



**IUPUC  
OFFICE OF STUDENT  
RESEARCH**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY  
COLUMBUS

**Introduction**

The Columbus region continues to grow in cultural and linguistic diversity. It is essential for schools to respond to this growth by becoming more inclusive and supportive communities for our diverse student populations, and for these communities to experience feeling valued as members of the Columbus community, as well as the state and nation. This work also involves supporting primarily English-speaking students who have lived here for multiple generations in recognizing that they are part of the cultural and linguistic diversity of these communities.

**Study Purpose**

This study seeks to understand how 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, in a public elementary Spanish immersion program share, learn about and connect with one another's cultural and linguistic similarities and differences through a shared art-based autobiographical project. This involves designing and implementing a lesson plan based on the autobiographical children's book authored by the student researcher about a family member's own cultural and linguistic background and journey to the U.S. This study will examine how students are inspired by the author's story to explore their own and others' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including the cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge (Moll, 2019; Moll, et al., 1992) students gain from one another, as they share their stories with one another. This lesson plan will support students in learning how to navigate intercultural and interlinguistic challenges, and to identify approaches for working through these challenges to live as a diverse, inclusive community.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Funds of Knowledge**

This study is based on Moll, et al.'s, (1992) concept of funds of knowledge, which aims to establish "joint household research between classroom teachers and university-based researchers" leading to "ethnographically informed classroom practices" (p. 132). Moll et al. (1992) found there is great value in home-visits in which teachers "assume the role of the learner, and in doing so, help establish a fundamentally new, more symmetrical relationship with the parents of the students" (Moll et al., 1992, p. 139). The authors highlight that this innovative concept, *funds of knowledge*, does not "replace the concept of culture," but emphasizes more specifically the "strategic knowledge and related activities essential in households' functioning, development, and well-being," and the "social, economic, and productive activities of people in a local region" that may be integrated meaningfully into classrooms (p. 139).

**Methods**

**Community Engaged Research**

This study practices community engaged research (CER) shaping how data is collected and understood (Bay & Swacha, 2020). Community-engaged research is committed to "local, trans-local, and contextual analysis" leading to "social and institutional transformation" (Berman, 2008, p. 516). This study practices community-engaged research in that a primary focus is agency-building (Berman, 2008), relationship-building (Liu, in review), and "understanding the complexities of the human experience" more mindfully (Bay & Swacha, 2020, p. 136).

**Community Engaged Project**

The student researcher's children book, an immigration story, is read and discussed among a class of 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. The children are guided through open discussions exploring the topics of diversity, immigration, and cultural values. Students will be encouraged both to share and ask about their classmates' backgrounds including family structures and values, languages and linguistic practices, cultural foods and nutrition, traditions for celebrating and remembering, music and artistic expressions, and any other cultural or linguistic topic significant to the students. As students explore their differences and similarities, these discussions will lead to an art-based (Irwin et al., 2006) autobiographical product to highlight a part of their culture, as well as art-based autobiographical products for 3-4 classmates who share together in a small group, to demonstrate the funds of knowledge (Moll, 2019; Moll et al., 1992) gained through learning about others. Through observations and analysis of the children's interactions with each other and written biographies, we can gather and interpret what the students learn from this study and how their views about themselves and their peers are affected through open dialogues about diversity. The findings will focus on student social interactions and the influence that discussions of cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom can have on learning and development.

**Data Sources**

The teacher gathered student culture journals from 46 students across two 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Spanish immersion classrooms. The researchers recognize this is a limited data set that does not seek to generalize findings to all contexts. The findings here seek to highlight the learning outcomes from culturally and linguistically inclusive curricula that may be meaningfully transferable to additional teaching contexts.

**Data Analysis: Constant Comparative Analysis**

In this art-based (Irwin et al., 2006), community engaged inquiry (Bay & Swacha, 2020) constant comparative analysis, as defined by Merriam and Tisdell (20105), seeks to identify convergent and divergent themes across student products that were created during the story lesson plan. Analysis seeks to go beyond traditional quantitative approaches by generating relationships as a meaningful research outcome, along with qualitative findings (Bay & Swacha, 2020).

**Lesson Plan Description**

**Academic Standards & Learning Outcomes**

- Language Arts: 2.SL.2.1 - Participate in collaborative conversations about grade-appropriate topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- Social Studies: 2.2.4 - Describe how people of different ages, cultural backgrounds and traditions contribute to the community and how all citizens can respect these differences.
- WIDA English Language Development Standard 5: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Studies.

**Learning Outcomes:** As a result of this lesson, students will be able to identify and compare cultural and linguistic values of peers in their classroom.

**Lesson Assessment**

**Culture Journal-** Compare and contrast cultures in the classroom. Students wrote or drew about their own cultures. Then, students were put in groups of 4, and were encouraged to ask their peers about their cultural values. Students wrote or drew pictures demonstrating similarities and differences between their cultures.

**Lesson Learning Activities**

**Introduction:** Read "La Gran Aventura de Gabriel/Gabriel's Great Adventure", along with questions relating to the story.

**Lesson Activities:** Students are placed in groups of 4-6 students. They create a guided cultural autobiography, being as creative as they would like, responding to the prompts assigned. They are then encouraged to ask 2-3 friends about their cultures and write/draw about what they learn, following the assigned prompts.

**Lesson Conclusion:** Lead students in a class discussion that highlights the meaning of culture. Informally assess in the discussion and formally in student books for awareness and understanding of student culture along with respect for peer difference. Through sharing and discussion, students should be able to relate more with one another and value each other's cultural and linguistic identity.

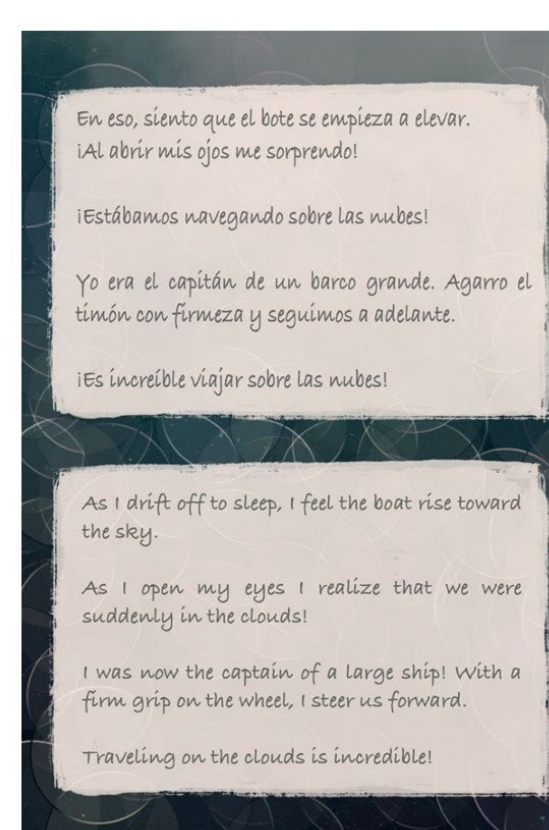
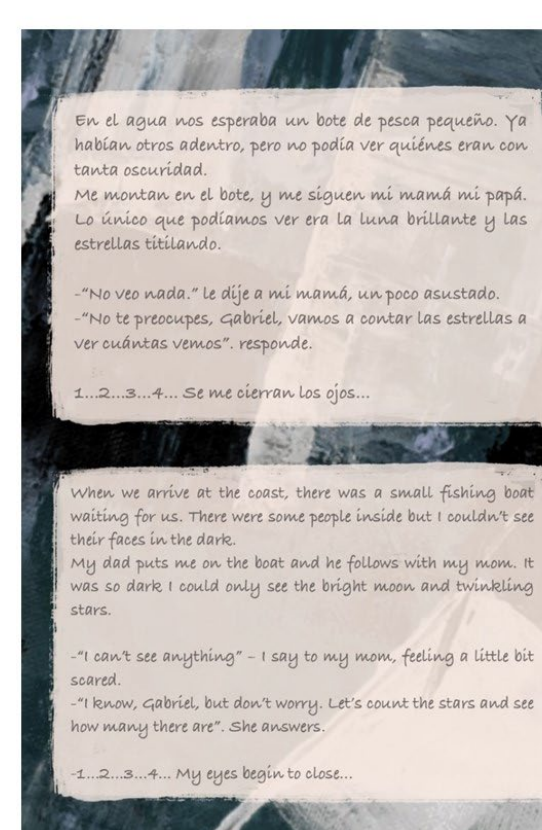
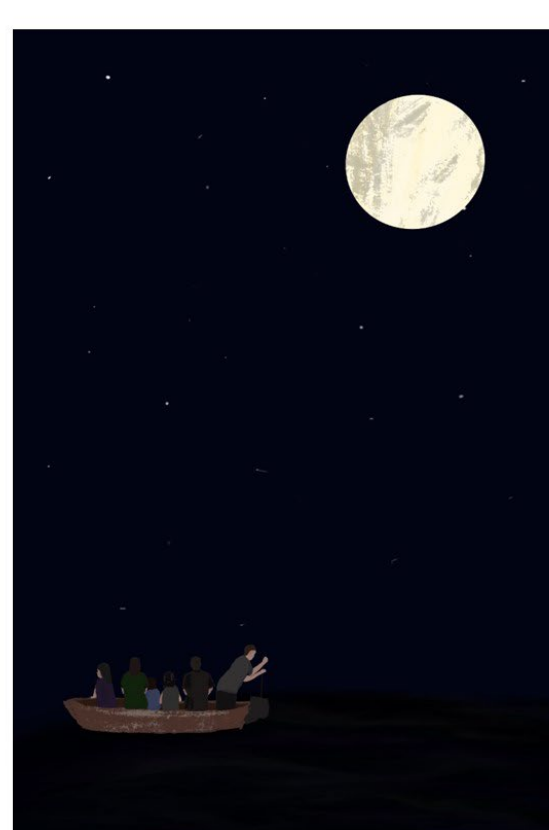
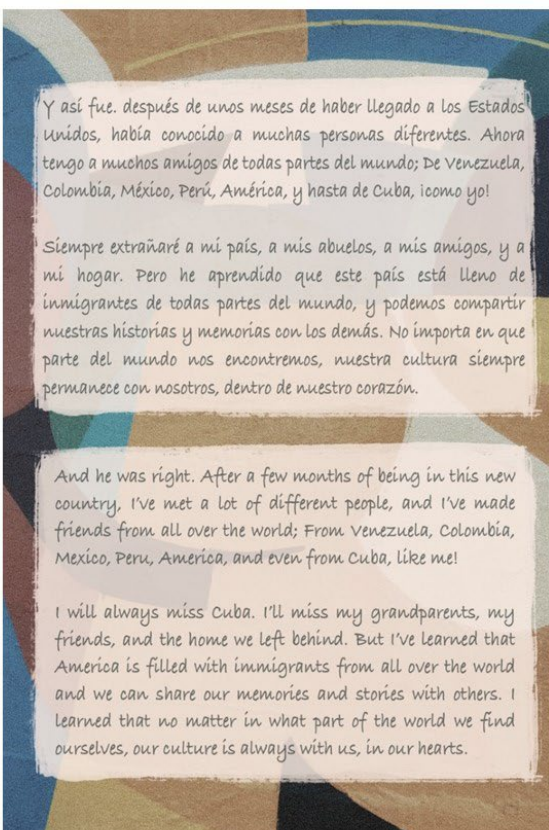
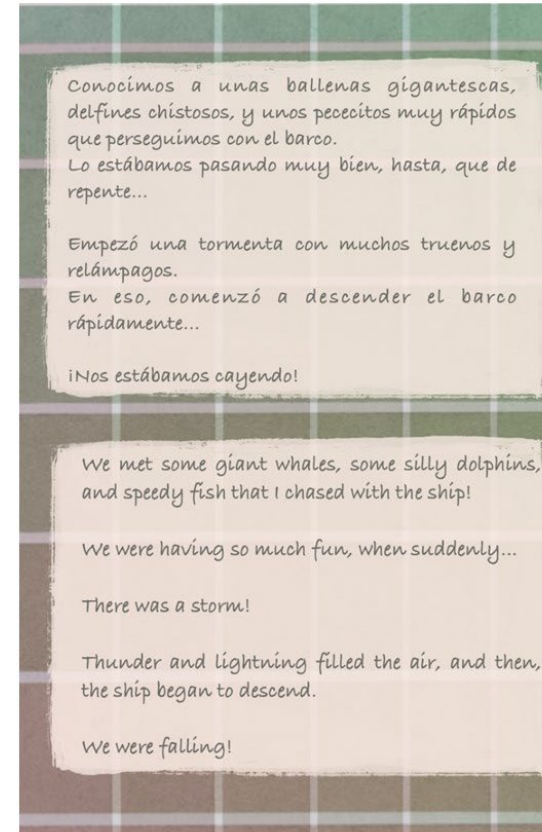
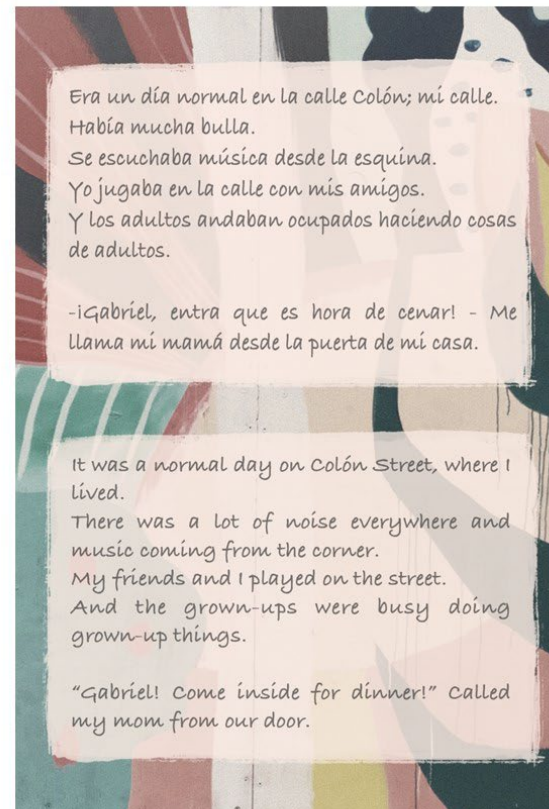
# Sharing Our Stories Aprendiendo de Nuestras Historias

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**Bilingual Story**

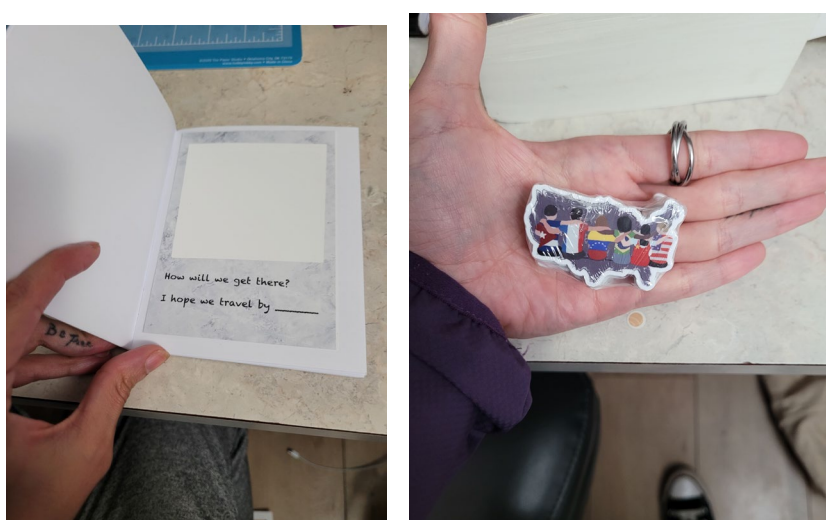
**La Gran Aventura de Gabriel by Anakarína Hurtado**



**Community Story Sharing**



Bartholomew County Public Library  
Blackwell Park Story Walk



Richards Elementary School Multicultural Festival

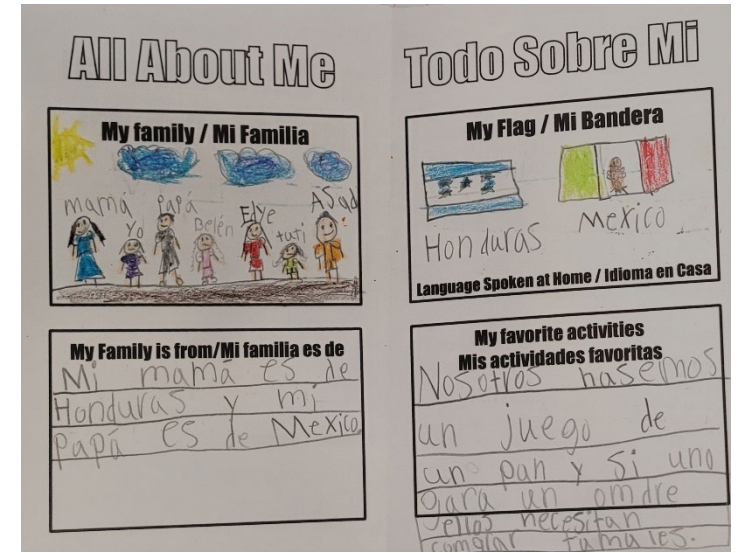
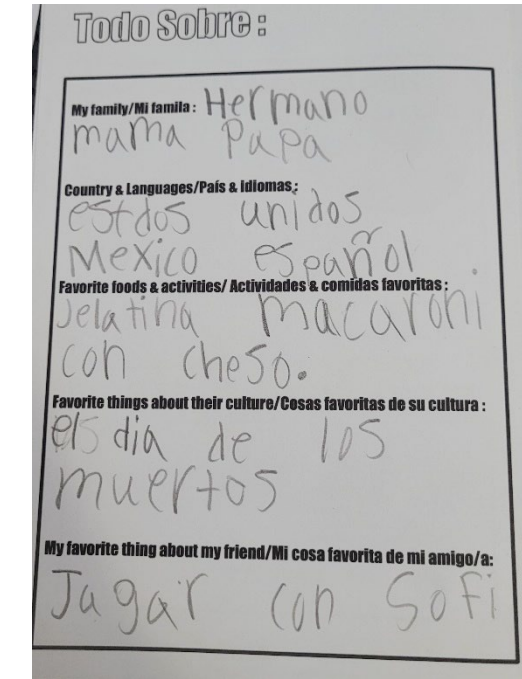


Bartholomew County Public Library  
Bilingual Storytime

**Findings**

Clifty Creek Legado Spanish  
Immersion Academy 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

**Student Products**



**Teaching Reflection**

- Parents and educators tend to associate cultural differences to other countries and disregard the culture in the U.S. There are many cultural differences within the US, as well. The language we use when teaching about culture should be more intentional, including the diversity within different regions around the U.S.
- Students who move from a different area of the U.S. have similar fears and feelings as those who migrate from a different country. They also are moving to a new place. Having open class discussions about this increases student empathy toward peers and acceptance of diversity.
- Students' curiosity increased when they found out that the book read was based on a real story of someone in their community. This supports the idea that kids are more receptive to real stories shared in the form of children's books and are more engaged in what is taught.
- Students were apprehensive of what "culture" meant at the beginning of the lesson, but seemed more excited talking about their culture after understanding that it can be anything they practice that others may or may not practice. Examples students gave were holidays/celebrations, food they eat at home, and the language or dialect they speak at home.

**Discussion & Implications**

**Implications for Teaching Practice**

- Kids are very receptive to real stories from community members.
- Children can easily relate to immigrants and those who are different if we are intentional in the way we phrase things. For example, kids who move from a different state have similar experiences to those who come from a different country (minus the language barrier), because it is still a new and, often, scary place at first. Acknowledging this may be helpful in teaching children to be more accepting of those who are different or migrate from another place.
- Our community greatly benefits from parent authors sharing their personal stories and funds of knowledge through children's books. This spreads cultural awareness and teaches children to appreciate their own culture and other cultures around the world.

**Implications for Education Policy**

- Our interpretation of culture is limited, and we often disregard US culture when teaching it.
- Culture is everywhere and in everything we do. It is important to be more conscious about it, specifically when teaching.

**Implications for Education Research**

- This study encourages community engaged research (CER) in education and teacher education involving learning communities (Parkson, 2009) of students, families, teachers, teacher candidates, faculty, and other community partners in a mutual exchange of shared learning.
- This study encourages future research exploring the learning impact of student sharing of stories in class, specifically if this increases empathy and understanding of diversity across other classroom contexts.
- This study encourages future research to explore the learning impact of story sharing by local authors whose stories come from the community.

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