Farming Practices as Funds of Knowledge for Multilingual Learners

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Purpose
This OSR project builds upon IUPUC teacher preparation coursework on integrating diverse funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992; González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) for TESOL candidates and curricula. Recent research has demonstrated the value of including and learning from farming practices as funds of knowledge and expertise. This grounded theory qualitative practice (Harper, 2016) project builds on this research by seeking to understand farming practices as valuable cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge, and to integrate these perspectives into a revised lesson plan introducing the concept of funds of knowledge to a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom.

Methods
- Preparing educators to practice humanizing pedagogies that draw upon EU’s pooled funds of knowledge can support students in developing critical literacy skills, and to participate in the process for equity by connecting their lived experiences to school curricula.

Lesson Introduction
- Develop a lesson plan that introduces the concept, funds of knowledge, to elementary students in a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom. Funds of knowledge refers to the knowledge and skills that students bring from their homes and cultural communities (e.g., home language use, family values and traditions, caregiving practices, occupational knowledge, etc.).

Key Terms/Vocabulary:
- Community: a group of people living in the same place or who have a particular characteristic in common.
- Countries: A nation with its own government in a certain territory.
- Culture: the arts, institutions, traditions, values, customs, beliefs, and behavioral patterns of a particular nation, people, or other social groups.

Sustainable Farming
- The activity or business of growing crops and raising livestock, in a way that can be supported over time.

Assessment and Reflection:
- Students will describe similar and different sustainable farming practices across three regions: Guatemala, Honduras, and the U.S.

Results
The findings from this study confirm that culture shapes and is shaped by farming practices, and demonstrates contrasts between U.S. and international regions in how culture and farming practices shape each other. Interview analyses revealed key concepts across regions in the following thematic areas: automated vs. manual labor, climate impact on food production, individual vs. social farming, institutionalized vs. personalized practices, and the politics of land ownership.

Farming Practices as Funds of Knowledge
This study demonstrate ways culture shapes farming and shape one another, and reveal farming practices as a significant fund of knowledge that students and their families may bring to a classroom and school community. Understanding regional and international farming practices as connected with student culture supports teachers in integrating this particular fund of knowledge into curriculum and instruction.

Implications for Elementary Curricula & Instruction