to be true to themselves and not sacrifice their beliefs or identity to fit in or assimilate. They should anticipate that the perception of being viewed as ‘different’ often means that one will be misunderstood and judged [...] when these instances occur, they are an opportune way to dispel stereotypes, myths, and educate others about the value and richness of diversity in a college or university community. (730)

Stanley's recommendation reflects the realities many academics of color face—they are often forced to choose identities or sacrifice certain views in order to succeed. Stanley argues that rather than conforming to the dominant ideologies or accepting stereotypes about their identities, faculty of color should counter such beliefs by educating others. This is an example of sense of purposes that Gonzalez identifies as a resilient trait. All participants in Stanley's study were conscious of both how they see themselves in academia and how others perceive them. Their autonomy, particularly their clear sense of identity, helped them resist assimilation, defend their identity, and argue for the benefit of diversity in the university.

A clear sense of purpose and autonomy are two resilient qualities that may help Latina/o academics to succeed in academia by merging their Latina/o and their academic identities. Resilient traits, such as social competence, autonomy, sense of purpose, and problem solving may help them engage in the language and identity negotiations necessary to creating a merged identity. Autonomy as a result of self-awareness and self-efficacy provides the faculty of color with the tools to negotiate their multiple identities, challenge dominant perspectives, and resist full assimilation. In "Embattled Scholars in the Academy: A Shared Odyssey," Jess M. Vásquez argues, "the university, for so many of us, is a place where the private and public selves merge. It is a place where one can attempt to reconcile or come to terms with the many contradictions of one's social, political, and personal realities" (1046). Although the university can certainly become a place where one may "attempt to reconcile" identities, as I argued in Chapter 3, an institution of higher education should first create spaces where the identity a person of color brings can be preserved and valued rather than be "overcome." When institutions

welcome diverse languages and identities, they not only create a sense of belonging for the academic of color but expose everyone to diverse world views that enrich knowledge-making in academia. Second, universities should create structures where the Latina/o academic may cultivate their resilient traits, such as autonomy and sense of purpose. These traits may then assist the Latina/o academic in achieving a balance between identities in academia. Vásquez shares, “[A]s one matures in academia, one begins to try to introduce balance into one’s life, and that’s what I’m working on these days—balance. But this balance is not easily achieved, especially when one finds himself or herself alone and cut-off from colleagues because of the nature of one’s work, and because of the inherent racism that persists in many universities” (1046-1047). Vásquez acknowledges the difficulty involved in arriving at a balance that would lead to effective merging of identities and languages, especially when the academic experiences a lack of connection with fellow colleagues and a lack of academic community identification.

Universities can help students develop a sense of autonomy, a sense of self-awareness and self-efficacy, through validating their cultural and language background, such validation can yield a strong sense of identity in Latina/os. In addition to autonomy, the significant role of having a sense of purpose is highlighted in “Navigating Between Two Worlds: The Labyrinth of Chicana Intellectual Production in the Academy” by Denise A. Segura where she seeks to discover strategies Chicana academics employ in order to effectively negotiate academia. Although Segura does not specifically identify sense of purpose as a resilient trait in her participants, it is evident that her participants were able to identify the strategies that helped them negotiate their multiple identities because they had a clear sense of purpose and autonomy in academia. Segura points out

“the academic environment provides few examples of successful and competent women of color receiving respect and recognition from their institutions, their departments, their peers, and their students” (31). As revealed in Chapter 3, having few examples of successful Latina/os in the academy inhibits a sense of belonging for other Latina/os. When academics of color are unable to identify with others who share a similar background, their sense of purpose in the academy may be jeopardized. Segura states that the Chicanas in her study had a positive mindset about academia, especially concerning their sense of purpose, which helped them negotiate multiple identities. Segura argues:

they entered the academy with a multidimensional mission: to challenge hegemonic discourse in their respective disciplines, articulate the needs of their diverse communities, mindful of the danger of false representation, serve as role models for members of historically disenfranchised groups, and to contest racially gendered limitations imposed on their communities (47).

Because Segura’s participants were motivated to challenge hegemonic discourse, they needed to bring together their experiences and perspectives as Latina/os and their academic skills in order to successfully merge their identities in academia. Their clear sense of purpose helped them identify strategies that would help them conceptualize their mission. One of the strategies her participants enact to reconcile their Chicana and academic identity is to consciously write in a way that pushes boundaries: “as marginal members of mainstream departments, Chicana scholars craft scholarship that expands the discourse of their disciplines and challenges definitions of scholarly value” (48). The participants’ ability to challenge boundaries and dominant, traditional academic

expectations is due to their resilient qualities. A clear sense of purpose—challenging norms—helped them develop autonomy in academia as they possessed a clear sense of identity.

Finally, another trait that helps Latina/os successfully merge identities in academia is problem solving ability, particularly the ability to seek support from others. According to Bernard, problem solving is a resilient trait, and one of the ways it is evident is when an individual has the ability to seek help from others in order to address challenges. As I argued in Chapter 3, support from others was crucial for my participants to achieve success in academia despite negative mentors or challenges in their lives. Similarly, in “Narratives from Latina Professors in Higher Education” Catherine Medina and Gaye Luna noted that support from others is a factor that helped their participants counter challenges in academia. Based on their interviews with three Latina faculty members, Medina and Luna found that “personal/professional experiences [they] encountered on a daily basis reflect tokenism in the academy, varying levels of support, and perceived burdens and expectations” (62). In order to counter such a negative academic environment, the Latina women interviewed looked for additional support outside the institution. The authors argue that “the guiding force for these women’s academic achievements was their reliance on and support from their mothers or another significant female figure” (62).

### Language Difference in Academic writing

One of the factors that contributes to the construction of identity is language. Pride in language and cultural background may help Latina/o academics merge identities

and languages. In “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” Gloria Anzalúda discusses the connection between identities and languages:

I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself. Until I can accept as legitimate Chicano Texas Spanish, Tex-mex, and all the other languages I speak, I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself. Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish [...] my tongue will be illegitimate. (81)

For Anzalúda, it is critical for her to take pride in her multiple language variations because they are a reflection of her experiences and multiple identities. When the dominant discourse is Standard American English and the dominant culture does not recognize language variation as legitimate, the bilingual academic experiences challenges to their pride in learning how to take pride in their language background and thus more problems developing a positive identity that includes both the academy and home community.

Academic writing complicates the identity negotiation of academics who possess knowledge of different languages. In “‘Who Are They and What Do They Have to Do With What I Want To Be?’ The Writing of Multicultural Identity and College Success Stories for First-Year Writers,” James R. Ottery argues that “an individual’s identity within the dominant, white, Western culture of the United States is re-formed by the learned language of that culture, by, not to mince words, the university discourse [...] the university discourse demands a sacrifice—a certain loss of origins, including a loss to

some degree of the mother tongue” (125). Although academic discourse does seem to demand “a loss of origins,” the larger question is how to prevent such loss through merging language difference with academic writing. Ottery tells his first-year writing students that “going to college must change who [students] are. I tell them that their desire to succeed in college must inform their identity and dictate their choices” (128). Ottery, to some degree, is correct; education changes one’s sense of identity; however, having the awareness that a change may occur is the first step in attempting to retain connections with one’s origins and language background even as one is also adopting elements of a new identity. In other words, knowledge that some change is inevitable might provide the individual with tools in order to resist absolute change by learning how to engage in a blending of identities and discourses.

In addition to pride in language background and knowledge that some change is expected, another strategy Latina/o academics may use to successfully merge identities is self-awareness of how English and Spanish function in their knowledge-making. For example, in “Toward a Mestiza Rhetoric: Gloria Anzaldúa on Composition and Postcoloniality,” Andrea Lunsford provides the transcript of an interview she conducted with Gloria Anzaldúa. One of the questions Lunsford asked focused on how writing can be liberatory, but at the same time teaching English composition can constrain, hurt, and enslave; Anzaldúa answered,

the body and the feeling parts of me come out in Spanish, and the intellectual, reasoning parts of me come out in English [...] what’s happening more and more with English is that I get the ideas in Spanish

and I get them in visuals. Like one of the ideas that I'm working with is *conocimiento*, the Spanish word for knowledge, for ways of knowing. (53)

Anzaldúa merges Spanish with academic English as she describes her thinking process. She is conscious of how her use of both Spanish and English helps her make sense of her ideas and reasoning; her consciousness of the role both languages play in her meaning-making process provides her with the opportunity to merge discourses, which enables a merged identity and vice versa.

Awareness of the risks involved in challenging dominant views in academia is another factor that can contribute to the success of faculty of color. For example, Beverley Moss states, "I am perfectly clear that my attempts to interweave public and private, personal, and theoretical, are also attempts to unlock the gates to nonacademics. I also understand the risk that I will be judged as lacking by various colleagues in the academy who place themselves in a position to judge" (168). She further articulates her reasons for taking such risks, "I find that trying to write to multiple audiences and using inclusive rather than exclusive language is much more intellectually challenging than writing to a narrowly defined group of academics in my field" (168). Similarly, bell hooks shares,

Speaking about one's personal experience or speaking with simple language is often considered by academics and/or intellectuals (irrespective of their political inclinations) to be a sign of intellectual weakness or even anti-intellectualism. Certainly I did feel that choosing to use simple language, absence of footnotes, etc. would mean I was



jeopardizing the possibility of being taken seriously in academic circles  
but then this was a political matter and a political decision. (133)

hooks and Moss are both committed to challenging dominant ideals and exposing their students to difference; their awareness of the risks and their clear sense of purpose help them achieve their objective.

In order to achieve success in academia, Latina/o academics must often find strategies that will help them negotiate their multiple identities and languages. I use the term “academic identities” to refer to ways participants describe themselves in relation to teaching, research, and service, and I use the term “Latina/o identities” to refer to the ways participants self-identify in terms of their cultural, linguistic, and social background. I am particularly interested in how Latina/o academics merge these two identities in academe. Merging these two identities is a challenge because the Latina/o academic may experience a disconnect between the dominant culture and their own background, especially in relation to values and beliefs (Castellanos, Gloria, and Kamimura). Academic and Latina/o identities are not mutually exclusive; they have varying degrees of association depending on how the academic views or defines such relationships. I argue that to effectively negotiate the differences between a Latina/o identity and an academic identity, the Latina/o academic must possess a view of difference that facilitates negotiations. The challenge in identity construction when “multiplicity of selves” exists is learning how to negotiate or interweave multiple identities. In *Toward a Mestiza Consciousness: Gloria Anzaldúa on Composition and Postcoloniality*, Andrea Lunsford states that “Anzaldúa represents herself as in constant conversation, a dialogue between her many selves” (36). In *Borderlands/La Fronter: The*

*New Mestiza*, Anzaldúa provides a vision that serves as a strategy for negotiating identities. She states,

the work of mestiza consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her prisoner and to show in the flesh through the images in her work how duality is transcended. The answer to the problem between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives, our culture, our languages, our thoughts. (102)

Although a mestiza consciousness, as Anzaldúa uses the term here, does not directly refer to Latina/o and academic identities, the concept is applicable to Latina/os in academia. One of the strategies Anzaldúa identifies as a way to cope with duality is to develop a “tolerance for ambiguity [...] she learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality [...] nothing is rejected, nothing is abandoned” (101). Plurality conveys the sense that diverse identities can merge and coexist in order to avoid abandoning certain views or values. Resilient qualities helped Latina/o academics in the current study develop a merged identity where their Latina/o and academic identity co-exist productively.

Latina/os’ ability to negotiate identities in academia is further complicated by their knowledge of diverse languages, especially within the field of Rhetoric and Composition that prioritizes academic discourse. As Bernard and Gonzalez propose, resilient traits, such as social competence, problem solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose (i.e. goals and academic objectives) help individuals persevere through

challenges and achieve academic success. I argue that resiliency provides Latina/o academics with the ability to develop strategies to merge language difference with academic writing. My analysis of interviews suggests that the participants' views of their Latina/o and academic identities contribute to their views of language difference and academic writing. I argue that in order to achieve academic success, Latina/os in academic must possess a particular vision—they must see how their Latina/o and academic identities can co-exist. A clear sense of identity, which corresponds with the resilient quality of autonomy, helped established academics in my study find the best strategies or tools to merge their identities and languages in academia.

#### Established Latina/o Academics: Language Diversity in Academic Writing

The established academics in my study shared that they experienced challenges in balancing languages due to the dominance of English in their lives and careers, but they maintained a balance among their various languages because they made the conscious choice of using Spanish or other language variations in academic writing. The established academics' awareness of the relation between their Latina/o and academic identities facilitated their research interests, theoretical lenses, and pedagogical methods. The complexity of identity construction is reflected in the participants' responses to my question about how they perceive the relationship among their multiple identities<sup>4</sup>. The established Latina/o academics possess a strong sense of having succeeded in balancing

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<sup>4</sup> Before I asked this question, however, I asked them how they self-identify; my interview protocol does not reflect this question because as I conducted my first interview, I realized the question on self-identification is important before delving into a discussion about their perceptions on the relationship between/among their academic and Latina/o identity.

their identities and languages in academia. This clear sense of merged identity helped them create spaces for language diversity in their academic writing. Although each participant possesses his or her own strategies for negotiating diverse identities and languages, there is an apparent correlation between how participants discuss identities and languages—the more connected they perceive their Latina/o and academic identities, the more facility they appear to have with merging language difference in academic writing. Problem solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose are key resilient traits that helped established academics develop a tolerance for ambiguity through strategies to balance ethnic identities and language difference in academia. These strategies include: pride in their language and cultural background, awareness of how Spanish and English help them make knowledge in academia, and connections with communities that share their language background outside of academia.

Some Latina/o academics experience difficulty in balancing their Latina/o and academic identity due to a sense of loss. In order to confront these challenges, Victor Villanueva conceives of his Latino and academic identity as one. He shared: “my Latino identity and my academic identity are the same. They are one thing, but that is a political position that has been foisted on us by the academic and American society that is que all of us had to make a claim to our particular identities; it is the very racism of our society that makes us come together as Latinos y Latinas. Given that, it is a political necessity for me to be a Latino academic.” Villanueva expresses his autonomy in his clear sense of self-identity and is self-aware of the role politics plays in his identity construction—he takes a position against racism. For Villanueva, in order to achieve success in academia, he needed to claim a Latino academic identity. When his Latino identity was challenged

by academe, his resiliency helped identify strategies for merging his identities and representing his identity in his use of language.

One of these strategies consists of developing pride in language and cultural background despite the pain associated with merging identities. Pain is a factor that some Latina/os use as motivation to retain their language background while others respond to pain by keeping their identities and languages separated. For Villanueva, he described the pain and insecurity he experienced throughout his education: “the pain and insecurity had to do with how I was raised to have a strong ego. That’s orgullo—it’s not a bad word for us [laughs]. Even though to be pride or prideful is a big deal for English. For us is a good thing; orgullo is pride and self-confidence. When people are telling you, you can’t write or you can’t read; that’s not good for the pride.” Orgullo is being self-confident about one’s culture, language, and identities amidst setbacks; orgullo is standing up for one’s cultural and language background despite challenges. Villanueva developed a sense of pride in his background due to his desire to counter negative messages—an example of his autonomy, a resilient trait. Villanueva’s pain and insecurity emerged from teachers who hurt his orgullo—teachers who believed he was unable to read and write well. He concluded, “It’s the struggle and the pride and the having to compensate for the hurting of the pride that I think leads to a kind of craziness of a career, [laughs] leads to overachieving.” Villanueva needed to defend his orgullo by demonstrating self-confidence in his writing and rhetorical choices and standing up for his varied uses of language, which contributed to his achievements. This quote illustrates Villanueva’s resiliency as he is able to move away from negative messages in order to achieve success.

A second strategy that helped Villanueva merge his identities included his self-awareness of the nuances of language, particularly how Arabic and Spanish rhetoric influence his academic work. Because Villanueva possesses a clear sense of purpose as an autonomous Latino academic, especially his objective to counter negative message in relation to his writing and language use, he was able to identify a strategy that helped him achieve success in merging discourses in academic writing. He shared,

the rhetoric of Latinos is an Arabic rhetoric and of course it would be after 700 years of colonialism of the Arabs being in Spain. This notion I have discovered (and you're hearing it now), even when I'm speaking in English [I'm] always using the rhetorics of a Spanish speaker. We have a tendency to elaborate, we have tendency to having metaphors, and we have a tendency to get off subject [laughs] or go on tangents. That's there; I can't help it be there. I'm English dominant; it's just that my rhetorics do not reflect that.

Villanueva's merged Latino academic identity is exemplified in how he views his language—English dominant with Arabic and Spanish rhetoric. Villanueva's attribution of his rhetoric to Arabic rhetoric or Spanish rhetoric illustrates his conscious use of language. In order to view Arabic rhetoric as a strength, it is first necessary to acknowledge its presence or possess the knowledge of the influence of history, language, and culture. Villanueva realized, “what I ended up doing with my own writing. You think my writing is not logical, no it's Spanish logical and that's how I'm going to write from now on [laughs].” Like the Chicana participants in Segura's study, Villanueva challenges traditional academic writing by carving a place for Spanish rhetoric in his academic

work. His sense of purpose in the academy—to create spaces for alternative rhetorics—is a resilient quality that facilitated his ability to merge languages. Furthermore, he believes his awareness of language difference contributed to his success: “my awareness that there were differences of language and teachers were less aware of those differences than what I thought served me well enough as a student, and as a writer.” Villanueva’s awareness of the nuances of language led him to develop a writing style that considers language difference in academic writing not as two distinct entities but as one. Self-awareness, as hooks argues, is a major contributor to how effectively a faculty member of color is able to succeed in academia while maintaining ties to their background. Because Villanueva possesses autonomy, he is self-aware, has a clear sense of identity, and as a consequence is willing to challenge dominant views.

The way established academics define the relationship between their Latina/o and academic identities correlates with how they define the relationship between language difference and academic writing. For example, for Juan Guerra, his Latino identity is “intimately, interwoven” with his academic identity; this relationship is one where he shifts and changes accordingly. He asserts that he “cannot escape” or does not want to escape his multiple identities, which illustrates his conscious awareness of claiming a multiplicity of identities.

I cannot escape; I will never escape; I don't want to escape this particular core identit[y]. I have multiple identities; I shift and change according to multiple circumstances. I acknowledge that in this day, at this time, in this place, if you're going to ask me what I am, I will say I am a Chicano and a Latino first and foremost, but I'm also a Mexican American; I'm a

Mexicano; I'm a Tejano; I'm a Hispanic. I'm a lot of things, but to different degrees and to different levels of allegiance. They are intimately interconnected. I have been what I am all my life and will continue to be who and what I am for the rest of my life and I don't make any apologies for it. When I wrote that, I suspected some folks were gonna say, 'you're not committed to one identity.' What I was arguing, of course, is that's part of transcultural repositioning.

Like Villanueva, Guerra also expresses his sense of autonomy as he takes control of how he chooses to self-identify. This resilient quality facilitates his decision to use transcultural repositioning as a mechanism to “shift and change” between interwoven identities. Transcultural repositioning is a term he coined to refer to “the idea that members of historically excluded groups are in a position to cultivate adaptive strategies that help them move across cultural boundaries by negotiating new and different contexts and communicative conventions” (Guerra 299). The metaphor of “interweaving” identities and languages illustrates the act of transcultural repositioning; the strategy allows him to weave “in and out” of various discourse communities simultaneously through conscious decision-making based on the situation.

Guerra learned to make these shifts due to his contact with people from various backgrounds, and his social competence and sense of purpose helped him see these shifts as positive. Particularly, his communication skills and cultural flexibility enhanced his transcultural repositioning strategy. As Vasquez noted, balancing an academic and Latina/o identity is not easy; Guerra corroborates this challenge when he describes the



difficulty he experienced in balancing his Latino and academic identity when conducting a study within a Mexican community in Chicago:

Although my familiarity with the cultural practices of Mexicanos and my facility with the Spanish language had not diminished enough over the years to interfere with my attempts to interact with Jaime's social network, I did often find myself struggling when I had to make the transition between the communities where I spent most of my time—the university and the suburban-like setting of Oak Park—and the communities—both the Chicago site and the villages in Mexico—that Jaime and members of his social network called home (152).

As implied by Vasquez and Medina and Luna in their respective studies, Latina/o academics' interaction with communities and colleagues who share their language background makes the balancing in academia easier to accomplish. Guerra's cultural flexibility led him to develop an effective strategy to interact with different groups. The success of his strategy is evident in how the members of the community reacted to his presence: "the ease with which they accepted me was unlike any I had known in most other settings in which I had lived or worked before" (152). The rhetorical tool of transcultural repositioning is especially relevant in this example. The fact that the members of the Chicago Mexican community accepted him illustrates Guerra's successful shift of identities. His ability to engage in the community allowed him to not only connect with the members of the Mexican community in Chicago but also utilize his experience to write a scholarly article. Like Moss and hooks, Guerra also desires to connect with people outside of academe in order to validate their communicative

conventions as valuable knowledge in the academy. Guerra's resilience is a factor that facilitated the act of balancing identities through transcultural repositioning.

As argued by Gonzalez and Vasquez, an academic environment where difference is recognized helps Latina/o academics more readily identify strategies that will assist them in balancing their multiple identities and languages. The main factor that helps Diana Cárdenas, Associate Professor at Texas A & M University Corpus Christi, see her academic and Latina identity as merged is the university where she currently works—a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) that welcomes multiple identities and languages. She reflected, “the identity of the professor is becoming more diverse; my identity as an academic is more diverse because, just as we want different viewpoints in the classroom, we need at a university [with] different world views, nations, cultures, languages [...] my identity as somebody of the academy and my personal identity, they merge well at this particular university, Hispanic Serving, at this particular time.” Diverse worldviews in the university facilitate the acceptance of the interconnected nature of personal identities and academic identities. Cárdenas further explores her merged identities in “Creating an Identity: Personal, Academic, and Civic Literacies.” She described, “I am an ‘English teacher of Hispanic descent’ and an American citizen. At this point in time, at this particular university, all students will gain from identifying me as such” (124). It is important to accentuate that Cárdenas is conscious of how her university encourages the interrelation between her diverse identities. In a different university context, perhaps in a predominately white institution, the merging of identities might present more challenges. As Vasquez notes, a lack of connection with colleagues or institutions who understand the Latina/os’ research interests related to cultural identity makes the balancing of

identities more difficult. This is a reality that Stanley further supports in her study with faculty of color in predominantly white universities; the faculty of color must constantly educate white faculty about not only the challenges involved in balancing identities but also the exigence of their research interests.

For the established Latina/o academics, seeing their multiple identities as one, shifting, or merging, respectively, were strategies they used to negotiate language difference in academic writing. Cárdenas demonstrates a sense of autonomy through her awareness of the factors that contributed to her language duality. Her resilient qualities helped her identify ways she could maintain ties to Spanish despite the focus on English in her profession. Like her merged academic/Latina identity influenced by her academic community, Cárdenas also sees Spanish and academic writing as merged. She reflected, “I’m bilingual. I write [and] read in both languages, although I think many of us who are in the profession tend to leave Spanish a little bit because we’re so focused on being the best we can; the home language gets used less.” Cárdenas describes the academic reality that in order to be “the best we can,” it is expected that any language other than Academic English might be used less. In order to counteract the pressure to use English more, Cárdenas made a conscious decision to continue to use Spanish. One of the contributing factors that helped her make this decision is her work environment: “I feel comfortable speaking both. This is a nurturing environment because we have history professors who are Spanish speakers, political science professors who are fluent in Spanish, and we have Spanish professors. Our conversations are very diverse. We have a Chinese professor, none of us speak Chinese, but we’re pleased that she’s here because it’s good for the students.” Because faculty at the university where Cárdenas works value

language difference, Cárdenas feels comfortable in her Spanish interactions with other professors. This support from others helps her maintain ties to Spanish and merge identities.

Another factor that helps Cárdenas merge identities and languages is her cultural flexibility through her continued connection to her neighborhood environment. In addition to Cárdenas' continued use of Spanish within her work environment, she reflected, "I maintain this duality because I stay close to where I grew up and because some of my students come from those neighborhoods. It's a challenge to get here, I imagine. Plus, I go back to all the bakeries I grew up with and all the restaurants [smiles]." Cárdenas' desire to stay connected to these environments motivates her to continue to be bilingual despite the emphasis placed on English in her profession. She further reflected on why language duality is particularly important to her Latina/academic identity:

my own language, which is very much alive with me, carries all the cultural values; the honor for traditions, that's part of what influences my identity as a person in the academy. My home language gives me a sense of my values, traditions, and appreciation for certain things—appreciation for education [...] There is where I see a lot of my identity, my language identity, and I like the sound of my home language.

Cárdenas maintains strong ties to her cultural and linguistic background. Her neighborhood and the university community were the primary factors that helped her maintain ties to Spanish despite the dominance of English inherent in her profession.

As with previous established participants, Caridad's strategies in negotiating diverse languages as an academic reveal a close connection to how she views her Latina/academic identity. Autonomy in a strong sense of identity can lead toward effective balancing of identities and languages in academia because it represents a sense of ownership of how one's background influences one's academic work. Caridad describes, "I think we're never wholly one thing or another; it's sort of fluid [...] So, I definitely identify as Latina, both on the job, off the job, everywhere." Caridad's view of her identity as fluid is closely related to how she decided to incorporate language difference in her writing. She identifies Ernest Hemingway as an author who influenced her decision to attempt to incorporate Spanish into her writing. The fact that Caridad names an iconic American author and not a bilingual author as influencing her work is a representation of the dominance of more traditional authors in her graduate education. She reflected,

I try to write English in a way that is not standard so it sounds like the characters are thinking or speaking in Spanish. In the way that Hemingway did in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*; I thought, wow. He wrote English and represented it so it reminded you or sounded like Spanish and I thought that's the way it should be done. You're [reading] it, you're going, 'oh, these characters are not English speakers.' That's what I wanted to do; I wanted to write English so you could tell that the characters were not thinking in English and were not speaking in English. I did that first; when I was able to [get] that down [laughs] then, I started to take liberties with my academic writing. More often than not, it was

when I was writing personal essays or cross genre essays where I felt I could be more free and it was more informal.

Hemingway's use of language influenced Caridad's ability to reconcile using Spanish in her creative writing first; most importantly, she was able to reconcile English and Spanish as fluid languages in her writing. She was also able to incorporate Spanish in her academic work, but mostly in personal essays and cross-genre, which illustrates that certain genres are more receptive to language fluidity than traditional academic writing. Failure to recognize language fluidity in academic works illustrates the English-only, monolingualist limitations in academic writing that Horner, NeCamp, Donhue discuss.

Caridad's ability to reconcile her use of multiple languages illustrates that awareness of her identity as both Latina and academic helped her identify a writing style that reflected fluidity among Spanish and English. As a writer, Caridad experienced an initial difficulty incorporating Spanish into her creative and academic writing, but inspired by Hemingway's writing, she learned to merge English and Spanish. Caridad's awareness of her identities as fluid helped her enact fluidity of languages in her writing. She explained, "in writing academic work there was really no opening to using Spanish [...] in my creative writing first I reconciled that Spanish was not a foreign language. Spanish was a language that was spoken at home and in my community and guess what, the United States is the fifth largest Spanish-speaking country in the world. I stopped italicizing the Spanish in my language." Caridad's recognition that for her, Spanish is not a foreign language and that Spanish is *her* language allowed her to make a conscious decision to use Spanish in her creative writing. Once she "owned" Spanish as her language in creative writing, she desired to also "own" it as part of her academic identity.

The act of italicizing a word or words in another language marks the language as different. When a word is used in Spanish, the author usually uses it to convey a rhetorically specific message in the context of the situation. Caridad's conscious decision to stop italicizing Spanish in her writing signaled her awareness that Spanish deserves a place in her writing without the marker of difference. Most importantly, Caridad's decision not to italicize Spanish represents her idea of fluid identities—Spanish flowing along side English in the same sentence. Caridad's strategy not only illustrates her clear sense of identity, but also her tolerance for ambiguity that Anzaldúa identifies as a strategy to foster the successful co-existence of languages and identities.

These established academics found ways to connect or reconnect with Spanish despite the dominance of English in their professional lives in order to create an academic identity that remained close to their language background. Their ability to merge Spanish and English in academic writing reflects not only their rhetorical awareness of the effect of these strategies but also the intricate interconnection between their academic identity and language experiences. Resilient qualities, such as autonomy, social competence, and sense of purpose, help them identify strategies to negotiate language difference in academic writing that reflect their identity as Latina/o academics. For example, the established academics' clear sense of an academic-Latina/o identity, whether unified, shifting, or merged, affects how they use language difference in their academic writing and how they talk about that language. One of their purposes as Latina/os in academia is to work toward change in academic discourse through enacting language diversity in their own academic work and pedagogy.

New Latina/o Academics: Language Diversity in Academic Writing

For the new Latina/o academics in this study, a clear sense of their identities did not always translate into a clear sense of strategies to merge language difference in academic writing. Like established academics, the new academics in my study believe their Latina/o identities positively influence their academic identities, particularly in regards to research interests, theoretical perspectives, and pedagogy. However, some participants express a sense of loss of their home identities because an academic culture and discourse seem to demand an erasure or distancing from their cultural identity and home language. This sense of loss creates challenges for the Latina/o academic in attempting to balance their academic and Latina/o identities. While established academics were able to identify specific strategies they utilize to negotiate language difference in academic writing, new academics, to varying degrees, appear to struggle to identify strategies that will help them find a place for language difference in academic writing. However, I argue that this struggle or challenge is not negative but rather an illustration of the new Latina/os' developing self-awareness of the values of academic writing. One of the primary factors inhibiting most of the new academics' ability to merge identities and languages is their professional status—most are graduate students. Despite their struggle and the dominance of English in their profession, the new Latina/o participants in my study continue to remain connected to their Latina/o identity and language background through their resilient traits. While the established academics appear to possess resilient qualities that align more with a sense of purpose and autonomy in academia, new academics appear to draw more heavily on problem-solving as a resilient quality, particularly help-seeking and critical and creative thinking to address challenges. Problem-solving, as a resilient trait, is a mechanism that helps the new Latina/o



academics in this study capitalize on their autonomy and sense of purpose. They understand how their research interests in Latina/o issues help them connect with their background, and they are aware of how their knowledge of Spanish or Spanglish contributes to their sense of identity in academia.

Despite the challenges new Latina/o academics in this study experienced in relation to their identities and languages, their keen interest in addressing these challenges demonstrates their commitment to developing a sense of autonomy in academia. Similar to established Latina/o academics, new academics' strong sense of purpose and clear identity helps them successfully merge identities and languages. Dre, a composition instructor, defines her Tejana and academic identity as follows: "I want to be in the academy, but I'm not going to have someone tell me what to research. I'm going to research what I want to research. I also don't want to be tokenized, like, expected to speak for this whole group through my research or focus on specific aspects of why I'm a Tejana [...] I refuse to completely abandon who I am; it's not going to happen." Dre sees herself as a Tejana—she sees her academic identity as directly connected to her background. While Dre's research interests center on Latina/o issues in higher education, she does not want to be stereotyped or forced to choose a research topic just because she is Tejana. She desires to be free to incorporate her cultural and linguistic background in her research interests if she wants to. Like the participants in Segura's study, Dre sees herself as an "agent of social change fighting for sustainable intellectual agendas" (47). The way Dre views her Tejana and academic identity is also represented in her views of language difference in academic writing. Dre understands when and how to use Spanish in academic writing demonstrates rhetorical sophistication in knowing how interweaving

languages enhances a particular argument. Dre shared, “I can adapt, even in the essay I wrote for this [conference], I put in a lot of Spanish, a lot of Spanglish because that’s me and sometimes things don’t translate. If you listen to your favorite mariachi song and it’s so beautiful; it sounds kinda funny when you translate it to English. Sometimes, you just need to have words in another language because it makes more sense.” Dre not only understands the rhetorical purpose for the use of Spanish in her academic work, but she feels confident in using Spanish despite the dominance of English in the academy. This is an example of her refusal to change her research interests or ethnic background in order to “fit” into the academy. Dre’s autonomous nature resembles the autonomy illustrated in the established academics experiences. Dre’s conscious decision to use Spanish is a characteristic that helps her take control in her research interests, thereby, facilitating the merging of her Tejana academic identity.

Alex, a doctoral student at a research one institution possesses a clear sense of how context influences his identity. Like Juan Guerra, Alex engages in shifting or changing identities depending on the context, and he seems aware and confident in enacting them. He shares the following concerning his *latinidad*, which refers to Latina/o cultural or linguistic characteristics:

Latinidad [is] rhetorical in the sense that it very much is driven by how much of your Latino identity are you going to use and how in front of, in certain Hispanics [...] I am Hispanic. I don’t use the term Hispanic very often, but I know certain audience responds to that or [...] Latino, certain audience will respond to that too. I definitely use Chicano, and it’s one of those terms associated with other concepts; I have to further parse that out

as well. Self-identification question is tough because I do find myself going between these terms very often. I definitely self-identify as Chicano; I also joke around with the use of Mestizo; my mother being White; I'm Mestizo multiple times here. I'm Chicano, but I also self-identify as half White just because I know [it's] part of [my] identity.

Alex's desire to move among various contexts and identities is a stance representative of his merged identities. Alex perceives his education as an opportunity to remain connected to his Latino roots and learn more about his heritage. He shared, "if [it] weren't [for] reading about our own culture, we would be less culturally aware; we would not engage in these discussions of cultural difference [...] with other Chicanos, Latinos about what it means to perform language variety, to engage with cultural texts, and see ourselves in [them]. Not just to read these texts to know [them] but to learn more about ourselves as we're reading." Although coursework on Latina/o identities exposed Alex to "what it means to perform language variety," Alex's enactment of such language variety in his own academic writing is complicated by conventional expectations in the profession. He shared, "for graduate students, when we're told [...] if we're going to write, we want to write to specific journals validated by universities where we're hoping to get jobs. If we're published where there's code switching between Spanish/English, are those journals acknowledged? You cross your fingers and maybe hope for [...] if you're told 'no, you're only going to write in this kind of language,' academic discourse gets more confusing." His self-questioning is an example of his problem-solving resilient quality, which leads him to become aware of how language difference is perceived in the academy. While writing in Spanglish might present challenges, Alex feels comfortable

speaking Spanglish especially with other academics and students who can identify with language difference. He shares, “I find myself, if there are other Chicano academics or Latino students, I code switch more with them. I throw things in and they’ll throw things back at me or when I’m teaching a predominantly Latino class, I’ll throw in more code switching Spanish. I think it seems normal enough for them.” Similar to Diana Cardenas’s experiences, identifying with a community that shares languages practices is a strategy that helps Latina/o academics merge identities and languages. The oral connection Alex establishes with his students not only represents his enactment of merging identities and languages in an academic context but also his drive to challenge boundaries and expose students to difference—an objective articulated by bell hooks and Beverley Moss.

As revealed by new academics, a clear sense of how their Latina/o identities strengthen their academic identities helps them connect with their background and carve out their own place in the academy. The construction of a Latina/o identity might be influenced by diverse characteristics, but language is one of the ways Esmeralda recognizes as a primary influence in the construction of her Chicana identity. Esmeralda reflected,

Certain people use different ways of making themselves close to [their Latina/o identity] whether it is their culture, family, or heritage and bringing that into an academic space [...] some people say, ‘hey, if you don’t speak Spanish, you’re not really Chicana or Latina.’ But, I think there are different ways to consider yourself close to a Latina identity; for me, it has been language. Yes, an oral tradition, with food, dance [...]

these things influence, but [...] my identity as a Latina, Chicana identity; language has been what I use to tie myself to that. I let it influence me. I want to make that connection. I don't know if the connection is natural, but it's just a personal choice for me [...] I make it an issue; it's a decision I take.

Esmeralda's knowledge of how she chooses to identify herself and the factors, which contribute to the construction of her identity is a representation of her clear sense of autonomy. Her self-awareness is a resilient trait that helps her remain connected to her background while in academia. Esmeralda demonstrates a clear sense of purpose when she describes how her Chicana identity “influence[s] what I do in my research; it influence[s] my interests, my lens, how I view theory; it influences how I approach my studies or how I approach choosing Ph.D. programs. Do we have a strong Chicano presence or am I going to be a loner on the outside kinda looking in and saying ‘I'm here, I'm here.’ I think that has definitely influenced academic choices.” Because Esmeralda is self-aware about how her Chicana identity influences her research interests, she is able to deliberately let her Chicana identity and language influence her work.

While the new Latina/o academics interviewed here possess self-awareness, autonomy, in how their Latina/o identities and home languages influence their work, their stories also demonstrate a sense of struggle in balancing languages in academia. The challenge leads them to draw on their problem-solving resilient trait. For example, Esmeralda's relationship with Spanish when she writes in English is intriguing—she makes the conscious choice to allow Spanish to influence her work in English. She shares, “my bilingual background has helped rather than hindered me [...] I think about

what I'd say in Spanish, more vivid or more to the point. I find it helps my writing [...] than if I tried to [...] imitate academic language. If I stick with what's comfortable—Spanish, it's my home, it's my first language—and think about [Spanish] as I'm writing in English, it's more engaging and I find it in the comments I received.” As Esmeralda writes, she thinks in Spanish, which is comfortable and familiar to her, and writes in English—a process that helps her compose rather than imitate academic language. The difference between composing and imitating is that composing facilitates the writers' meaningful engagement with his or her work while imitating might distance the writer from their background in an attempt to join an academic discourse community. Esmeralda shared that if she uses Spanish in her writing, her decision is based on critical thinking, a characteristic of resiliency:

When I'm writing in Spanish, it has to be a conscious decision. I have to decide who is reading and are they going to understand [...] On my thesis, I get encouragement from my director who says [...] if you feel it's better in Spanish or that word has more meaning or resonance. In the back of my mind, I'm thinking but I have two other people on my committee and they don't speak Spanish; am I going to have to translate it and do I want to do that? I wish I could do what Anzaldúa [did], but I'm not Anzaldúa. I'm just a master's student; I don't know if it would be acceptable for me to do that. Do I want to? Yeah, you meet me half way. I have to think about it.

While Esmeralda is conscious of her academic audience for her master's thesis, she also questions whether or not she would like to translate the Spanish she incorporates.

Although Anzaldúa influences her academic writing, she also recognizes her current

position as a graduate student and questions whether such language choices would be acceptable to her committee members. Esmeralda's ability to think about audience when deciding on language use demonstrates her rhetorical sophistication. Through problem solving, Esmeralda learned to merge Spanish and English in her academic writing in a more subtle way; she makes a conscious decision to think in Spanish while she writes academically in English.

The challenge new Latina/o academics experience in merging identities and languages in an academic context does not indicate their inability to do so. In fact, their struggles represent their strong sense of autonomy—their consciousness of their identity and their awareness of how language works in the academy. For example, Ana reflects,

I definitely see [my Latina and academic identities] as a distinction. Although my Latina identity affects my academic identity [through] my research interests, I'm marked as a Latina [...] I have research interests that have to do with my cultural background; I bring that into my scholarship. The questions I have, I look at [them] from my cultural background and the perspective of maybe Mexican American; I'm looking at it through that lens and some of the questions or comments I might have stem from that.

Ana's awareness of how her cultural background influences her scholarship is a reflection of her intent to try to reconcile both identities. Although Ana believes her Latina identity is helping her academic pursuits, seeing these two identities as separate might inhibit her from merging them and the languages associated with them. However, this challenge helps her become rhetorically aware of the dominant, hegemonic ideals in academia. Ana shares,

the initial reaction to my academic identity affecting my Latina identity...is negative because academic identity is [...] the process of professionalization, becoming proficient in mastering English, especially being a BA in English all the way through now a Ph.D. in English. It's a move away from Spanish and other languages; I never even considered any indigenous languages. My academic identity has affected my Latina identity in the sense that for me it has introduced this great gulf, and it's a distancing away from my Latina identity in relation to language and what is emphasized in the academic context, which is a major part of my life and work.

Because English is the dominant language in her work, Ana experiences a "great gulf" between her background and what she is required to accomplish as an academic. This "great gulf" is driven by an academic community that lacks tolerance for languages other than English as argued by Horner and Trimbur in their noted article "English Only and U.S. College Composition." Latina/o academics possess larger awareness of rhetorical strategies used in diverse contexts where languages other than English are used, but due to language hegemony in Rhetoric and Composition, they are unable to demonstrate this knowledge, especially when new academics attempt to learn the conventions of academic writing in order to succeed.

Ana further explores the root cause of the distance she feels between her Latina and academic identity. She reflected, "there is that hesitancy to use Spanish or incorporate it because it's not conventional and also my position as a graduate student. I need to work on mastering conventional academic writing before I can have the license to



experiment. I would like to bring in more of the Spanish in that sense, but I'm not there yet." Ana acknowledges the tension between learning the conventions of successful academic writing and incorporating Spanglish or Spanish into her academic writing. While she recognizes that her identity as a Latina helps her identify research interests or perspectives, she has not yet identified strategies that will facilitate her inclusion of language difference in academic writing. This is not necessarily negative, as questioning demonstrates awareness of not only the challenges in merging languages but also her position as a graduate student. Because the field of Rhetoric and Composition is English dominant and monolingual (Horner, NeCamp, and Donahoue), Ana desires to master writing academic discourse first before attempting to incorporate language difference. Although it might seem like Ana might feel oppressed by this decision, she is very conscious of her decision to focus on academic English, which demonstrates her resilient qualities, especially her sense of autonomy.

The more difficult it is for new academics to discover the benefits of their Latina/o identities in academia, the more challenges they may experience in negotiating language difference and academic writing. While Ana perceives that education created a gulf between her Latina and academic identity, Rei believes her education helped her claim her Mexicana identity. Rei reflects,

I call myself Latina. I call myself Mexican American; my grandparents were from Mexico. My identity [...] I feel like when I go to Mexico I don't fit there. I go to the people on the West side. If I have an invisible ladder to heaven, we are all on a different step. I am a Mexicana but there are a lot of Mexicanos down here; there are a lot of Mexicanos above me;

I am somewhere there. It's the education. My mother said education changed me. My identity here is that I have improved my identity as a Mexicana because of my education.

Rei views education as a source that helped her rise from her low socioeconomic background—she views education as a positive outcome that allowed her to enhance her Latina background. At the same time, education separated her from her friends and family within her home community. She does not feel she belongs on either side.

Established and new academics might work in similar social locations, such as Rei and Cárdenas who work at an HSI, but their experiences differ due to their professional position and degree of autonomy, particularly their ability to claim multiple identities.

For example, Cárdenas, who is an established academic, sees her identities as interconnected whereas Rei experiences a distinction between her multiple selves. She sees herself as being “in the middle” of her home and academic identity and she wants to establish a sense of merged, duality.

Rei's idea of being “in the middle” is further illustrated in how she talks about her language background. She shared, “in school, sometimes, I do not think [my bilingual abilities are] an advantage because my vocabulary is not as good as others. I'm talking about Whites or even other Hispanics. I think my vocabulary was kinda limited because of my environment I grew up [in].” Rei views her language as abilities a weakness in her pursuit of an advanced degree in English, but she possesses knowledge of the variations in two languages—a rhetorical strength that she does not yet recognize. Rei emphasizes the importance of learning how to write academically, which reflects her awareness of what is valued in academia. Rei shared, “[professors] tell me that [...] I write this way

because English is my second language.” When I asked Rei what professors mean by saying she “writes this way,” she responded, “I’m writing like I speak [in] academic writing. I’m trying to change that. I want to write academic[ally]. I’m writing like I speak, and when you speak, look at me—body, hands, facial [expression]—you can’t put [this] in paper. I think that’s where my weakness in writing is [laughs]. You see my body language; I have a lot of that. When I’m writing, I can’t [write my] body language.” The way Rei discusses her experiences with academic writing illustrates her feeling that she is “in the middle.” Although Rei valorizes her animated use of body language, the dominance of Standard English in academia and the failure of institutions to value the strengths in spoken language leads Rei toward focusing on learning how to write academically in English first rather than merging academic English and other languages. This objective is illustrated in the following example:

[the] first paper was about a need your department needed; I came to my Dean and said, we need money to pay for our adjuncts at the offsite outreach [...] I submitted the paper to my class as a final project. I made a B, and a B was okay for the first time. I presented it to the president of the university; I was asking for \$72, 856.15. I got that whole money; the following September I got the money again. This money that we were not getting, we started to get. Since then, we get the money every year; it is an agreement. I started to feel confident because look at what I did.

This example illustrates how Rei increased her confidence in academic writing, specifically because she learned that her writing had a positive effect in an institution of higher education. This project helped Rei bring a personal interest, affirming the identity

she brings into the academy. While it is important for academic writing in English to permit the use of languages other than English, it is also important to mention that validating personal investment in academic writing might be another way of affirming merging identities. Rei's view of "being in the middle" and Ana's experience of a "great gulf" illustrate the struggles new Latina/os experience in merging identities.

Although the new academics struggled, due to their position as graduate students, in their attempt to discover strategies that would help them balance identities in academia, they all relied on their resilient characteristics such as problem solving in order to develop a sense of purpose and autonomy in academia. Despite the new Latina/o academics' struggle to discover ways to merge languages in academia, they all, to varying degrees, demonstrate a desire to develop a clear sense of purpose and autonomy in academe through their conscious decisions to let their Latina/o background influence their work. Believing that their Latina/o identity positively contributes to their research interests and theoretical lenses helped them counter challenges and struggles in their attempt to merge identities. As I noted earlier, the struggle to merge language difference and academic writing is not negative; rather, the challenge illustrates the new Latina/o academics' awareness of both how to manage academia and how to address the problems that continue to exist in academia concerning language hegemony. Most importantly, regardless of the struggles new Latina/o academics face in academia, they have managed to remain connected to their Latina/o and language heritage and based on their resilient qualities, they are likely to continue to do so.

### Conclusion

The benefits of merging language difference in academic writing include the following: helping minority academics integrate their cultural and academic identities, expanding knowledge making in academe, and exposing knowledge to a larger audience. Furthermore, allowing language difference in academic writing benefits the academy and the field of Rhetoric and Composition by expanding everyone's understanding of language and rhetoric—one of the primary objectives of study in the field. All academics would have a better understanding of the rhetorical strategies used in other languages and how multilingual academics make knowledge in other languages and/or in combination with English. Particularly, merging of discourses facilitates Latina/o academics' sense of belonging within academia while allowing them to retain ties to their home and community languages. In order to address the disparities between the values of academic discourse and language difference, Donahue, NeCamp, and Horner argue for “a new model of multilingualism—not just in the classroom but in our scholarship as well” (271). The authors' claims encourage academics and academic journals to broaden their views of traditional academic writing by welcoming scholarship and research in languages other than English. This call to action would benefit all academics as such scholarship would expose them to different kinds of language use; most importantly, as revealed in my study, Latina/o academics would more readily develop a sense of identification with the academy as their languages would be validated in an academic, professional setting. Donahue, NeCamp, and Horner argue that “the dominance of composition scholarship by English monolingualism is manifested not simply in the language(s) of the scholarship produced but the language(s) of scholarship cited, the bibliographic resources on which composition scholars rely, the forums in which the

scholarship circulates, and the arguments it makes” (272). The main reason for moving beyond English-only in academia is articulated by Victor Villanueva in ““Memoria Is a Friend of Ours: On the Discourse of Color” where he describes how the discourse of the academy needs to reflect his sense of self in its multiple forms. He argues, “memory simply cannot be adequately portrayed in the conventional discourse of the academy” (12). He continued,

I'm trying to figure this out, somehow: who I am, from where, playing out the mixes within. It isn't a question for me, whether public or private discourses. I am contradictory consciousness. The discourse should reflect that. I am these uneasy mixes of races that make for no race at all yet find themselves victim to racism. The discourse should reflect that [...]  
Personal discourse, the narrative, the auto/biography, helps in that effort, is a necessary adjunct to the academic. Looking back, we look ahead, and giving ourselves up to the looking back and the looking ahead, knowing the self, and, critically, knowing the self in relation to others, maybe we can be an instrument whereby students can hear the call. (17)

When language and cultural differences directly influence how academics make knowledge and see themselves in academia, it is important for the discourse to reflect these ways of constructing knowledge.

Patricia Bizzell supports this argument in “The Intellectual Work of ‘Mixed’ Forms of Academic Discourses,” where she notes that,

the academic community is changing [...] and becoming more diverse—more people of color, more women, more people from the lower social

classes, more people whose native language is not English or not the so-called Standard English (not all of these groups are mutually exclusive). Gaining access for these diverse groups has certainly not been easy, of course, and as they brought with them diverse discourses from their various home communities, gaining acceptances for these discourses, too, is an ongoing struggle. (2)

The negotiations minority academics must engage in among their multiple discourses and identities has the potential of changing the way knowledge is made in the field as well as expanding the ways an individual gains acceptance in academia. According to Bizzell, “previously nonacademic discourses are blending with traditional academic discourses to form the new ‘mixed’ forms [...] they combined elements of traditional academic discourse with elements of other ways of using language, admitting, personal experience as evidence [...] employing cultural allusions or language variants that do not match the cultural capital of the dominant white male group” (2). When the academic mixes academic discourse and other discourses, he or she not only merges identities but also enhances knowledge making by considering alternative ways of knowing, language use, and rhetorical strategies. Bizzell argues that “these new, alternative or mixed discourse forms [...] allows their practitioners to do intellectual work in ways they could not if confined to traditional academic discourse [...] these new discourses enable scholarship to take account of new variables, to explore new methods, and to communicate findings in new venues, including broader reading publics than the academic” (3). If the academic discourse community allows for the presence of merged discourses, underrepresented academics might reach a wider audience, which will ultimately, positively influence the

academic community and vice versa. Arguably, academic discourse does not provide the facility to represent the multiple and complex experiences of Latina/o academics. As hooks and Moss argue, the use of the personal or simple language often conveys anti-intellectualism among some academics. But because the use of the personal or simple language has the potential to reach a wider audience, Moss and hooks note that they make a conscious decision to use non-dominant languages in their writing.

Although Bizzell argues there is more acceptance of merging alternative discourses with academic discourse, one of the major challenges in merging languages is learning how to engage in such interconnections, especially when there is pressure to gain acceptance within the academy by demonstrating facility with academic discourse.

Yancey argues the following in regards to writing Standard American English:

to write in this language is to reproduce the professional culture of philosophy, to perpetuate lines of power, and to show that you have been ‘properly’ educated and worthy of hire [...] to engage in this discourse is to *perform* linguistically before an audience of gatekeepers who probably fear too much fat in their discourse, too much play, too much signifying, too much indirection, too much ambiguity, too much vagueness, too much concrete, everyday reality. (276)

Yancey speaks of a performance in language that proves the academics’ capability of writing academically; however, as Yancey argues, academic writing might not always accurately reflect the academics’ experiences, knowledge, identities, and I would also claim, their rhetorical moves. In order for Latina/os in academia to identify the benefits of non-standard languages, they must develop an awareness of the strategies they enact to



negotiate their multiple identities and languages in academia. Most importantly, they must become aware of how their resilient qualities—social competence, problem-solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose—might lead them toward discovering strategies to merge identities and languages. Being aware of their resilient traits can help them feel capable of facing the challenges they might face in academia productively. The challenge lies in how multilingual people can achieve this level of awareness if they are in classes or programs where language difference is ignored or devalued and resilient qualities are not fostered in the classroom.

## Chapter 5

### INCREASING LATINA/O SUCCESS IN ACADEMIA

My study aimed to identify how Latina/o academics in Rhetoric and Composition successfully merge identities and languages in academia. Although many scholars argue for the benefit of validating language difference in academia, Latina/o academics continue to struggle to balance their knowledge of language difference in the academy with the need to meet traditional expectations. “The Students’ Rights to Their Own Language” resolution was presented to the Conference on College Composition and Communication’s Executive Committee in 1972 in order to conserve variations of English and languages in the U.S. The resolution came out of the Civil Rights Movement and, unfortunately, was received with mixed and conflicting reviews. According to Geneva Smitherman, some argued that the resolution “doom[ed] speakers of ‘divergent’ dialects to failure in higher education by telling them that their stigmatized language was acceptable” (24). This viewpoint continues to be prevalent today, but it is important to realize we are not “dooming” our students to failure by accepting their home language. In “Rethinking Language and Culture on the Institutional Borderland” Virginia Crisco’s studied a basic writing class primarily composed of Mexican American students in a California State University. Many of these students felt trapped in the middle of languages and cultures. Crisco notes the need to listen to our students’ voices, take action in response to the institution’s and program’s view of a multilingual composition classroom, and “find value in cultural and linguistic diversity” (60). Crisco states “[I]f we do not confront the institutional structures that privilege white, English-speaking teachers and students, we will not be able to move forward in our field’s desire for welcoming,

addressing the needs of, and working toward equality for students of color in college writing classrooms” (41). Once we acknowledge and understand that privilege exists in our classrooms and institutions, we can then learn how to value “students’ experiences within the institutional contexts of language regulation and acculturation” (57). Students do not have to think of their own language as “incorrect” in order to succeed in academic writing.

As revealed in my study, the established and new Latina/o academics view their linguistic agilities as a resource, primarily due to mentors, programs, and institutions that encouraged them to embrace both their home language and the language of the academy. Due to their resilient qualities, the participants in my study became conscious of the conflict they experienced between English and Spanish, which led them to identify strategies that helped them negotiate languages and identities in their academic work. Although resiliency is an individual characteristic, institutions can nurture students’ resiliency through academic communities, mentors, and pedagogy that validate students’ cultural and linguistic difference. We should foster our students’ resilient qualities by helping them develop a sense of autonomy and sense of purpose through encouraging self-awareness of their and others’ rhetorical agilities in different languages or dialects. A multilingual institution should not desire to acculturate their students into institutional and academic writing norms, but rather design spaces where all students can succeed in academic writing while drawing on their cultural and language strengths.

Academic Communities: Validating Difference in Academia

Based on my findings in Chapter Two, all participants had a home community that valued their knowledge of language difference. Their home community helped the Latina/o participants in this study become self-aware of the conflict between English and Spanish, and this awareness facilitated their ability to identify strategies to address the conflict without devaluing their heritage language. In order to respond to the needs of Latina/os in academia, the institution should incorporate a sense of community in academia that parallels the cultural and linguistic values encountered in a home community. Institutions need to establish an academic community support system for Latina/os and non-Latina/os—a university-wide system that genuinely welcomes and understands cultural and linguistic difference beyond a university’s desire for “diversity.” Most importantly, an academic community, similar to the participants’ home community, should help Latina/os become aware of the conflict between their two languages and/or dialects in order to further facilitate their ability to identify resilient strategies to help them cope with challenges concerning language in academia. As previous research outlines, academic community programs should provide a space where language and cultural difference are welcomed and where Latina/os can articulate their experiences with others who share similar backgrounds (Ek, et. al., Diggs, et.al.). In “Creating Successful Opportunities for Latinos/as in Academia,” Emilio Rendón argues that “Latino/as must form a community of learners, teaching one another not merely to get what we want professionally but to want what is worth having” (75-76). A support system within the Latina/o community is certainly imperative for their academic success as they can develop a sense of identification and support. While current research on Latina/o mentorship focuses on the benefits of a shared academic community space for

Latina/os, scholars fail to take into account the negative consequences that may arise from producing isolated academic community support groups. The larger question is how such community bonding spaces can become a part of the mainstream academic context rather than isolated spaces. Trust is important in establishing a sense of community—trust that one can use language or share experiences that are welcomed and understood. When Latina/o academic groups become isolated spaces, it is an indication that individuals might sense a lack of trust and a lack of belonging in the mainstream. An academic community composed of Latina/os and non-Latina/os that value the research of their colleagues and who are mutually willing to contribute to each other's areas of study also helps Latina/os develop a sense of identification in academia.

When institutions create spaces where Latina/o academics feel comfortable speaking and writing in their heritage language without fear of negative criticism, they develop a sense of belonging in academia that often times may parallel a home community atmosphere. Ana articulates the benefits of bringing language difference acceptance to the forefront: “All across the level from institutional, department, down to faculty. As a person of color, as a Chicana, Mexican American female, I would like to see [language difference] play a larger role in the future. I understand it's a gradual process, but it is extremely important and I would like to close that distance a little bit.” Ana explained her desire to close the distance between academic discourse and language difference in academia. Because Rhetoric and Composition focuses on effective use of language in response to audience, purpose, and context, there is a particular exigence for this field to embrace language difference as a way to expose students and faculty to a variety of rhetorical and linguistic contexts. If universities, through activities, programs,

and curricula, conveyed the benefits of language and cultural difference in academia, Latina/os would be more likely to develop a sense of belonging within the academic context, and non-Latina/os would have a better understanding of difference in academia.

### Mentors: Responding to Language and Cultural Difference

Throughout my study, I have argued that institutions of higher education should create spaces where language and cultural difference are viewed as active contributors of knowledge, particularly as it relates to the Latina/o population in academia. In Chapter Three, I found that in order for Latina/os to succeed in academia, they must have mentors who support and embrace their knowledge of language difference. Because my research study reveals that mentors who value language difference help cultivate Latina/os' resilient qualities, institutions of higher education can further respond to this finding by training all faculty to view Latina/o students' language difference as an asset in the classroom and as ways to enrich knowledge-making in academia. In “‘Mentor, May I Mother?’” Catherine Gabor, Stacia Dunn Neeley, and Carrie Shively Leverenz argue that “‘although mentoring can be motivated by altruism, the mentoring we received and now attempt to give is also motivated by the larger goal of changing institutional norms. Research has shown that those who have been mentored well are more likely to mentor others (Chandler); mentoring with the goal of changing the academy thus increases the potential to change exponentially” (100). Although the authors in this piece discuss a different issue of concern in academia, women with babies in the academy, there is a connection to my argument on mentorship and Latina/o students. For the institutions and teachers to welcome diverse languages and cultural views as active contributors of knowledge in academia, there is a need to *change institutional norms*. One of the venues

for achieving institutional change is through mentors who support and understand the benefits of difference in the academy. Institutions of higher education should implement programs where all faculty and graduate students are exposed to mentoring and pedagogical practices that support difference and aim to challenge and change institutional expectations.

One of the ways academic institutions and programs can value language difference is through the presence of mentors who understand the importance of difference for the benefit of the institution and all students. In the “Webs of Mentoring in Graduate School,” Jennifer Clary-Lemon and Duane Roen argue that mentors in academia are essential “especially to female junior scholars or junior scholars of color” (178). The authors note that mentoring practices need to change by viewing “mentoring as a scholarly activity, rather than service to the profession” (179). In order to enrich mentoring strategies for Latina/o students, mentoring must be recognized as scholarly work in higher education. Providing incentives, such as tenure recognition, for professors may provide them with the motivation to attend workshops aimed at increasing mentoring effectiveness. Additionally, in order to achieve institutional change regarding the mentoring of Latina/o students, institutions of higher education must create positions that acknowledge Latina/o studies or language difference in English composition as legitimate areas of study. More qualified, diverse faculty are needed in higher education in order to address Clary-Lemon and Roen’s argument for the need to “diversify mentoring experiences, encouraging cross-gender, cross discipline, cross-race, cross-sexuality, cross-ability mentoring” (190). The diversification of mentoring experiences is key, but in order for such cross-race and cross-language mentorship to be successful or

productive, the mentor and mentee must view such mentorship as beneficial and both must support difference.

New faculty and graduate programs should aim to expose all faculty and graduate students to mentoring strategies beneficial to diverse students. Okawa states that Villanueva and Smitherman,

serve as examples for mentoring across groups; they not only cultivate intraethnic, intracultural, and same gendered relationships, but also encourage cross-ethnic, cross cultural, cross-class associations. In contrast to a generic mentoring of students into an assumed homogenous academic culture, we can witness through these stories the process of mentoring as a form of activism. (529)

In addition to becoming familiar with the mentorship strategies used by Villanueva and Smitherman as Okawa argues, “what seems critical is our willingness and watchfulness to ‘know each other better,’ to ‘teach each other our ways, our views’—within and across cultural groups, not for feel good liberal reasons but for survival as a democratic society” (530). Mentors can send the message that they value difference to their mentees by supporting their research interests, listening to their concerns about academia, demonstrating interest in their personal background and beliefs, and guiding them to successfully complete the objectives of their program of study. In order for both cross and intra-ethnic mentorship to be successful, the desire to understand different kinds of students is imperative.



Teachers and prospective mentors should self-assess their attitudes toward language difference in order for cross and intra-ethnic mentorship to be effective. Discussions on language diversity have prevailed in recent years among Rhetoric and Composition scholars committed to cross-language relations and multilingual rhetorics. Bruce Horner in the introduction to a special 2006 issue of *College English* titled “Cross Language Relations in Composition” states that “instead of viewing students’ command of languages other than English as a resource to promote biliteracy and multilingualism, we frequently examine their languages for whether it hinders or helps their mastery of academic English” (572). Horner also states that difference and diversity are “recognized, but, once again, only as something ultimately to be overcome” (572). In order to mentor Latina/o students effectively, it is important to address the issue of teachers’ perception of language difference. Elaine Richardson, in “Race, Class(es), Gender, and Age: The Making of Knowledge about Language Diversity,” reports findings from the Language Knowledge and Awareness Survey, administered in 1998, that aimed to uncover language attitudes and concerns of professionals in the National Council of Teachers of English and the Conference on College Composition and Communication. The data revealed that “although most of the language educators surveyed want to foster language diversity, some don’t feel they have the training to provide it” (62). Additionally, the findings revealed, “educators of Color supported the maintenance of diverse dialects and languages in the classroom more than White Language educators” (62). Richardson concludes “White instructors need more meaningful experiences with linguistically diverse speakers in their everyday lives” (62). Lack of teacher training and lack of

exposure to the rhetorical richness of diverse dialects and languages can yield negative assumptions and attitudes toward multiple languages, cultures, and identities.

The lack of teacher training in the area of language diversity is further addressed in “Language Diversity and the Responsibility of the WPA” by Susan K. Miller-Cochran who proposes that “teachers need support and continuing professional development opportunities to work with students successfully. And to support these teachers, the WPA’s first responsibility is to develop a personal understanding and awareness of language diversity issues” (219). In addition to professional support and development of multilingual pedagogies, each teacher must become aware of his or her own attitudes and personal experiences with language difference. In order for mentors to help students negotiate conflicts related to different identities and languages in academia, they need to be exposed to the stories of those who have successfully negotiated conflict in academia. Literature and rhetoric courses on Latina/o issues, language difference issues, and recognition of the benefits of language diversity in academic writing should be a part of an undergraduate and graduate curriculum. Most importantly, discussions of language difference should be addressed in all classes not just in Latina/o literature and rhetoric courses, as Ana, one of the new academics in this study emphasized. These discussions create a sense of identification and belonging for Latina/os in academia, and non-Latina/os have the opportunity to be exposed to diverse ways of knowing, thinking, and being in the world.

Because negative attitudes toward multilingualism might hinder effective cross-ethnic mentoring, academics must be exposed to the benefits that different kinds of students can offer the institution, faculty, and fellow students. Juan Guerra discusses a

pedagogical approach called WACommunities “founded on the basic notion that we must create conditions under which students can learn to expand their already considerable talents as rhetors and writers capable of negotiating difference” (6). In order to create these conditions, all graduate instructor and writing teacher workshops should focus on exposing teachers to conversations in the field concerning language attitudes, assumptions, and cross-language relations in composition, particularly, the work of Min Zhan Lu, Bruce Horner, Paul Matsuda, Elaine Richardson, and Brian Lovejoy among many others. Academics might engage in these conversations through attending conference presentations on the linguistic agilities of multilingual students. They should also attend presentations or workshops at their institutions that particularly address language and cultural difference. Becoming aware of dominant assumptions concerning language use is essential in order to counter negative assumptions associated with language difference and, therefore, mentor linguistically diverse students more effectively. Most importantly, workshops on language difference should emphasize the rhetorically sophisticated strategies that multilingual writers employ in their texts in order to make complex arguments. Understanding and knowing the specific strategies others use can help writing teachers foster their own students’ rhetorical strategies in negotiating language difference. Finally, writing workshops should focus on identifying key activities and projects that build on students’ rhetorical, linguistically diverse experiences.

In addition to creating a space that values difference through supportive mentors and workshops, institutions of higher education should make an effort to hire qualified Latina/o faculty in Rhetoric and Composition. Latina/o faculty mentors serve as role models who can connect with Latina/o students through shared experiences, cultural and

language background, and the challenges related to navigating academia as faculty of color. Latina/o presence in academia conveys to Latina/os not only a sense of belonging but also a sense of inspiration for academic achievement. My arguments are supported by a recent Hispanic education campaign undertaken by *Univision*, the largest U.S. Spanish language news station. During October 16-22, 2011, the station reported on a wide variety of education issues concerning the Latina/o population in the United States. On October 20<sup>th</sup>, *Noticiero Univision* aired a segment titled, “Se necesitan más maestros hispanos en EU.” Although the segment focused on the necessity of having more Latina/o teachers in U.S. public schools, the implications for more Latina/os teachers in higher education are very similar. Angela Valenzuela, Professor of Education at the University of Texas at Austin, reinforces the argument for more Latina/o role models: “La falta de modelos pues tiene muchas consecuencias porque los jóvenes no pueden imaginar una vida profesionista, no pueden imaginar algo mas aya de las circunstancias que tienen, que experimentan.” Valenzuela argues that the lack of role models affects Latina/o students’ ability to imagine a professional life—something else beyond their current circumstances. This claim is further supported by Cristina Gil, a junior at Georgetown University, who was one of the audience members in the special program, “Tu educación es nuestro futuro” (“Your Education is Our Future”) that aired on October 22, 2011. The host, Jorge Ramos, asked the audience of students if they had someone who inspired them to continue with their education; all students, except Gil, raised their hand. When Ramos asked why she does not have anyone who inspires her, she responded,

the reason I did not raise my hand is because the school that I go to we do not have Latin[a/o] teachers, especially female teachers, and its really hard

for me because I've been going to that university and I've only had American teachers. So, I'm going to make a decision shortly. I want to become an attorney and I want to go to law school, but I'm afraid to take that step without knowing how I'm going to do it. I'm a woman; I'm Latina. What am I going to face when I have to do that and I have to start school and have no idea how to go forward. So, how am I going to do it without having someone to help me get there?<sup>5</sup>

Gil's experiences illustrate the need for more Latina/o faculty mentors who can serve as role models for Latina/os students. The representation of Latina/os in academia is not accomplished just through the employment of one Latina/o who "fulfills" the university's diversity expectations but rather through the employment of Latina/o faculty mentors who come from different cultural, ethnic, linguistic, gendered, and class backgrounds and who understand the value of difference.

The current Latina/o education crisis reflects the need for universities to establish a system that validates difference through hiring more qualified Latina/o faculty who value language and cultural difference and who can serve as mentors and role models to other Latina/os. As Gail Y. Okawa's study revealed students of color "could explore the range of their and others' language varieties—AAVE and Spanglish, English and Spanish—*within* the academic context because their mentors had paved the way" (522). As Victor Villanueva shared in his interview, many English teachers are not aware of the pain involved in moving among languages or dialects, and hence, they might be unable to

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<sup>5</sup> Translated by Univision on CC3.

understand and connect with their Latina/o students or students from a diverse language background. Although the question of language difference in academia or in composition classrooms is complex, it is a question that should be addressed by Rhetoric and Composition scholars and teachers. The presence of Latina/o mentors or mentors of any background who desire to understand the pain of moving among dialects and languages provides support for Latina/os who are in the process of developing their academic writing skills and constructing their academic identity. Mentors who understand the pain of language difference can contribute to Latina/os' successful academic identity because they can serve as guides who can help them succeed in academia without compromising their language or cultural background.

#### Multilingual Pedagogy: Fostering Language Difference in Coursework

Although research on mentoring practices between minority faculty and students emphasizes mentors' and mentees' cultural and linguistic connections and how others can learn from such relationships (Okawa), research seems to ignore that the availability of multiethnic coursework is another way to help faculty become better mentors to diverse students. Most importantly, the presence of Latina/o or underrepresented groups, as faculty and in coursework, is vital. Coursework on Latina/o issues, multicultural education, and a multilingual pedagogy can provide new perspectives to students by embracing and appreciating cultural and linguistic differences. As my findings demonstrate in Chapter Three, the Latina/o academics in my study countered challenges, developed a sense of belonging, and became successful in academia due to, in part, multiethnic coursework. I argue that a multilingual pedagogy is receptive to and welcomes language difference in the classroom in order to create new knowledge by

enriching our understanding of language, rhetoric, and rhetorical strategies. I argue that courses in literature, rhetoric and theory that address Latina/o issues have the potential to create spaces for language and cultural difference where Latina/o students can begin to develop a sense of identification in academia. In order to meet the needs of Latina/o students in academia, it is necessary to bridge Rhetoric and Composition with other fields of study, such as English as a second language and Latina/o studies. Jaime Mejia, in “Bridging Rhetoric and Composition Studies with Chicano and Chicana Studies: A Turn to Critical Pedagogy” notes “because educating Chicanos and Chicanas continues to be the sole means for rising up from the deplorably oppressive circumstances that have historically governed many of our lives, using all the available means to accomplish this noteworthy goal can be pursued by bridging [Chicano Studies and Rhetoric and Composition] together” (41). Bridging these two fields would facilitate Latina/os ability to construct their own identities and identify the rhetorical strategies that help them negotiate languages. As Mejia argues, “pedagogical approaches seldom understand the robust dynamics of this hybrid rhetorical combination in countless discourses currently used throughout the Southwest and anywhere else Latinos/as find themselves situated” (52). Through this hybrid mixture of English and Spanish a unique identity or identities emerge—identities that often fail to be explored because pedagogical methods do not validate the multiple ways in which language difference influence identity construction. Students must be exposed to the literature on cross-language relations in multiple courses and areas of studies, and they should be exposed to the works by authors who have managed to merge identifies and languages in specific rhetorical contexts.

Although I argue that a multilingual pedagogy should become the norm in theory, rhetoric, and literature courses at the graduate level, there is a particular exigence to expose students to language difference in first-year composition (FYC) courses. The first-year composition course is often perceived as a gateway course—an entry into the academy where students might receive the message that they belong or do not belong in academia. Therefore, in order to increase Latina/o students’ success in academia, the FYC course should send the message to all students that their knowledge of other languages or dialects is rhetorically sophisticated and valuable in academia. In order to create a space for language difference in English composition beneficial to all students, we must reconsider the definition of a rhetorical education as Jessica Enoch, in *Refiguring Rhetorical Education*, encourages us to. Enoch argues that rethinking rhetorical education begins by viewing the pedagogical objectives employed by the women she studied as a heuristic for “a new rhetorical education for the twenty-first century” (171), one that enables our students to engage discursively in diverse social contexts “without sacrificing cultural or linguistic ties” (171). We should rethink how we define rhetorical education in order to be inclusive of the multiplicity of rhetorical acts all of our students engage in outside of our classrooms. This involves redefining and changing how we perceive our second language writers’ abilities with multiple languages and what they can offer their monolingual peers. A redefined rhetorical education conducive to language difference is one where students are encouraged to reflect on their language abilities as strengths, are exposed to language difference in multiple contexts, and are invited to compose in diverse languages and discourses as appropriate.



Because multilingual students are aware of different languages and dialects, it is important to help them cultivate their consciousness so they can use their rhetorical tools to their advantage as they construct their academic identities without sacrificing their language background. bell hooks argues, “[t]he most powerful resource any of us can have as we study and teach in university settings is full understanding and appreciation of the richness, beauty, and primacy of our familial and community backgrounds.” Awareness of the value of one’s background is a strategy useful in negotiating identities and languages, but as hooks’s experiences reveal, this resource must be acknowledged in higher education. A multilingual pedagogy receptive to language difference has the potential to help Latina/os and other minority groups discover strategies to negotiate language difference in academic writing. This pedagogy can help Latina/os recognize their family, community, and language background as a resource in academia.

The participants in this study achieved success due to, in part, their consciousness regarding the relationship between language difference and academic writing. At the same time, exposure to language difference enhances all students’ understanding of how to negotiate among language choices and how such choices are often influenced by individual’s personal experiences. Guerra shared,

there’re a lot of different tools students have at their disposal. It’s not like they have to develop them or they have to be taught those tools. They are a part of their experiences; their lived experiences; their personal knowledge; the fact they’re human and engaging others in the world [...] Any student who has to cross the borders and boundaries—class, race, ethnicity [...] has to figure out how to best represent themselves; interpret

the world and enact in it. They have these tools [and] we need to get them to become more aware [that] they have these tools.

For Juan Guerra, transcultural repositioning is a rhetorical tool that helps him interact in different language communities, and as a teacher, he aims to encourage his students to become aware of the rhetorical tools they possess that can help them to successfully negotiate language difference and academic writing. Unless students are encouraged to reflect on how they utilize these rhetorical tools, they might be unable to identify ways to negotiate language difference and academic writing. When emphasis is placed on one discursive practice, such as academic writing, students may fail to understand how their rhetorical tools can serve as a strength in not only their academic writing but also other facets of their lives.

In order to help students become aware of their language agilities and rhetorical strategies, I propose a multilingual curriculum that exposes students to rhetorical strategies used in different languages (Language Diversity Syllabus; Appendix C). One of my English composition courses I taught at Texas Christian University focused on issues of language diversity. In one of the writing projects in my class, I deliberately asked students to reflect on and analyze their language use in a specific situation (Project 1; Appendix D). Students were encouraged to think about a particular rhetorical experience where the language they used was significant in persuading or connecting with others. Based on their reflections, they were also encouraged to identify an argument they wanted to make about identity and the function of language in the situation. This project enabled students to become conscious of their rhetorical, linguistic choices while “repositioning” themselves through their writing and the rhetorical situation they

experienced. Most importantly, the way I designed this project was open enough to encourage multilingual students to think about their language use in languages other than English. One of my international students, who learned English as a second language, described her linguistic experience as a volunteer teacher at a local reformatory in her hometown in China. By integrating English and Chinese, the student learned how her use of a Chinese dialect, music, and poems facilitated her interaction with the audience through cultural and linguistic identification. Many writing projects in traditional composition classrooms can be modified in order to be more inclusive of all students' knowledge and abilities, including their knowledge of languages other than English.

A second learning outcome in a multilingual pedagogy, particularly in FYC but could be adapted to fit the learning objectives of advanced undergraduate and graduate level courses, aims to help all students become aware of how rhetorical situations and discourse communities influence language practices in English and other languages. Writing teachers should provide students with ample opportunities to analyze how language functions in rhetorical situations where languages other than English are used. My proposal of a multilingual pedagogy is not new, as many scholars have argued for the benefits of a cross-language pedagogy that helps students reflect on their identities and languages (Horner, Lu, Trimbur, Guerra). However, similar to the Writing About Writing curriculum developed by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs, I propose that we expose our students to conversations in the field regarding cross-language relations in composition studies. In multilingual students' own research investigations, they should be encouraged to conduct research in languages other than English in order to analyze a rhetorical situation from various perspectives.

Teachers should encourage students to engage in critical thinking, reading, and writing as they analyze how language influences writers' arguments in a variety of genres from personal narratives to academic articles. For example, in my language diversity English composition course, we read "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" by Gloria Anzaldua, "Mother Tongue" by Amy Tan, "English Only and U.S. College Composition" by Bruce Horner and John Trimbur among others. Reading responses and class discussion help students practice rhetorical analysis, especially as it relates to how the authors' use of language influences their arguments and purpose in the particular rhetorical situation. For instance, we analyze Anzaldúa's text in relation to her argument regarding the intimate connection between her multiple identities and languages, and we discuss how her language choices, Spanglish, Tex-Mex, and code switching, are rhetorical techniques that support her argument and convey her sense of authority. Although monolingual students are sometimes hesitant at first to read a text that merges languages and dialects, monolingual and multilingual students alike learn to appreciate and recognize the importance of language use in arguments and identity construction. The mere exposure to language difference provides students with awareness of a multiplicity of rhetorical and linguistic strategies—knowledge they would not be exposed to otherwise.

In a multilingual classroom, students should be encouraged to conduct research from multiple perspectives, including sources in other languages or dialects. In "Toward a Multilingual Composition Scholarship: From English Only to a Translingual Norm," Bruce Horner, Samantha NeCamp, and Christiane Donahue challenge current monolingual assumptions in Composition scholarship by proposing a translingual

approach. They argue for the necessity of citing scholarship conducted in other languages, and they also challenge conference organizers to encourage their participants to “not only address multilingual issues explicitly but also include in their presentations (via PowerPoint, handouts, or other means) translations of their work into one or more languages other than English” (290). Furthermore, the authors argue that their suggestions “might also encourage scholars to seek out bilingual colleagues with whom to work, colleagues who might not currently consider their linguistic abilities an active advantage in their scholarly production” (290). Similarly, in a multilingual composition course, we can encourage our students to conduct research in other languages—sources that will allow them to analyze an issue or topic from multiple views. They may even consider collaborating with bilingual peers, friends, or family members in order to analyze the most relevant scholarship. For example, in the second project in my language diversity English composition class, I encouraged my students to conduct an analysis of the oral use of language on an issue they are interested in (Project 2; Appendix E). A couple of years ago, one of my students demonstrated interest in the U.S. tariff imposed on tires imported from China. The student decided to analyze speeches and interviews with politicians and economists from the United States and China who addressed this particular issue. This student took advantage of her knowledge of Chinese and English and provided a detailed analysis from various perspectives on the issue. The analysis and conclusions the student made, especially concerning the economists’ arguments and sense of audience, are knowledge and skills the student would not have developed in a classroom that did not recognize or encourage language difference. A multilingual pedagogy requires that we let our students teach us about their language and analysis; it

does not require us to learn all of our students' respective native languages. Recognizing multilingual students' strengths and knowledge can make them feel they have a place and a place of expertise in the English composition classroom—a place they often times question due to their native language.

Finally, students should compose in a variety of discursive and non-discursive forms including in languages other than English or bilingually depending on the situation. Language difference in academia conveys not only tolerance, but also recognition of the knowledge and values conveyed through multiple uses of language. Ana, a doctoral student, shared in her personal interview that “multiple languages signals multiple world views; ways of looking [at] the world and being in the world. Language is a huge opportunity to step into that sort of critical thinking and experience [...] of trying to step outside of your own perspective and consider multiple ways of looking at things—[a] part of the college experience.” The consideration and analysis of language use is one way for students to be exposed to diverse views. Exposure to language difference is essential in Rhetoric and Composition as the nature of rhetoric is indeed the consideration of one's audience, purpose, context, and constituents in order to adapt our use of language accordingly—failure to consider language difference leads to failure to fully understand the complexities of our society. For example, in his interview, Alex, a doctoral student and writing instructor, shared one of his pedagogical approaches that focuses on encouraging students to think about the relationship among language use, audience, and medium. Alex described:

[twitter] isn't something we're actually doing in the classroom but it coincides with the work we're doing. I can ask my students to have

metaconversations to create [a] community within the classroom [...]  
those are nice places to encourage diversity of language because  
automatically they're already shifting into alternative texts. If they [want]  
to code switch or have a tag of a Spanish word that is more inclusive or  
more effective to the audience of [the] classroom, I think that's great.  
Blogs are [also] great places where you are already asking students to use  
their visual literacies and if you're also opening that up as a place where  
they wanted to code switch.

As a pedagogical strategy, Alex asks students to keep a twitter or blog account for the purposes of building a learning community outside of the classroom. Through these alternative spaces, Alex invites his students to use their own languages and dialects as they communicate with their audience, fellow classmates, and make sense of academic content together.

Multilingual pedagogical approaches should aim to introduce students to the ways writers merge or negotiate language difference in their work. We should expose students to language difference through course readings and invite them to analyze sources in different languages and from multiple perspectives. When pedagogical approaches expose students to multiple languages and dialects and the rhetorical values of diverse discourse communities, students develop a sense of belonging and identification within academia. If our pedagogies support language difference, multilingual students may begin to see their ethnic and academic identities as merged, which might lead toward academic achievement. In turn, monolingual students have the opportunity to be exposed

to a multiplicity of rhetorical strategies and language choices writers use to convey arguments.

### Conclusion

Multilingual students' experiences with diverse languages are often not recognized in academia as rhetorical strengths, as the editors of *Latino/a Discourses* argue: "Literacy education both in English and Spanish systematically ignores, devalues, stigmatizes or marginalizes Spanish" (2). Language difference in academia, especially in Rhetoric and Composition, is a complex issue because English is the primary language spoken in the United States of America. English-only policies have been one of the reasons we have failed to acknowledge the richness that other languages might offer pedagogically in the composition classroom (Horner and Trimbur). Despite the relationship between identity and language, the emphasis placed on English as the "official" language and as the unifying characteristic of American identity has prevailed in educational and public sectors (Ronald Schmidt and Carol Schmid). The emphasis placed on one "American identity" displaces the multiple identities we all possess. In order to challenge institutional norms, we must recognize that privilege of middle to upper class values exist in institutions of higher education (Green and Prendergast).

In order to counter dominant ideologies about academic writing, we must view our multilingual students as rhetors in diverse languages; we should capitalize on and value our linguistically diverse students' rhetorical, linguistic agilities. Although addressing language diversity in first-year composition continues to be a topic of discussion and disagreement, it is important to consider that the number of linguistically



diverse students is increasing, and we should implement programs and pedagogies that are receptive to their cultural and linguistic background. Most importantly, we must believe that our students' knowledge of language differences enhances knowledge making in academia. Instead of perceiving them as those writers who have "problems" with language use that need to be "corrected," we should view them as students who can negotiate among languages and dialects in diverse rhetorical ways, and we should provide them with opportunities to reflect on and showcase their unique rhetorical skills. One of the most important strategies in a multilingual pedagogy is the practice of listening to our students' voices, experiences, and aspirations in order to guide them toward academic achievement while also helping them remain connected to their heritage languages and cultures.

We have to continue arguing that other languages deserve a place in English composition and institutions of higher education. We cannot stop arguing simply because English is the primary language spoken in the U.S. or because it is the language perceived to be needed to succeed. Our objective should be for students to learn to use language well, which includes becoming conscious of the rhetorical strategies they enact to negotiate diverse languages and contexts. I would like to see all English teachers and students understand how our ways of thinking and making knowledge are enriched when we create spaces for language difference in English composition. In order to accomplish these goals, we have to revise our programs and curriculum so they include coursework in pedagogy, theory, rhetoric, and literature that focus on the relationship between language and identity and the value of language diversity in English composition. We must also reconsider how new instructors are trained in composition pedagogy. All new

instructors must become aware of their attitudes and assumptions concerning language difference, and they must be exposed to a pedagogy that more than helping students become effective writers in academic English, focuses on helping them identify strategies to effectively communicate in diverse contexts and discourse communities. Our ultimate objective, therefore, is to believe and have confidence in our multilingual students especially in what they can teach *us* about their linguistically diverse abilities. Instead of saying “this student struggles with writing in English,” we should say “this student possesses valuable knowledge of language difference.” When we change our perception of our students, we create an environment focused on fostering students’ knowledge of language difference by helping them identify the strategies that will facilitate their ability to move among languages, communities, and cultures.

## APPENDIX A

Subject: Dissertation Project Participation

From: Cavazos, Alyssa

Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2011 1:15 PM

To: [Latinocaucus@listserv.cc.ucf.edu](mailto:Latinocaucus@listserv.cc.ucf.edu)

Dear Latino Caucus Members:

My name is Alyssa G. Cavazos, and I am a third year doctoral student in the Rhetoric and Composition program at Texas Christian University.

I am currently in the process of gathering data for my dissertation project titled “Latina/os in Rhetoric and Composition: Learning from Their Experiences with Language Diversity.” Through my dissertation project, I want to discover: 1) what challenges and achievements have Latina/os experienced throughout their educational career and what factors influenced their experiences; 2) to what extent was their academic success constrained or enhanced by the role of language difference/diversity; 3) how have their experiences with language difference influenced the formation of their professional identities; and 4) based on their experiences, what pedagogies do they believe might enhance the success of Latina/os in higher education and graduate school. To answer these questions, I will analyze autobiographical documents written by Latina/o scholars in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. Additionally, I am currently seeking participation from bilingual or multilingual Latina/o graduate students, composition instructors, and/or scholars in the field of Rhetoric and Composition who would be interested in participating in this study.

Below you will find my dissertation abstract. If you are willing to participate in a one-hour interview about your experiences as a Latina/o academic in Rhetoric and Composition, please contact me at [a.g.cavazos@tcu.edu](mailto:a.g.cavazos@tcu.edu). Please forward this letter to any other Latina/o academics in any stage of their career, including graduate students. Once you contact me, I can answer any questions and provide you with consent documents outlining your role of participation in this research study. Additionally, I can also e-mail you the interview questions in advance.

I appreciate any assistance you are able to provide toward the successful completion of a research study that I hope will reveal pedagogical and institutional benefits toward increasing Latina/o representation in higher education and their academic success.

If you have any questions about this project, you can contact me at [a.g.cavazos@tcu.edu](mailto:a.g.cavazos@tcu.edu), my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Carrie Leverenz at [c.leverenz@tcu.edu](mailto:c.leverenz@tcu.edu), or Institutional Review Board Chair, Dr. Morrison Wong at 817-257-7472.

Thank you for your time and concern.

Alyssa

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Alyssa G. Cavazos, MA  
Graduate Instructor | Ph.D. Candidate  
Department of English | Texas Christian University  
TCU Box 297270  
Reed Hall 402 | Desk #15  
Fort Worth, Texas 76129  
a.g.cavazos@tcu.edu

**Dissertation Abstract:** In my research study, I will investigate how bilingual or multilingual Latina/os in the field of Rhetoric and Composition navigate through their academic lives as they pursue a degree in a field often focused on language hegemony. Current research demonstrates that Latina/os often fail to pursue higher education due to systemic and personal setbacks, such as low expectations, lack of information, and academic tracking; those who manage to attend often encounter challenges in higher education that prevent them from completing degrees (Castellanos, Jeanett and Gloria Alberta; Delgado-Romero, Edward). I am interested in studying the experiences of Latina/o graduate students and scholars in rhetoric and composition and discover how their experiences with language difference influenced their professional identities. My study will consist of analysis of autobiographical-pedagogical texts written by Latina/o scholars in the field. I will also conduct personal interviews with graduate students, composition instructors, and scholars in rhetoric and composition. I am interested in discovering how experiences with language diversity influenced the formation of identity in the Latina/o experience. By learning about their personal and academic experiences, I hope to discover to what extent their academic success was constrained or enhanced by language difference. Through their stories I might be able to trace early influences and work on potentially changing or enhancing these influences in order to facilitate academic success for Latina/os. The knowledge I gain might allow me to propose changes in composition pedagogy, mentoring, and/or learning objectives at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Protocol

Name: Pseudonym/Alias:  
Degree: Additional Materials:  
Date: Phone/e-mail:

1. First, I would like to learn more about you. What is your job title and how many years have you been in this position? What does your current work entail; what kind of work do you perform? How do your research interests intersect with your job position? How would you characterize the institution where you work/attend school?
2. To what extent do you believe factors, such as racial/ethnic background, social class, gender, and language difference contributed to your challenges and achievements as a Latina/o student and academic? Which of these factors has had the largest effect?
3. How would you describe your language background? What does the term *language diversity* suggest to you?
4. How would you describe your personal experiences with language difference in the following contexts: 1) as a student, throughout your educational career (i.e., elementary, middle, high school, and college); 2) in your community/home environment; and 3) at work or other institutional settings?
5. How would you describe your experiences—successes and challenges—in balancing multiple languages/dialects between home and school? Who, what classes, or institutional structures sponsored your achievements and challenges and/or your use of multiple languages?
6. How would you define your current relationship with languages other than English? To what extent do you read, write, and speak (or listen to) languages other than English and in what contexts?
7. Based on your educational and professional experiences, what do you think should be the role of multiple languages in the university, writing programs, and graduate school? How do you see the institutional power influencing the role of multiple languages and facilitating the success of Latina/o students in higher education and graduate school?
8. What is your current pedagogical stance regarding language diversity in the composition classroom?
9. How do you think your Latina/o identity affects your academic identity and how does your academic identity affect your Latina/o identity? To what extent do you

believe your experiences with language difference influence your Latina/o identity and your academic identity?

10. My research focuses on learning about Latina/o academic's experiences with language difference and how these experiences influence their identity(ies). Do you have anything else you would like to add or share?
11. Are you willing to share your syllabi, teaching materials, lesson plans, teaching philosophy, and/or any other written texts for the purpose of enhancing my analysis and representation of you in my research study?

## APPENDIX C

### Intermediate Composition: Writing as Argument

Spring 2011

**Ms. Alyssa G. Cavazos**

**Office:** Reed Hall 402; Desk #15

**e-mail:** [a.g.cavazos@tcu.edu](mailto:a.g.cavazos@tcu.edu)

**Office hours:** TR 8:00-9:00a.m. and  
TR 2:00-3:30 or by appointment

**E-College:** [www.tcuglobal.edu](http://www.tcuglobal.edu) or  
through [www.my.tcu.edu](http://www.my.tcu.edu)

**Course & Time:**

20803.015 TR 9:30-10:50a.m.

20803.045 TR 12:30-1:50p.m.



#### English 20803 Intermediate Composition: Writing as Argument

Course satisfies Written Communication 2 (WCO) requirement in the TCU Core Curriculum. Prerequisite: English 10803 or equivalent and sophomore standing (24 hours). Prerequisite to all upper-division English courses and advanced writing courses at TCU. Writing workshop that builds on ENGL 10803 by focusing on the analysis and production of arguments in a variety of media (i.e., print, visual, oral, digital). Students will work individually and collaboratively to read, research, and compose effective arguments on issues of local and national importance.

English 20803 is intended to extend the introduction to various forms of writing that are the focus of English 10803; in particular, this course focuses on different aspects of argument writing. While one goal of the course is to help you continue improving your ability to shape your writing for different audiences and different effects, another goal is to make writing—theories about how writing works—the subject of the course. We'll also explore how and why different kinds of arguments are effective—to us and to others. English 20803 will be especially concerned with preparing you to analyze and produce complex arguments, including arguments that go beyond print. In an American culture that seems focused on arguments as only two-sided battles to be won, dialogue seems harder to come by; we'll consider how to create more nuanced and complicated arguments in a myriad of ways.

This course, like all courses at TCU, has outcomes explaining what students should achieve in the course. The outcomes listed here are the goals we are working toward, and the course was created to best help you meet those ends. By the end of ENGL 20803, students should demonstrate:

- Students will demonstrate facility with the language and analysis of argument.
  - Analyze and assess genre, discourse conventions, rhetorical situation, and argument strategy in complex texts
  - Recognize and produce familiar argumentative genres (e.g., narrative, personal-public, satire)
  - Examine how their role as citizens includes participation as critical consumers and producers of arguments
  
- Students will demonstrate the ability to write an argument for a specific rhetorical situation.
  - Produce an argument with a situation-appropriate focus, thesis, or controlling idea and recognize such in others' texts
  - Practice firsthand the complex dynamics of collaborative work and analyze how that affects the rhetorical situation in analyzing and producing arguments
  
- Students will demonstrate competency in using sources, (primary, secondary, electronic) in argument construction.
  - Find, evaluate, and analyze primary and secondary sources for appropriateness, timeliness, and validity
  - Incorporate and synthesize source material (primary, print, digital) in argumentative composing
  - Practice connecting their personal experiences, values, and beliefs with larger social conversations and contexts
  
- Students will demonstrate the ability to use computers effectively as a communication mechanism.
  - Find, evaluate, and use online sources in academic assignments
  - Use word processing software to produce and format texts, as well as use computers to facilitate presentations, and produce and incorporate non-print information (e.g. charts, spreadsheets, images, videos, and illustrations) in academic arguments

### **My Expectations and Objectives**

The main objective of our course is to provide you with extensive opportunities to write and analyze language in order to develop rhetorical writing strategies that will help you perform successfully in a variety of writing and oral contexts within the university and future professional careers. The following are key learning objectives in our course: 1) question and analyze how others construct arguments in oral, visual, and print contexts; 2) become aware of how language might be used negatively to manipulate others in order to gain power over them and how language might also be used to connect, understand, and respect one another; and 3) learn to interact successfully with people from diverse



cultural and linguistic backgrounds by respecting and valuing all languages/dialects. We will focus on language use in a variety of context, such as the different Englishes that exist (i.e. Spanglish, Ebonics, slang, etc); the variety of languages that exist throughout the world; and the discourses of each perspective in diverse arguments. If you speak more than one language, please feel free to bring your knowledge of these multiple languages into class discussion through your research and analysis. We will analyze current debates on the English-only policy, global issues related to language use, and the role of English Composition in the debate on languages as springboards to analyze the language used within your own particular issue/area of interest and/or personal experiences. Therefore, the purpose of this class is to explore and analyze how people use language everyday for a variety of purposes and objectives.

We will discuss how our readings make arguments and how you can make arguments about writing through implementing diverse rhetorical and writing strategies. Because we will consider how writing (or composing) can become a public act (and collaborative act), you will consider how you can make each of your major writing projects public by choosing and arguing for a specific genre/medium for each major writing project. Your choices will depend on 1) who is your audience, 2) arguing for why your audience might be interested in your particular writing project, and 3) discovering how you might appeal to them rhetorically through your use of language and even your analysis of language, as applicable.

I expect you to engage in thoughtful questions and become involved in the process as we learn to analyze the minor and most important details of language use through writing and revising. We must remember that writing is a complicated process that evolves from our research, conversations, thoughts, and experiences. With each major project, you will learn how to write effective, valuable, and useful comments to your peers; it is my expectation that you will learn to value what your peers write, help them improve their writing, and in the process, improve your own writing.

*At first English was nothing  
But Sound  
Like trumpets doing yakity yak  
As we found meanings for the words  
We noticed that many times the  
Letters deceived the sound  
What could we do  
It was the language of a  
Foreign land.*

*-Victor Hernandez Cruz*

I hope to learn with you as we think critically, question, and analyze course readings, our experiences with writing, and the experiences of others. I have high expectations for all my students, and I believe that through hard work and dedication we can learn, discover, and achieve! One of the most vital aspects of this course is revision and your ability to understand that writing and learning is a process. You will be required to significantly revise your writing projects and it is my expectation that you will be willing to explore new genres of writing and new revision strategies. I look forward to learning

from your experiences and discoveries as we engage in conversations about learning, writing, language, and reading!

**Readings and recommended books:** All our readings and handouts will be available through our e-college online course component as Word or PDF documents. However,

you are welcome to purchase the following books for your own personal resource, writing, and learning.

- what's language got to do with it? By Keith Walters and Michal Brody; New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.
- Everything is an Argument by Andrea Lunsford

### **Other Required Materials and Access**

\$\$ for possible copies

4 2-pocket folders to contain your work for each project

Internet access

e-college access

### **Course Requirements:**

#### **1) Writing Projects:**

You will work on four major writing projects throughout the semester. Each assignment will also have process material (see #2) that will be considered in the development of your drafts and your grade for each project. Before each project is due, you will receive the specific assignment. Each project will go through subsequent drafts and revisions, and only project 1 and 2 can be revised after the pencil grade; project 3 and 4 can not be revised after you receive a grade since one is collaborative and the other is the final project. Also, each writing project will require a thoughtful and extensive reflective letter. **Finally, every version/draft of each project must be accompanied by an author's note—always.** Below you will find a brief description of each project, but you will later receive a detailed assignment sheet for each project as the semester progresses.

**Project 1:** The first project is a self-reflective/analytical piece where you will reflect on how you used language in particular ways to make a certain argument (major or minor), establish a connection/relationship with others, or how you might have used language to gain “power” over others (with this option you could think about what you might have done to change your use of language). The purpose of this assignment is that you think about how you use language and why you use it in this way for a particular situation/purpose and with certain people. If your native language is other than English or if you speak multiple languages, you may think about this assignment in terms of how you use language in your native tongue or in any other language you speak. Everyone is encouraged and required to write specific words/phrases that you use and analyze why/how you used these phrases. Additionally, you will also be required to identify an audience and a genre/medium to achieve the objectives of this project.

**Project 2:** The second project is an analysis of language use in real-time, live, and public situations in your community, neighborhood, television, radio, church, MSN chats, etc. The conversation/discussion you analyze can be in any language you know, understand, and are able to analyze. You should have access to the transcripts or record their conversation (with permission/approvals, if applicable)

in order to analyze the language. This assignment will allow you to think about and analyze how people use language in real-time and particular situations, what drives their choices, what is their purpose, what effect it has on others, and why it makes sense to use language in this way. In addition to the transcripts, please bring in any additional print texts that were distributed, discussed, or viewed in order to add another layer to our discussion on language use. After you “listen” to the conversation once, you will be required to identify a key question you are genuinely interested in discovering as you analyze the conversation in detail. If you know a language or languages other than English, you may consider analyzing the use of English and/or other languages to fulfill the expectations of this assignment. Additionally, you will also be required to identify an audience and a genre/medium to achieve the objectives of this project.

**Project 3:** The third project is collaborative that presents you with the opportunity to join a conversation on an issue that is important to you and your peers and make a proposal toward change. Each group will research a specific, current issue (of your interest) at the local, state, national, or global level. Each group member will be responsible for researching a particular perspective with particular attention to language. Each group member will take a “position” and will be responsible for identifying common words/phrases used by those from that perspective. Once each group member has researched their respective viewpoint and analyzed the language, each group member will be responsible for writing their respective viewpoint (language analysis). Then, as a group you will decide how the different perspectives might establish common ground through the language they use to discuss the issue and identify a key question that is necessary to address in order to create change (this will be written as a report). Based on your discoveries, as a group you will decide on what needs to ‘change’ regarding the issue and you will develop a “call for change/action” and you will design an appropriate medium to convey your message to the intended audience. As you create your medium or call for change as a group, you will need to think about the language you will utilize based on your discoveries regarding each perspective on the issue, respectively.

**Project 4:** After reflecting on your own language use, how the public uses language in live situations, and how to consider diverse perspectives, you will then have the opportunity to design/create your own argument of a particular issue. The “issue” you select must be something you truly desire to find out more about and something within our society you truly desire to change. The purpose of this project, like project #3, is to design a ‘medium’ for a real audience and with a real purpose. This will help you think about the language you will utilize to convey your objective; you will decide on the language you use based on the audience and your objective. However, in this project you will use multiple languages in order to reach a wider audience. This project may take different forms (visual ad, op-ed piece, speech, poem, etc, depending on who is your audience and what is your purpose); you can be as creative as you would like while you consider the appropriate form based on your audience, purpose, and language use. This project is accompanied with a reflective piece.

**2) Drafts/Workshops:** For each major writing project, you will be asked to submit preliminary and revised drafts to be workshopped in small groups, by the whole class, and/or by me. **Each draft should include an author's note explaining to readers the following:** 1) the state of your draft (first draft, third, etc.); what you were trying to accomplish in this draft; and what your writing intentions are; 2) what you think is going well and why; and 3) what you are having trouble with or would like advice on (This section of the author's note may vary depending on the writing project). Failure to bring full drafts when due will affect your portfolio grades for each assignment. During workshops, you are expected to read your peers' drafts carefully and provide a thoughtful, substantive response. For each draft that you read, you will provide your peers with half a page (single spaced) peer endcomments on their drafts where you will engage with your peers' essay through response. In your peer endcomments assignment, you will discuss the author's **strengths, make suggestions, and ask questions.** During the semester, you will be asked to evaluate the performance of your peers as responders and these evaluations will contribute to my final evaluation of your work. In addition, you will include the peer endcomments you provide your peers in each one of your portfolios.

**3) Daily Work:** Daily work includes in-class writings, outside research, informal out-of-class writings, pop quizzes, written feedback to peers, etc. This work, while informal, will be some of the most important work we do for the course, and while each piece is ungraded, they are a part of the grade **within each portfolio** (see below) in that not doing them adequately (or not doing them at all) can hamper your grade. The goal of daily writing is to generate ideas, thinking on the page, not about having a finished product.

**4) Rhetorical Responses:** Throughout the semester, you will be asked to write a total of five reading/viewing responses. The reading responses are based on assigned readings for each project unit. Since the purpose of reading responses is to prepare you for class discussion, late responses will not be accepted. (I will, however, happily take them early if you know you will be gone). Reading responses should be **at least three typed double-space pages** (you can always write more) and will be evaluated with a letter grade and returned to you.

- **LaNgUaGe FuN:** For the past couple of semesters, my students and I have enjoyed what we called "Friday's Fun;" however, since we are not meeting on MWF, I have decided to call our "fun" day; LaNgUaGe FuN. This day will consist of you bringing in current or other significant articles, youtube videos, news reports, images, advertisements, etc. that use language in particular and meaningful ways or that discuss issues of language diversity and/or language difference in meaningful ways. You each will be required to bring in at least **Two mediums** throughout the semester; you will sign-up for which day you plan to bring in a medium (see sample mediums on e-college under webliography). Part of our class period for the day's a LaNgUaGe FuN is due will be dedicated to viewing the mediums, analyzing them, and discussing their significance in relation to our class projects. After you bring your two required mediums, you will write a Reading Response (Reading Response #5) where you analyze the

two mediums you selected in terms of the significance of the language used, why you chose the mediums, and what you learned about language used/language issues based on the mediums your peers shared in class.

**5) Attendance and Participation:** These are both critical for succeeding in this course. Strong participation means being engaged in all aspects of the course: small group discussion and workshops, whole class discussions, in-class writings, and carefully completing all reading and writing assignments. Lackluster or no participation can affect your grade. Missing class can hamper your grade as well. The kind of interactive work we do in this class means that coming to class is a necessity; see below for the attendance policy.

**6) Conference:** Early in the semester, we'll meet one-on-one to discuss your goals and work for the course. We will also meet one-on-one to discuss your brainstorming ideas and plans for each of the major projects. When we meet, please come prepared—you will plan the agenda for our time together. Attendance is required for these conferences—if you need to reschedule, contact me ahead of time. Conferences will not be rescheduled due to lateness or an unexcused absence. Though we will have scheduled conferences, everyone is encouraged to visit with me throughout the semester to discuss your writing projects and progress in the class.

### **Evaluation**

For each project of the semester, you'll turn in a first draft, second draft, and a portfolio that contains both drafts of the essay, informal work toward the essay (in-class writing, research notes and articles, etc.), author's notes, and a reflective letter. When you submit each of your portfolios, you will submit a one to two page reflective letter (more on this later).

For Projects #1 and #2, you'll receive a "Pencil Grade" (or tentative grade) on the portfolio. You may choose to make the Pencil Grade a "Firm Grade" for the essay portfolio (meaning it will be the grade recorded for the semester), or you may choose to substantively revise the essay again. (Revising the essay doesn't guarantee the grade will be improved; we'll talk much more in-depth early on in the semester about making the decision whether or not to revise.) You will have the opportunity to revise only Project 1 and 2. Because Project 3 is collaborative and Project 4 is the final assignment, you will not have the opportunity revise these two after you receive a grade. However, it is important to remember that you will still have many opportunities to revise your projects before you receive a grade.

**If You Choose to Revise:** If you choose to resubmit your portfolios of Project 1 and Project 2, you must first submit a half to full-page revision plan memo (single spaced) a week after you receive your Pencil Grade. Your final revised portfolio will be submitted a week after you submit your Revision Plan Memo (see class schedule for due dates/more on Revision Plan Memo later). If you don't submit a Revision Plan Memo by the deadline, your Pencil Grade will automatically become a Firm Grade for the course (Note: if you turn in a revision plan and then decide not to revise, there is not a penalty;

your Pencil Grade will simply convert into a Firm Grade). You'll receive a handout that explains in more detail how the portfolios are graded as the class gets underway. In preparation for constructing your portfolios, please keep all of the writing that you do for this class—reading responses, drafts (including those with my comments and those of your peers), in-class writing, etc., together. **SAVE ALL WRITING YOU DO FOR THIS COURSE!** Make sure you save each version on your computer and USB drive as well.

**Fulfilling Class Requirements:** It is important to remember that simply fulfilling the minimum requirements of the course warrants an average grade (as in C), not an A. Coming to class every day and doing assignments is not something that earns “extra credit” or an automatic A; it's expected by you being in the course. A higher grade will be based on the distinctive quality and development of your work, on your ability to guide a piece of writing through the various stages of revision, and on a willingness to explore new subjects, genres, and techniques. Please keep in mind that though grades might seem like an important aspect of your college career, you want to consider that more than grades, the value and importance of this class lies in your own desire and willingness to think critically, engage with your writing, and learn. Below is a thumbnail breakdown of how I view letter grades; as we move into the semester you'll receive more detailed descriptions and we'll talk more about how I evaluate your writing:

A—excellent overall

B—good with some excellent aspects

C—adequate

D—mostly adequate with some unacceptable aspects

F—unacceptable overall

**Grade Breakdown:**

<b>Project 1:</b> Self-reflection/analysis on Language as Argument	20%
<b>Project 2:</b> Public (real-time) Language Analysis as Argument	20%
<b>Project 3:</b> Multiple Perspectives of Language in Arguments (Collaborative)	20%
<b>Project 4:</b> Creating an Argument (with oral presentation)	20%
<b>Reading/Viewing Responses</b>	20% (5 @ 4% each)

**Course Policies and TCU Information/Resources:**

**Attendance:** Improvement in writing is a complex process that requires lots of practice and feedback from readers. Regular attendance is necessary to your success in this course. It is a Composition Program policy that in writing workshop courses, only official university absences are excused. Students representing TCU in a university-mandated activity that requires missing class should provide official documentation of schedules and turn in work in advance. More than six unexcused absences in a TR class

constitute grounds for failure in the course. Absences due to illness, sleeping, and long weekends are NOT excused—they all count toward the three weeks' absences limit. Since illness is likely at some point during the semester, students are urged to save their unexcused absences for times when you are too sick to come to class. After three unexcused absences, each additional absence will cause your final grade to drop half a letter grade (i.e.: if you are at a B and miss four classes, your grade would be a B-, with five, a C+, with six, a C, etc.) Students whose absences are due to circumstances beyond their control may appeal this policy by scheduling a meeting with the Director of Composition. Generally, the Director of Composition does not excuse additional absences without documentation. To do well in this course, you must come to class.

**Tardies:** Please be on time for class. Students who are tardy are a distraction to the whole class. **Three tardies will equal an absence for the course.** Please review the attendance policy for penalties in case of excessive absences. Keep in mind that in-class work cannot be made up.

**Late Work:** Work will be due at the beginning of class and will be considered late thereafter. If you know you will be missing a class, you need to submit the assignment ahead of time. Late Portfolio Projects will be penalized one letter grade for each class period beyond the due date unless a) the student has an official university absence and b) the instructor has agreed to late submission in advance of the due date. OR: If you know you will be missing a class, you need to submit the assignment ahead of time or come meet with me well in advance of the due date for us to discuss the issue. Note: This course relies heavily on technology, so you will need to have reliable access to the internet, which is always available in several places (including the library) on campus. Problems with technology (i.e.: computer crash, printer malfunction, internet connectivity issues, etc.) are not acceptable excuses for submitting late work. Plan ahead to avoid last minute crises related to submittal of your assignments. Also, assignments will be due online in our e-college course shell, and you are expected to post the assignment by the time and due date specified. (reading responses are NOT accepted late; they are due at the beginning of class on the specified date)

**Classroom Atmosphere:** I envision our classroom as a place where all of us can share our ideas, thoughts, and questions without fear of being made fun of or embarrassed. We all have different beliefs and perspectives and we do not need to agree with each other on everything we discuss in class, but we do have to respect each other at all times and provide constructive feedback and believe that we can all learn from one another. We need to listen to each other at all times, and ask questions rather than ridicule; I envision peaceful and learning enriching discussions for all. Our classroom interaction will be based on respect for all of the writers and readers we encounter this semester.

**Ipods, cell phones, and computers:** Because this is an institution of learning, **ipods and cell phone use is not permitted in the classroom unless for specific educational purposes related to our course.** If you need to take a call, please excuse yourself from class. Text messaging during class is not permitted. Additionally, **you are encouraged to bring your laptops to each of our classes, especially during peer workshop and research days. Your use of laptops is a privilege in class, and they can prove to be a learning-enriching instrument; however, you want to limit your computer use to our**

**classroom activities and assignments *only*.** If you use your computer to complete homework for other courses, check your e-mail, facebook, or text message (not related to course learning), you will kindly be asked to leave class and will receive an absence for the day. As soon as you arrive to class, you should login to our e-college website.

**Office Hours:** During the office hours posted above, I will be in my office and available to talk with you about any questions, comments, or concerns you have about the course. Please stop by and see me during these hours—that time is **YOURS**. If the hours don't work for you, e-mail me to make an appointment.

**eCollege Class Website:** We have a course website we'll use for various activities throughout the course: discussion threads (when applicable); sharing resources on the webliography; accessing handouts for the course; assigned readings, and sometimes submitting course assignments to the course dropbox. Most major assignments (reading responses, essay drafts, etc.), I'll be collecting via hard copy (and sometimes, I will ask you to submit them via e-college in the dropbox as well).

**The Writing Center:** Please refer the TCU Undergraduate Studies Catalog, <http://www.catalog.tcu.edu/undergraduate/>, quoted here: “The Center for Writing offers assistance with writing projects and assignments to all TCU students. Staffed by professional writing instructors and peer consultants, the Center for Writing provides students with one-on-one tutorials free of charge. Conferences usually focus on a particular project or assignment but may also include general writing instruction. The ten PCs in the center's computer lab are available for the use of any TCU student during normal office hours and provide email and Internet access. Located in Reed 419, the Center for Writing is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Students may make an appointment by accessing an online scheduling service through the center's website (at <http://www.wrt.tcu.edu/>) or by calling 817-257-7221. Students may also use the Center for Writing's annex at the library Monday through Friday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday from noon to 4 p.m., and Sunday through Thursday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Those who wish to submit a paper online may do so via the center's website. A consultant will read the paper and offer feedback within 48 hours.”

**Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities:** Please refer to the TCU Undergraduate Studies Catalog <http://www.ugradcouncil.tcu.edu/>, quoted here: “Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 11. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-7486.”

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations and accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. Each eligible student is



responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Coordinator. Guidelines for documentation may be found at <http://www.acs.tcu.edu/DISABILITY.HTM>.

Students with emergency medical information or needing special arrangements in case a building must be evacuated should discuss this information with their instructor/professor as soon as possible.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Refer to the TCU Undergraduate Studies Catalog.

<http://www.catalog.tcu.edu/undergraduate/>, as quoted here: “An academic community requires the highest standards of honor and integrity in all of its participants if it is to fulfill its missions. In such a community faculty, students, and staff are expected to maintain high standards of academic conduct.” The purpose of this policy is to make all aware of these expectations. Additionally, the policy outlines some, but not all, of the situations which can arise that violate these standards. Further, the policy sets forth a set of procedures, characterized by a "sense of fair play," which will be used when these standards are violated. In this spirit, definitions of academic misconduct are listed below. These are not meant to be exhaustive.

**Plagiarism:** The appropriation, theft, purchase, or obtaining by any means another’s work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one’s own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another’s work without giving credit therefore. **Collusion:** The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit. **Fabrication and falsification:** Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification involves altering information for use in any academic exercise. Fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise. **Multiple Submission:** The submission by the same individual of substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once in the same or another class without authorization. **Complicity in academic misconduct:** Helping another to commit an act of academic misconduct. All cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Director of Composition. Sanctions imposed for cases of academic misconduct range from zero credit for the assignment to expulsion from the University. This policy applies to homework and drafts as well as final papers.

Tentative Schedule Spring 2010

Week	Tuesday	Thursday	Assignments Due
<b>1— Jan. 11 &amp; 13</b>  <i>Introducti on to course</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to course</li> <li>• Introductory Letter</li> <li>• The language of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The Historical Struggle for Language Rights in Conference on College Composition and Communication” by Genva Smitherman</li> </ul>	<i>Introductory Letter Due Friday, Jan. 14th by 5:00p.m.</i>  <b>Thursday:</b>

<p><b>Project 1:</b> <i>How do I use language?</i></p>	<p>course syllabus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Former 20803 students' experiences in the course</li> <li><b>LaNgUaGe FuN sign-up</b></li> </ul>	<p>(Reading on e-college)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethos, pathos, logos and the Rhetorical Triangle (Handout on e-college under doc sharing)</li> <li>MLA Letter to Governor Jan Brewer (e-college link)</li> <li><b>LaNgUaGe FuN</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>Bring hardcopies of readings with marginal annotations.</i></p>
<p><b>2— Jan. 18 &amp; 20</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Assign Project #1</b></li> <li>“How to Tame a Wild Tongue?” by Gloria Anzaldua (Reading on e-college)</li> <li>“Mother Tongue” by Amy Tan</li> <li>“Father” by LL Cool J (on Weblibliography—listen to the lyrics and analyze his use of language as well as how the music video contributes to the meaning of the song and the language)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brainstorming Activity</li> <li>Read Sample Student Projects located on e-college under docsharing.</li> <li><b>LaNgUaGe FuN</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday &amp; Thursday:</b> <i>Bring hardcopies of readings with marginal annotations</i></p> <p><b>Tuesday:</b> <i>Rhetorical Response 1 Due</i></p> <p><b>Thursday:</b></p>
<p><b>3— Jan. 25 &amp; 27</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Learning through Response” by Alice Gillam</li> <li>“Rhetorical Situations” Grant-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Project #1 Draft #1 Due</b> (Please post on e-college before class time; either bring hard copies of your</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> Bring your annotated notes on read as well as</p>

	<p>Davie</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer Workshop/Response modeling</li> <li>What is effective peer response?</li> <li>Previous experiences with peer response?</li> <li>Drafting activity</li> <li>One-on-one conferences</li> </ul>	<p>draft or your lap tops in order to engage in peer workshop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comment on at least two peer's projects by employing the effective peer response strategies we discussed on Tuesday and by addressing the peer response questions.</li> </ul>	<p>brainstorming /drafting ideas/progress to class.</p> <p><b>Thursday:</b> Draft #1 Due</p>
<p>4— Feb. 1 &amp; 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer group workshop</li> <li>Revision Activity</li> <li>Bring all peer response feedback and my feedback to class</li> <li>One-on-one conferences</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>SNOW DAYS</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Final Revised Project #1 Due</b></li> <li><b>Discuss assignment/readings due Tuesday, Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>LaNgUaGe FuN</b></p> <p>-----</p> <p>----</p> <p><b>SNOW DAYS</b></p>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> bring all feedback</p> <p><b>Thursday:</b> Final Revised Project #1 Due</p>
<b>Week</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
<p>5— Feb. 8 &amp; 10</p> <p><i>Unit 2:</i> <i>How does language work in public, real-time situations?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Assign Project #2</b></li> <li>Group Activity: Analyzing a public, real time situation.</li> <li>Discussion on reading and speech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rhetorical Response #2 Due</li> <li>Sample Project #2 Discussion</li> <li>*Discuss youtube transcript feature (a way to help you choose key words/phrases)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> Bring all readings and marginal annotations</p> <p><b>Thursday:</b> Rhetorical Response #2 Due</p> <p><b>Friday:</b> Post</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Rhetorical Listening: A Trope for Interpretive Invention and a ‘Code of Cross-Cultural Conduct’ by Krista Ratcliffe (print, read, and annotate reading; bring notes to class)</li> <li>• The 2011 State of the Union Address delivered by President Obama. (View about 20 minutes of the speech; you can begin viewing at any point; you might consider a section that is of interest to you).</li> <li>• Please take notes and address the questions on e-college. Be prepared to discuss in class</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZdEmjtF6HE">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZdEmjtF6HE</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real time language analysis Project #2 ideas and brainstorming</li> <li>• Share ideas</li> <li>• One-on-one conferences</li> <li>• Begin drafting Project #2 Draft #1</li> <li>• <b>LaNgUaGe FuN</b></li> </ul>	<p>ideas for Project #2 by 3:00.</p> <p>*Begin writing notes/drafting this weekend.</p>
<p><b>6— Feb. 15 &amp; 17</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm and draft project #2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Draft #1 Due</b> Peer response workshop</li> <li>• <b>LaNgUaGe FuN</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> <i>Drafting and brainstorming</i></p> <p><b>Thursday:</b></p>

			<i>Draft #1 due</i>
<b>7— Feb. 22 &amp; 24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision Activity</li> <li>• Bring all feedback</li> <li>• Identifying a controlling idea</li> <li>• One-on-one conferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision/work day</li> <li>• <b>No class today</b>; I will attend and present at a conference.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> Revision Activity</p> <p><b>Thursday:</b> No class-Revision/work day</p> <p><b>Monday, Feb. 28th:</b> Final Revised Project #2 due by 3:00 electronically in the dropbox and hardcopy on my desk.</p> <p>*Complete reading on Collaborative Writing by class time on Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>.</p>
<b>Week</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
<b>8— Mar. 1 &amp; 3</b>  <b>Project 3:</b> How does the language used in various perspectives influence the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Project #3 assignment collaboratively</li> <li>• “Collaborative Writing” by Beth Henschen and Edward I. Sidlow</li> <li>• Please read this article by class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Rogerian Arguments”</li> <li>• “Don’t Make English Official—Ban It Instead” by Dennis Baron</li> <li>• “A Nation Divided by One Language” By James Crawford</li> <li>• “English Only and</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> Bring all reading annotations to class.</p> <p><b>Revision Plan Memo for Project #1 Due</b></p> <p><b>Thursday:</b> Readings</p>

<p>argument? (Collaborative)</p>	<p>time, and please write notes; be prepared to discuss in class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Revision Plan Memo for Project #1 Due</b></li> </ul>	<p>U.S. College Composition” By Bruce Horner and John Trimbur</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Be prepared to discuss readings and your additional source on the issue.</i></li> <li>• <b>Rhetorical Response #3 due Friday</b> See detailed assignment on e-college</li> <li>• Whole class discussion based on different perspectives of arguments using Rogerian Argument</li> <li>• Discuss collaborative commitment with peers</li> <li>• <b>LaNgUaGe FuN</b></li> </ul>	<p>Due—be prepared to discuss all four readings in class and bring your additional source on the issue of English-only vs. English-plus. <i>Your additional source should address another perspective on the issue.</i></p> <p><b>Friday:</b> <i>Rhetorical Response 3 Due in the dropbox by 5:00p.m.</i></p>
<p><b>9— Mar. 8 &amp; 10</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Research day</li> <li>• Research your issue of interest</li> <li>• Bring at least <b>three sources</b> from the perspective you chose to investigate. These should be sources you would like to analyze in terms of how they use language to make their arguments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhetorical Response #4 work day with collaborative group or individually (will vary depending on your perspective on the issue you selected; please analyze at least three main, credible sources in detail)</li> <li>• Please bring your research sources and/or your lap tops.</li> <li>• Peer response feedback within your</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> Collaborative Research Day; bring at least three sources each from your respective perspective.</p> <p>Collaborative commitment due</p> <p><b>Thursday:</b> RR 4 workday/research day with collaborative</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative Commitment Due by 10:15a.m. (20803.015) and 1:15p.m. (20803.045).</li> <li>• View language fun mediums</li> </ul>	<p>collaborative groups on RR4. <i>Please respond to your collaborative group's RR4 by class time on Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss progress you will make over Spring Break</li> <li>• <b>Begin draft of Collaborative Report</b></li> <li>• <b>LaNgUaGe FuN</b></li> </ul>	<p>group.</p> <p><b>Friday:</b> RR4 due by 5:00p.m. on Friday in the dropbox.</p>
<b>10— Mar. 15 &amp; 17</b>	<b>Spring Break—No class</b>	<b>Spring Break—No class</b>	<b>Be Safe!</b>  *Please respond to all your group member's Rhetorical Response #4; please post your feedback by class time on Tuesday, March 22nd.
<b>11— Mar. 22 &amp; 24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss your feedback on RR4 with your collaborative groups</li> <li>• Discuss your Collaborative Report—what claims you will make in terms of how language is used to discuss</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Writing Together Metaphorically and Bodily Side-by-Side: An Inquiry into Collaborative Academic Writing” by Stephen M. Ritchie and Donna Rigano</li> <li>• <b>Collaborative Report and Medium draft work day</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> Come to class prepared to discuss the reading, discuss your feedback on RR4, and plans for your collaborative report.</p> <p><b>Revised Project #1</b></p>

	<p>the issue (from different perspectives) and what you propose needs to be done (what is your message/argument, who will be your audience, what will be your medium, and what language will YOU use). Bring your analysis of the sources (RR4) in order to discuss with your group members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss how Rogerian argument or a common ground might be applied to your issue and what might be your controlling idea/argument about how language is used among the different perspectives within your issue.</li> <li>• <b>Revised Project #1 Due.</b></li> <li>• <b>Revision Plan Memo for Project #2 Due</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm the medium you will create, your audience, the purpose of the message, and the language you will use</li> <li>• <b>Revision Day (in-class)</b></li> <li>• On creating Proposals reading due (on e-college)</li> <li>• Draft Collaborative Medium</li> </ul>	<p><b>Due.</b></p> <p><b>Revision Plan Memo for Project #2 Due</b></p> <p><b>Thursday:</b> Collaborative Report Due by 5:00p.m. and plan draft medium.</p>
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<b>12— Mar. 29 &amp; 31</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Revision Day (revise RR4 and Collaborative report)</b></li> <li>• Brainstorming activity</li> <li>• Medium draft work day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collaborative Medium Draft Due</b></li> <li>• <b>Whole class workshop on all five groups' mediums.</b></li> <li>• <b>Final Revised Project #3 Due Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup> by 5:00p.m.</b></li> <li>• <b>LaNgUaGe FuN</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> Revision Day</p> <p><b>Thursday:</b> Collaborative Medium Draft</p>
<b>13— Apr. 5 &amp; 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Project #3 Portfolio Due by class time</b></li> <li>• Assign Project #4</li> <li>• <b>Plan Ideas for Project 4</b></li> <li>• Review learning skills throughout semester and how you will apply them to your Project #4</li> <li>• Brainstorm/Discuss Project</li> <li>• Bring lap tops to conduct research</li> </ul>	<p><i>I will attend and present at the Conference on College Composition and Communication—No Class</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Argument Proposals</b> (please address the questions on e-college). <b>Fyi:</b> part of your proposal might be included in your Rhetorical Analysis of Project #4</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> <b>Project #3 Portfolio Due by class time both hardcopy and electronic.</b></p> <p>Begin brainstorming for Project #4.</p> <p><b>Thursday:</b> No class Work on Argument Proposal Due Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup> by class time (post on e-college)</p>
<b>Week</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>
<b>14— Apr. 12 &amp; 14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin drafting Project #4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafting Day</li> <li>• One-on-one Conference day</li> </ul>	<b>Tuesday:</b> Argument Proposal Due

<p><b>Project #4:</b> How should I use language for the purposes of creating change?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argument Proposal Due</li> <li>• Research/drafting day</li> <li>• <b>Revised Project #2 Due</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas and progress on your work due</li> </ul>	<p><b>Revised Project #2 Due</b></p> <p><b>Thursday:</b> Drafting day ideas and progress on your work due.</p>
<p><b>15— Apr. 19 &amp; 21</b></p> <p><i>Final Revisions, Reflective Letter, and Medium</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project 4 Draft #1 due for peer response</li> <li>• <b>Post on e-college the following:</b> 1) a draft of your “medium” 2) a draft of your analytical report (including context of issue, analysis of diverse perspectives on issue, and analysis of your rhetorical choices for your medium—more on this on e-college, which parts of this might come from your Proposal)</li> <li>• <b>Bring your laptop or hard copies of your drafts for peer workshop</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Course Reflective Letter assign</li> <li>• <b>LaNgUaGe FuN</b></li> <li>• Revision activity/work day on RR5 and Extra Credit.</li> <li>• Course Evaluations</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> Bring all revisions and feedback</p> <p><b>Thursday:</b> Revise Project #4</p>

<p><b>16— Apr. 26 &amp; 28</b></p> <p><i>Final Revisions, Reflective Letter, and Medium</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-on-one conference day</li> <li>• Final Exam discussion</li> <li>• Review/Revision day</li> </ul>	<p><b>Study day—No class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Work on final revisions for Project 4.</b></li> <li>• <b>Project 4 Due Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> during finals.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Tuesday:</b> Course Reflective Letter Due</p> <p><b>Wednesday:</b> Rhetorical Response 5 Due and Extra Credit Due</p>
<p><b>17—</b></p>	<p><b>Final Exam: Oral Presentation of your Medium for Project #4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Project #4 (with the Course Reflective Letter) will be due Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at the beginning of your final exam hour.</b></li> <li>• <b>For the 9:30-10:50 class, the final exam will be on Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 8:00-10:30a.m.</b></li> <li>• <b>For the 12:30-1:50 class, the final exam will be on Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 11:30-2:00p.m.</b></li> </ul>		

## APPENDIX D

Ms. Alyssa G. Cavazos | English 20803—Intermediate Composition: Writing as Argument

### **Project 1— Self-reflection/analysis of Language as Argument**

#### **Purpose of Project:**

This project requires you to analyze how you use language to make minor and/or major arguments and/or connect/communicate with others. Once you analyze your language, you can discuss how your use of language is a representation of your identity. If you know languages other than English, please consider thinking about this assignment as it relates to other languages. We've discussed the rhetorical triangle and strategies people use to connect with others and/or make arguments, such as ethos, logos, pathos, and kairos, and we've discussed the importance of language use regarding people's identity. Now, you will have the opportunity to analyze your own language use!

#### **Description of Project:**

Describe **how you use language to either make major/minor arguments and/or connect with others; how this is a part of your identity as a human being, and based on this analysis, what argument can you make about the function of language?** A specific situation might include: a time when you had to direct a play; asked your teammates to collaborate; convince a friend, parent, or teacher to join your perspective on an issue; convince your organization to participate in a particular event; talked about the importance of reading to young children; worked collaboratively with coworkers/team members). Describe to your readers the situation; consider the following questions:

- *what was the purpose/objective? What were you trying to accomplish? Why?*
- *Who was your audience? How did you appeal to your audience? How did they respond?*
- *How did you find yourself explaining ideas? What language did you use? What words/phrases did you repeat or emphasize?*
- *Why was it important to use this language?*

Once you describe the situation, context, and your language use in narrative form, you should analyze the rhetorical situation (you want to intersperse narrative and analysis throughout your draft). As you reflect and analyze, **describe how you used ethos, pathos, logos, kairos, and/or the rhetorical situation to make an argument/connect with others.** Based on your knowledge of your audience (who they are, what they believe, how they think, what they expect), how did you appeal to them through rhetorical appeals? Think about **what influenced you use language this way?** What came before might have influenced how you handled the situation (i.e. Did you employ a successful strategy from the past, from listening to your parents, friends, and/or family members? Did you finally speak up after years of keeping quiet? Did you find yourself acting like a parent?).

Finally, you can choose to write a traditional narrative/analysis essay for this project, but you are also welcome to think about how you might complete the objectives of this project in any other form or genre (i.e. interview form, song, play script, etc.). Whether you choose to write a traditional narrative/analysis or any other genre, you are required to identify a specific audience (i.e. why might they be interested in your reading about your experiences with language?) and make your project available to them (i.e. through the medium or genre you choose).

In the end, your project should include:

- a description of the situation/event/context and your purpose and audience;
- an analysis of the rhetorical strategies used to make arguments
- an analysis, description, and examples of how you used language to “fit” your purpose/appeal to your audience
- a controlling argument or idea you want to make about how language works based on your experiences, and how your language is a representation of your identity. Your controlling argument should slowly develop through your descriptions (i.e. a controlling idea or argument about language may be your repetitious use of ethos/pathos/logos or a question you pose about your own language use). It may take an entire first draft to discover your controlling argument, how to organize your essay, or how to analyze your language use.
- Finally, an appropriate genre or medium to present the objectives of this project in order to reach your intended audience

Remember, you are working from memory and it may take several drafts to discover the meaning of your experience analysis of how you have used language in the past. Also, you are encouraged to include any images or visuals that contribute to or enhance your argument.

## APPENDIX E

Ms. Alyssa G. Cavazos

English 20803.020—Intermediate Composition: Writing as Argument

### Project 2: Public (real-time) Language Analysis as Argument

*“through listening, we can avail ourselves with more possibilities for inventing arguments that bring differences together...we can listen to the harmony and/or discordant notes, knowing that more than meets the eye lies before us” (Ratcliffe 203)*

**Purpose:** For this second project, you will choose to analyze the language used in a real time, live, and/or public situation in your community, neighborhood, television, radio, church, organization meeting, community activists’ meeting, etc. (in any language you understand and are able to analyze). You should have access to the transcripts or record their conversation (with permission/approval) in order to analyze the language. This assignment will allow you and your classmates to analyze how people use language in real-time/spoken situations, what drives their choices, what effect it has on others, and why it makes sense to use language in this way. In addition to the transcripts, please keep any additional print texts that were distributed, discussed, or viewed. If you know languages other than English, please consider analyzing your public/real-time subject in languages other than English and/or both.

**Objective:** The primary objective of your project is to analyze, in detail, how individuals use language in real-time to make arguments. Your objective is to analyze **the Rhetorical Situation and its Constituents** (i.e. Exigence, Rhetors, Audiences, Constraints, and Discourse/Language used) and how the rhetor employs **Rhetorical Listening** (i.e. understanding, responsibility logic, and commonalities and differences), in their use of language.

**The following are some of the questions you should consider as you analyze the situation:** how does the language (i.e. specific words, phrases, objects, visuals) illustrate or enhance the argument or appeal to the audiences? You want to be vigilant of specific words/phrases/objects/visuals that the rhetor(s) use and whether or not they contain certain connotations or how they convey the rhetor(s) beliefs/values? How are the rhetor’s values/beliefs/arguments areas of commonality or difference with the audience’s beliefs/values. Does the rhetor use metaphors, similes, or analogies to connect with the audience? Does the rhetor use personal experiences, facts/surveys/studies? How so? What kind of rhetorical appeals are made to connect with the audience? How do others respond? How do YOU respond? Are you a part of the audience? What language do they use? Language is one of most powerful rhetorical tools, and you want to make sure you analyze this language in detail. Is the language manipulated to achieve certain purposes? What purposes? How so?

As you analyze these various constituents identified by Grant-Davie, you also want to consider how rhetorical appeals are employed and used; for example, *pathos*, *ethos*,

*logos, and kairos.* Keep in mind that these rhetorical appeals are present in the rhetors use of language as they try to accomplish the goals of rhetorical listening, if present.

**Rhetorical Listening:** As you use rhetorical listening to analyze the situation, you also want to analyze how well the rhetor uses rhetorical listening through their use of language. Keep in mind that “**rhetorical Listening is another way of helping us continually negotiate our always evolving standpoints, our identities, with the always evolving standpoints of others**” (Ratcliffe 209). Therefore, through your analysis of the situation, you want to employ rhetorical listening regarding your own relationship to the issue/topic/situation you analyze; however, you also want to consider how the rhetor employs rhetorical listening in relation to the topic/issue and his/her audience and how this is evident in their use of language.

In your project, you want to employ “**understanding**” or “**standing under**” by acknowledging the various uses of language and listening with intent as you work on analyzing the situation and the rhetor’s use of language. At the same time, you also want to listen for how the rhetor listens or how he/she employs rhetorical listening—how he/she aims to understand the self and others. As the critic of the discourse, you also want to employ **responsibility logic** by acknowledging your own ideas, beliefs, values and how these might place a constraint on your analysis of the situation. Additionally, you want to listen for how the rhetor uses responsibility logic; whether they operate from a defensive/guilt standpoint or if they genuinely understand the constraints influencing their decision and/or connection with the audience. Finally, as the epigraph above states, you want to listen for the *harmony* and *the discordant notes*; you want to listen for your own **commonalities** and **differences** with the issue/situation. And, you also want to listen for the how the rhetor appears to listen for commonalities and differences.

Eventually, you want provide evidence of **whether or not** the rhetor’s use of language reflects the presence/use of rhetorical listening. The evidence you provide will be based on examples of the language used by the rhetor. Through rhetorical listening, you will be able to analyze the language used by the rhetor in the situation you analyze. You also want to be vigilant of how the **rhetor’s** use of language (discourse) fits the **exigence** of the situation, appeals to the **audiences**, and acknowledges **constraints**. Please use the handout on rhetorical listening to help you analyze the situation.

**Requirements:** In the end, your public (real-time) language analysis as argument should include the following:

- 1) A description and analysis of the context—the rhetorical situation (i.e. Exigence, Rhetors, Audiences, Constraints, language).
- 2) Analysis of the language used in the rhetorical, real-time situation you observed (i.e. rhetorical appeals, such as ethos, pathos, logos kairos.)
- 3) Evidence that you analyzed the real-time, public situation through rhetorical listening (i.e. by using understanding, responsibility logics as you analyze the situation, and identifying commonalities and differences among the various

constituents) and by identifying how the rhetor uses (or not) rhetorical listening in their speech/rhetorical situation.

- 4) Finally, what argument do you want to make about language based on your description and analysis of the situation. Remember, it may take you an entire first draft to discover what your argument/controlling idea might be; however, the most important aspect of your project is your ability to analyze the argumentative situation in detail and your ability to reflect on your analysis in order to discover the argument *you* want to make about language.



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## VITA

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## ABSTRACT

### LATINA/OS IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION: LEARNING FROM THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

By Alyssa G. Cavazos, Ph.D., 2012  
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*Latina/os in Rhetoric and Composition: Learning from their Experiences with Language Diversity* explores how Latina/o academics' experiences with language difference contributes to their Latina/o academic identity and success in academe while remaining connected to their heritage language and cultural background. Using qualitative data (interviews with ten new and established Latina/o academics), Cavazos addresses how the participants became self-aware of their resilient qualities, such as problem-solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose, which assisted them in identifying strategies to effectively merge identities and languages in academia. One of the major findings in this study focuses on how the participants' knowledge of language difference and their ability to see their identities and languages as merged in academia contributes to their success as Latina/o academics.

In order for Latina/os to achieve success in higher education, this study suggests that institutions of higher education and pedagogical approaches must view language and cultural difference as valid ways of making knowledge in the academy. Institutions

should not only create spaces that convey a genuine sense of community for Latina/os (i.e., an academic community that values their language strengths and background) but also make efforts to train and hire mentors who recognize the strengths of multilingual students. A better understanding of how Latina/o academics merge identities and languages and how language difference enhances academia results in a multilingual pedagogy that increases faculty and students' understanding of language, rhetoric, and rhetorical strategies. A multilingual pedagogy aims to not only help students become successful writers in academic English, but also encourage them to identify the resilient, rhetorical, and linguistic strategies that will assist them in negotiating diverse contexts. In order to increase the success of Latina/o students in higher education and academia, Cavazos argues that institutions, faculty, and programs should invest in creating opportunities that will help everyone learn from multilingual students' language strengths in order to challenge language hegemony and expand knowledge-making in academia.