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# Tales for a teacher's toolbox: Stories of emergent bilinguals and their funds of knowledge

Erika Rae Bakkum

Hamline University, ebakkum01@hamline.edu

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TALES FOR A TEACHER'S TOOLBOX: STORIES OF EMERGENT BILINGUALS  
AND THEIR FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

by

Erika Bakkum

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English as a Second Language  
Hamline University  
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Primary Advisor: Anne DeMuth

Secondary Advisor: Mary Ojala

Peer Reviewer: Susan Samaha

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

There is a myth within the educational community, the myth that English learners (ELs) bring only need to the school. It is a persistent, pervasive, and completely unrealistic belief; however, it continues to influence educators and impact the decisions made regarding students learning English. Comments that reveal the belief that ELs bring only need to our classrooms have become increasingly concerning for me. I recently analyzed this statement made by a colleague, “I can’t believe Ibrahim made it to a level M in reading this year, because, you know, neither of his parents speak any English!” This statement is worrisome because it illustrates the belief that having non-English speaking parents causes a child to have deficiencies when compared to peers. I don’t agree with the idea that speaking a language other than English in the home leads to deficiencies in a student; in fact for me it is just the opposite. Multilingual students hold strengths and assets rising from their experiences learning multiple languages and existing in more than one culture. There is a counterstory that we could tell that would transform this educator’s belief system so that the declaration instead would be, “Ibrahim made it to level M in reading this year, which doesn’t surprise me at all because he speaks a language other than English at home. He is multilingual. He is using his metalinguistic knowledge and other skills held by multilinguals to expand his literacy.”

In like manner, I have listened closely to phrases and words used to describe newcomer English-language learners, phrases that revealed unexamined deficit thinking about English learners (ELs). I believe that many educators have not considered the gifts

that linguistically diverse students have to offer the school community in terms of linguistic and cultural assets. I have heard descriptions of newcomer ELs such as “They cause so much stress for the classroom teacher.” In a recent conversation, a colleague described a situation in which there were more than ten students just beginning to learn English in one class as “there are no language models in the classroom” and “there are so many low, low language kids that our MCA test scores will not look good this year.” It may be inferred from the comments that English is the only language the commenter considers to be of value. The students surely speak at least one language and are not “low, low” in that language. It seemed apparent to me that the educator was not seeking to understand the cultural and linguistic assets that the new students had to offer the school community. The individual had not considered the different ways of knowing and understanding the world among this new group of kids, experiences from across the globe, their first languages that undoubtedly have interesting and unique features that, given a different mindset, could be seen as enrichment to the school community. The students were seen as deficient, as a liability, lacking something necessary, something that would take time to add and build. What if my son’s Mandarin immersion teachers thought and said those things about students in their classes? It strikes me how ridiculous those statements would sound in an immersion school. “Hey, none of these 18 kindergarteners know any Mandarin, this is just terrible, there are no language models in this classroom, this is causing the teacher so much stress!” Which leads me to ask the question: How can educators counteract the deficit thinking that is impacting emergent bilinguals of Color within our school community? How can I as a teacher leader impact educator belief systems towards an assets-based paradigm? I believe counteracting

deficit thinking starts with stories that illuminate the cultural and linguistic capitals and funds of knowledge held by multilingual students and communities.

Teachers are not surprised when English-speaking students at immersion schools achieve high levels of success in literacy or other areas, even though neither parent speaks the instructional language of the school. So then, why the surprised reaction when English learners achieve at high levels? Educators are surprised because of the overwhelming tendency to see students who are developing English through a deficit perspective (Valencia, 2010). People often believe that because students didn't arrive at school fully proficient in English, they are in a state of deficit, they need intervention, and remedial services. Such is the primacy given to English dominance by educators. ELs are not really any different from the English monolinguals who enter immersion schools. We might think of ELs as speakers of other languages entering English immersion schools and adding a second language (English) as an enrichment. However, many educators' comments indicate that they don't see it that way. A difference between English-speaking and non-English speaking language learners exists in their perception. The non-English dominant student is considered needy, whereas the English-speaking immersion student is considered enriched. The English-speaking immersion student is seen as bringing valued capital and adding to it. The EL student is seen as in need of the linguistic capital of English and the cultural capital of the white middle class.

Even though this deficit myth exists in our school community, I believe educators can look at EL students of Color through a different lens. It is possible to change the lens through which we see ELs to that of an attribute model, the lens of benefit, not deficit, even the lens of envy. Many monolingual and sequential bilingual EL teachers have felt



envy towards the adult who grew up a simultaneous bilingual, or better yet, in a simultaneous *multilingual* environment, and has all the benefits that speaker has in two *or more* first languages. Many multilinguals have native-like fluency, little or no accent, and social and often academic proficiency in two or more languages. I believe that educators can perceive English learners with these and other assets in mind. To that end, I have used the term emergent bilingual in this capstone to reflect the fact that additional languages, not solely English, have legitimacy and are developing in the lives of English learners; Ophelia García's work asserts that to use the term emergent bilingual honors this lived language reality. (Garcia, 2008)

What would life be like for emergent bilinguals if educators approached their abilities within a framework that recognizes the cultural capitals they hold? How can teachers as members of an educational community begin to redefine the value of multilingualism when that multilingualism does not start with English as the most proficient language? I believe this begins when teachers transform themselves from the inside out starting by actively seeking out stories that illustrate the assets of such students and their families.

This chapter introduces the key elements of a framework for how I will begin to counteract deficit thinking within my own practice as a teacher leader through the compilation of stories that demonstrate the funds of knowledge held by emergent bilinguals.

### **Background of the Researcher**

I started my career as an ELL teacher in a large secondary site with a small emergent bilingual student population. I taught sheltered math, literacy, and science to a

group of about 15 students in 5th through 8th grades, most of whom spent the entire morning with me. As the semester went on I began to wonder why the students were not in the mainstream classes, as most were conversationally proficient in English, and could have been successful in the mainstream content courses if supported through scaffolding of academic English. I reached out to the science and math teachers for content knowledge including guidance on what curriculum to use and how to differentiate the math for the enormous variety of math proficiencies in my classroom. I was treated professionally by the science and math teachers; however, I could sense that it was not their top priority to assure that emergent bilinguals in their building had access to the grade-level content and curriculum. This was my first encounter with perceptions of emergent bilinguals as somehow outside the core group membership of a school community. The group of 15 emergent bilingual students with whom I worked were likely the only linguistically diverse students in the school site and they had been separated from their peers for most of their day and for all of their core content classes. A discomfort began to develop in me. I began to see where emergent bilinguals fit in the pecking order of a school system, and the situation was not as just as I had assumed it would be when I was learning in my teacher-training courses. As a White educator, my assumptions about the fairness with which emergent bilinguals would be treated stemmed from and is characteristic of a White racial perspective. Whites are less likely than people of Color to be aware of alternative racial experiences. Whites are, in fact, often taken by surprise when confronted with scenarios that differ from their own racial experience (Bell, 2003). At the end of the semester, I secured a teaching job in a different district with a large percentage of emergent bilinguals. This district was implementing

inclusionary practices for ELs through co-teaching. I began my career in this new district at an elementary school in which about 20% of the population were ELs. Still a first year teacher, I boldly went forth to co-teach with a staff of talented veteran teachers who had never co-taught before. I had a variety of experiences during my three years at that site, revealing distinct differences in belief systems among educators. Some of my colleagues clearly believed that ELs had much to offer their classrooms, and they welcomed my presence and expertise in an inclusionary model. Others quickly pushed for me to take the students out of the room and teach in a different space. The standardized test scores of the students who were included in the classroom and received their EL service there were higher. I believe the students' success in the inclusionary style classes was directly related to the educators' beliefs about the assets of the students. After three years at this site, I moved to another elementary site in which 70% of the students were ELs, many of whom were newcomers from Thailand and Somalia. Co-teaching and inclusionary practices were the norm at the site. During my time there, I again encountered a variety of attitudes among educators about linguistically diverse students. This was contrary to my expectations and assumptions about a school site whose population was mostly ELs. My surprise aligned with a White racial perspective. Whites frequently tell stories that convey a sense of history that is progressive, depict a society that is basically fair, and assume a trajectory of forward progress. This story positions Whites as good and fair and reassures them that, despite problems, ongoing social progress is being made. (Bell, 2003). I assumed that, given that the majority of the school were ELs, the majority White teachers would have made progress in their understanding of the assets of linguistically diverse students. Later, I realized that there was no school-wide effort to understand the

assets that ELs and their families brought to the school community. Enrollment began to drop as families chose charter schools that they believed better served the needs of their children.

Evaluation of these experiences at different school sites has led me to develop an understanding about the experiences of emergent bilinguals in our school system. First, educators' attitudes about emergent bilinguals affect their academic performance. Of equal importance, the degree to which linguistically diverse families feel membership in a school community is affected by educators' attitudes towards them. Furthermore, a White racial perspective was shaping (and continues to shape) my expectations for the way schools are experienced by emergent bilingual students of Color.

Recently, I transitioned to an EL Program Coordinator position. My experiences with encountering deficit thinking about ELs continue, but they don't surprise me as much anymore. In this position, I often present to groups of educators. I have found that sharing a story is a compelling manner of illustrating a point; stories deliver the emotional energy (juice, punch) needed to create empathy and sway people's belief systems. It has been my experience that when I have shared a particularly interesting or poignant story, participants have gasped, or even spontaneously exclaimed "Wow!" When I have observed heads nodding in agreement, I know that I have the attention of my audience. Participants in trainings have commented to me later that a story I shared deeply impacted them and they have mentioned that they kept thinking about the story for some time after our meeting, and that it changed their belief system. The emotional core of the story cemented the content for them and brought about an evolution of thinking. Given these experiences, and my great desire to influence teachers' perceptions of

emergent bilinguals towards a more assets-based framework, I believed it would be advantageous to create a repertoire of illustrative stories. I planned to gather stories that demonstrate clearly that emergent bilinguals bring an abundance of cultural capital to our school systems.

The stories that I planned to gather can be called counterstories. A counterstory is any story that challenges a common narrative, or any story that challenges the belief systems that inform actions of those in power. A counterstory may be the perspective(s) of a marginalized person or group and can be an anti-racist action when it challenges racist belief systems. It seeks to provide an unexplored or unrecognized perspective. As a White teacher of ELs, I believe that the area of deficit thinking regarding emergent bilinguals of Color is an area in need of counterstories. Counterstories are called for that contradict the idea that emergent bilinguals bring only need to the school community. Some recent qualitative Critical Race Theory work has begun to focus on student narratives as, in part, a way to shift the conversation away from crisis talk regarding marginalized students. By exploring student voice, it is possible to gain insight into how students understand their own educational experiences (Fernández, 2002).

I saw this research study as an endeavor to prepare myself with a depth of knowledge about the assets of emergent bilinguals. Educators can reject deficit myths through immersion in critical reflection on traditional ways of looking at students with the intention of replacing non-productive beliefs with assets-based perspectives (Flores, 2005). This study was my immersion into critical reflection on traditional ways of looking at students, so as to replace them with a more positive view and create in myself the momentum of the counterstory. I aimed to capture the stories, counterstories, and

narratives of emergent bilinguals that plainly illustrate the cultural capitals and funds of knowledge that they hold.

### **Cultural Capital**

It is my belief that emergent bilinguals of Color bring to school all sorts of assets, and that often those assets are unrecognized or under-recognized by the school community in general. As the population of students who speak languages in addition to English continues to grow, our public schools in the United States are becoming richer with untapped cultural and linguistic resources (Martin-Beltrán, 2014). After reading Yosso's (2005) article, titled *Whose Culture Has Capital?*, I began to think deeply about how little I know about the seven assets Yosso describes that contribute to community cultural wealth: aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capitals. I began to consider the importance of naming and describing the specifics of how multilingual students enrich the school community and, as a result, the community as a whole. Enthusiasm for this idea has led me to the assumption that there are surprising aspects of multilingualism that have not yet been considered systemically and that are benefiting our school communities, or could more fully benefit them if we understood, accepted, believed in them, and capitalized on them. I undertook this research study as a means of influencing new frames of thought, and creating a new narrative around emergent bilinguals, one that makes me poised to forget about the old deficit framing that has adversely impacted students.

Linguistic capital is of particular interest to me and is described in part by Yosso as including storytelling traditions, recounting oral histories, translating for parents, and metalinguistic awareness. I am also curious about translanguage transfer of sayings,

metaphors, and ways of expressing ideas. I wonder how multilingual people use their many languages and cultural knowledges to create novelty of expression in their writing and speaking in any of their languages. I believe that it is possible that commonplace ideas and manners of expression that come from one language and are translated into a different language may become truly interesting and unique ways of expressing ideas in that second language. This new expression could serve as writing or speech that delights and surprises a reader or listener with novelty of expression. Multilingual writers or speakers may have a whole realm of creative writing and speaking power at their disposal by transferring expressions and ideas from one language to another. And this is just one of the seven cultural capitals that Yosso presents.

WIDA has also articulated a framework for describing assets of emergent bilinguals of Color. Within their Can-do Philosophy, four categories of assets are described: linguistic, cultural, experiential, and social and emotional. WIDA elaborates on these categories by offering examples of both contributions and potential within each. These categories are described in greater detail in Chapter Two.

Tara Yosso's (2005) seven cultural capitals together with WIDAs (2014) categories of assets informed the collection of stories illustrating the funds of knowledge held by emergent bilinguals, their families, and communities.

### **Role of the Researcher**

One thing that is of critical importance to discuss in this capstone is how my own race and culture influence the ideas presented. When one writes about assets, it is an evaluative conversation. As a White woman, raised in white culture and consciousness I tend to value things that white culture values. My racial identity is central to my

perception of what I observe and how I interpret what I perceive. I can have only one racial perspective, which is that of a White woman. Thus, my evaluation of cultural capitals and assets is an evaluation through a white racial perspective. I do not believe that there is a way to include a racial perspective that is not my own within a capstone that I write. I also know that I am unpacking deficiency thinking in my own journey of racial consciousness.

I come to this study with biases. I agree with most qualitative researchers who assert that objectivity is not a tenable or useful principle in Critical Race Theory (CRT), or in storytelling. I believe that attempting to ensure objectivity is irrelevant and counterproductive, and that subjectivity is a part of any research endeavor. I am also biased in that I believe that the educational landscape in which we operate is not just.

### **Summary and Guiding Question**

If writers such as Yosso so clearly outline cultural capitals possessed by communities of Color, then why undertake this research? I undertook this research in order to capture the power of counter-storytelling as a method of challenging and dismantling deficit thinking regarding emergent bilinguals of Color. Through this capstone and the research that it involves, I presented my perspective and the perspectives of ethnographic researchers on the cultural capitals and funds of knowledge of multilingual students of Color. I asked the question: What stories exist that demonstrate the cultural capital and funds of knowledge that emergent bilinguals hold?

To begin to uncover answers to this question, I conducted a systematic review of ethnographic studies of emergent bilingual students and their families as a means of discovering counter-narratives to deficit thinking. In my final chapter, I discuss ways in



which these assets can be highlighted within professional development for teachers as well as how they can be recruited in school as strengths.

### **Chapter Overviews**

In Chapter Two, I provide rationale for my research, outline literature that articulates contrasting views on emergent bilinguals, and summarize research regarding storytelling and critical race theory. Subsequent sections of Chapter Two contain a synopsis of specific assets that have been described by researchers regarding multilingual children including children as translators, and spontaneous biliteracy. Finally in Chapter Two, I include a description of sociocultural context and linguistic assets, a summary, and an overview of Chapter Three. In Chapter Three, I explain the systematic review methodology that I used to discover stories that articulate the cultural capitals described by Yosso (2005) and the assets described within WIDA's Can-Do Philosophy (2014). I describe the theoretical framework that informs and supports the direction of my study. Additionally, I offer a detailed description of the search strategy I used to find articles. I describe the inclusion and exclusion criteria used to choose studies for the research and a description of the studies included in the research. Finally, Chapter Three contains an overview of Chapter Four.

In Chapter Four, I present the findings gleaned from the research process described in Chapter Three. Within Chapter Four, I tell the specific stories that I encountered which demonstrate the cultural capitals and assets described by Yosso (2005) and WIDA (2014). In Chapter Five, I summarize the findings of my research, discuss its implications, and suggest future action steps for educators.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of this systematic review is to examine the current literature and uncover narratives, stories, and counterstories that illustrate the cultural capitals described by Yosso (2005): aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital; and the assets described by the WIDA consortium: experiential, and social and emotional (WIDA, 2014). The results of the review will then be used to impact my own belief system and build a bank of counterstories that disprove deficit-based thinking regarding ELs. The question guiding this systematic review is: What stories exist that demonstrate the cultural capital and funds of knowledge that emergent bilinguals hold?

A systematic review will allow me to identify a wide range of research that has captured stories illustrating the cultural capitals and funds of knowledge held by ELs, their families, and their communities.

In this chapter, I will cover the following topics contrasting perspectives on language learners, race and emergent bilinguals, cultural capitals and funds of knowledge, children as translators, spontaneous biliteracy, assets of bilingualism, sociocultural context and linguistic assets, and the power of storytelling.

### **Contrasting Perspectives on Language Learners**

#### **Deficit Perceptions Regarding Emergent Bilinguals**

Valencia (2010) describes deficit thinking as a pseudoscience founded on race and class bias. It blames the victim for school failures instead of examining how schools

are structured to prevent poor students and students of Color from learning. He refers to Menchaca's assertion that of the various conceptual frameworks that scholars and others have advanced to explain school failure among low-SES student groups of Color, the deficit thinking paradigm has held the longest currency (as cited in Valencia, 2010).

Within deficit thinking, the powerful party (the school system, white educators) locate the blame for lack of success of students of Color on the students themselves, rather than on the structural and belief problems of the powerful unit. Deficit thinkers disregard systemic factors and belief systems in explaining why some students fail, and instead point to the internal deficiencies of the students in question (Valencia, 2010). I find this sentiment embodied in the example statement from above "There are so many low, low language students, our MCA scores won't look good this year." Through this statement, an educator blames the students for their (potential) failure on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), and implies that the presence of the new emergent bilinguals in the class may prevent others from succeeding.

According to research compiled by Dr. Barbara Flores (2005), the myth regarding the deficiencies of bilingual students has been present for decades, although it has changed forms over the years, eluding capture or destruction. Educational research literature across each decade has characterized Spanish-speaking children from a cultural and linguistic deficit view. Latino children have been depicted as "problems" for educators and indicated as the culprits of their own educational failure.

During the 1920s, Spanish-speaking children in school were regarded as mentally retarded due to their language. As a group, Mexican children did not do well on performance or intelligence tests during this time, which became an anomaly to be

studied and rationalized. Various studies related to the question of mental retardation made comparisons between Anglo children and their Mexican American peers' performance on achievement tests. The tests used in the studies were considered reliable and valid, even though Mexican American students had not been included in the reliability and validity process of test development. Through these studies the myth of mental retardation due to language difficulty was created. Mexican American children's lack of achievement in school was blamed on a "language difficulty" which resulted in low intelligence (Flores, 2005).

In the 1930s, the problem was bilingualism itself, learning English was regarded as difficult, and Spanish-speaking children were thought not to achieve in school simply because they were bilingual. The 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s were characterized by the belief that school could and should compensate for cultural and linguistic deficiencies in Mexican children's lives. The problem for bilingual children was thought to be the language barrier and cultural and linguistic deprivation. Reading problems were thought to arise from home situations (Flores, 2005).

During the 1970s, the term Limited English Proficient (LEP) arose along with the belief that the LEP student was linguistically different and should be helped by school. English achievement was the only yardstick of educational success. It was believed that mixing languages was a sign that a child knew neither language well. In the 1980s, the problem became the idea of semilingualism, the idea that if children don't learn certain concepts in their native language, they will be deficient when learning the concepts in a second language. In the 1990s, the term 'at risk' emerged. Bilingual students were thought to come from dysfunctional homes in which the parents didn't care, or were

illiterate, or neglected their children. The belief that the children needed to be reached early so they wouldn't fail was pervasive. During 2000-2012, the problem has been seen as lack of English (Flores, 2005).

The language and culture of children culturally distinct from the white middle class were further pathologized by a highly influential 1995 research project known as the Hart and Risley study. The study has created a lasting discourse in education about poor children. It examined vocabulary development in families of differing socioeconomic backgrounds and has become the primary source for the claim that poor children grow up in environments that are linguistically impoverished (Dudley-Marling, 2009). The Hart and Risley research has been described as groundbreaking work, has been cited in Congressional hearings as well as numerous popular press articles, and cited in over 600 articles in scholarly journals. Because of this study, the high level of failures in reading among children in poverty is often linked to the claim that poor children are lacking in the specialized and rich vocabulary necessary for school success. However, the claims about language deficiencies in children and their families that are based on the Hart and Risley study are unjustified and reflective of a trend in education to pathologize the language and culture of some groups of students. These claims are another example of blaming marginalized students for their failure to succeed in a system that does not value them. The statement is that poor parents do not provide their children with sufficiently rich language learning environments in the home and this plays a significant role in the cycle of poverty. The presence of deficit thinking has impacted educators deeply. Deficit thinking is one of the most prevalent forms of contemporary racism in US schools as it takes the position that students and communities of Color are at fault for

their poor academic performance because the students enter the schools without the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful (Yosso, 2005).

### **Race and Emergent Bilinguals**

Deficit thinking is grounded in an unfavorable judgment of the capabilities of students coming from homes with non-white, non-middle class, non-upper class norms; it is also a form of racism (Marx, 2002). Many white teachers seem to define themselves by their ability and desire to help those less fortunate than themselves. They see themselves as martyrs or missionaries who have made sacrifices to work with diverse groups of children whom they perceive as needy. Their perception includes the notion that they are the saviors in students' lives and believe themselves to be the key to enlightenment and advancement for their students. Sherry Marx has researched and documented this phenomenon. She examined the altruistic motivations of nine White, female pre-service teachers who spent one semester tutoring emergent bilinguals of Mexican origin. She interviewed the participants, all of whom volunteered to be a part of the study. Marx also observed them tutoring and collected their tutoring journals. In addition to being White, all pre-service teachers in the study were monolingual English speakers. Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) points out that rather than being a neutral or raceless perspective, Whiteness is actually a socially constructed ethnic category that comes with unearned privileges. The students the pre-service teachers tutored were from low socioeconomic backgrounds attending schools in which children of Color predominated. Most of the study participants had never been to the neighborhoods in which the schools were located. Many felt unsafe entering the neighborhoods and were surprised when their race was noticed by the children. Through the experience, they became more aware of

their own Whiteness and the privileges associated with it, and as they became more aware they became more determined to “help.” However, that form of help involved becoming protective of the children, regarding themselves as much-needed parent figures, and determining that because the parents of the children spoke only Spanish, they were not capable of helping the children in school. Most of the participants in the study took on a motherly approach to their tutees. Many emphasized how sorry they felt for the child when comparing the imagined life of their tutees with their own. One participant described explained that children served by volunteer programs had missed the support that comes from good families. In order to help correct the imagined deficits in the lives the children they tutored, many began to construct themselves as valuable role models the children could strive to emulate. They believed that the children could learn good habits and characteristics through their examples. Many described miraculous improvements in their tutees after just one session despite their lack of significant teaching experience or skills. They contrasted their own situations to the imagined circumstances of their tutees, and came to the conclusion that their kindness and good upbringings, combined with a willingness to tutor children perceived to be at risk, qualified them to make positive impacts in the students’ lives. Thus, rather than teaching skill, participants relied on their Whiteness to guide them.

One participant in the study revealed her belief that the identity of immigrants is characterized by dependency. She described how her family had helped a Russian immigrant family who went on to achieve a high socioeconomic status. She spoke with scorn and characterized them as traitors of sorts because of their success. “I mean *we* helped *them* when they came here. Now *look at them!*” (Marx, 2002). This description

revealed her belief that they expected an immigrant family to remain in a position of dependency.

The participants in Marx's study did not seek to understand the strengths of the children. One participant, Michele, smothered her tutee Valerie with affection and praise while Valerie read aloud. However, the moment the child left, Michelle commented about how poor her English skills were and how she talked like a Mexican. She focused more on Valerie's accent and occasional use of non-standard English than on her reading skills, which were, according to Marx, at grade level. Valerie did not look or sound like a typical White American child. Her clothes were Mexican American in style, she spoke in English with an accent influenced by Spanish, her skin was darker than a White American student, and her school was in a low socioeconomic part of town. Thus, although Valerie's reading skills were quite strong, Michele only noticed Valerie's deviance from her own standards and experiences. For the participants, deficit thinking inseparable from their own White racial perspective pervaded all aspects of contact with, beliefs about, and expectations of their tutees. Their attention was continually drawn away from the academic needs of the children, and instead centered upon modeling "correct" social behaviors to save the children from families that they completely misunderstood.

The tutors' unconscious assumption about the superiority of their own cultural norms led them to center their efforts on trying to save the children from families and lives they completely misunderstood. These efforts included modeling "correct" social behaviors and undermining the authority of the parents. They used negatively evaluative phrases to describe the neighborhoods of the students such as "It's just...a mess... So far



removed from everything I grew up with. It's just so poor and so destitute that...I feel sorry for those kids!" (Marx, 2002, p.4; ellipses in original). They also asserted that the students didn't have any help at home because their parents spoke only Spanish. In these ways, the pre-service teachers looked through their White racial lens to judge the students as deficient in areas that whiteness values - affluence, high levels of English proficiency and English literacy. They did not ask what gifts the languages and cultures of these students had or what these students, families, and community could teach *them* about life. The study uncovered beliefs among the tutors which are characteristic of the deficit thinking and racism that is applied to emergent bilinguals of Color. The study revealed that these future educators regarded the neighborhood, heritage language, and cultural norms of the tutees to be inferior to their own. Emergent bilingual students were seen by the tutors as having little or no cultural capital to offer the school community. Furthermore, the ability of the students and families to use their heritage language, Spanish, was seen as a deficiency rather than an asset. The students they tutored were disadvantaged by the influences of the tutors' unexamined beliefs related to race and culture (Marx, 2002).

There is a lack of value placed on non-English heritage languages within the educational systems in the United States. In a 1998 study, Valdés followed two immigrant students for a period of seven years. She found that mastery of English became the predominant theme of their schooling experience. Despite having considerable literacy in their home language, both were repeatedly placed in courses that emphasized English language acquisition at the expense of grade level instruction in content areas. One of the students dropped out of school, the other graduated and

enrolled in a community college where he was required to enroll in more ESL classes (Valdés, 1998). This theme repeats itself in another study by Olsen in 1997 who followed a cohort of Hispanic and Asian students through their high school experience. Olsen's research showed that immigrant students spent their time in two types of classes; either English-only classes in which they were unlikely to thrive or in "sheltered" English classes that were separate from English proficient students and in which there was little or no emphasis on grade-level standards. The stories of emergent bilinguals in this study included exclusion and separation from English proficient students combined with extreme pressure to give up national identity and language. (García, 2005) The data uncovered in this study indicate a lack of value placed on the languages and cultures of bilingual children and families.

Students' use of non-standard dialects of English such as Spanglish can be seen as a liability by educators. A student may control five present tense verb aspects, as in Ebonics, or be able to fluidly switch from one language to another to create meaning such as in Caló, and come to school only to encounter a language, English, that uses different means to achieve expressiveness. When linguistically diverse students fail to impress teachers with their communicative abilities they are likely to withdraw and fail to succeed in the classroom. Educators often place the blame for the students' lack of thriving on the lack of proficiency in standard English, rather than on the effect of their lack of positive reception in the educational community. (García, 2005; Wolfram, 1994)

Immigrants significantly reshape the ethos of their new community. This can often be the hardest part of immigration for established citizens. Additionally, immigrants today are entering a nation that is very unlike the country which absorbed previous

groups of immigrants economically, socially, and culturally. Previous groups of immigrants arrived during the beginning of the great industrial expansion and played a key role as both workers and consumers. Today, however, immigrants are part of a globalized economy. An important feature of the new economy is its increasing pyramid shape. High-skilled immigrants enter into well-paying industries, whereas low-skilled immigrants enter and stay in the low-wage sector with little prospect of upward mobility (Garcia, 2005).

### **Cultural Capital and Funds of Knowledge**

Critical Race Theory (CRT) shifts the research lens away from a deficit view of communities of Color as sites of disadvantage, and instead focuses on and learns from the cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities possessed by socially marginalized groups. Community cultural wealth is a CRT challenge to traditional interpretations of cultural capital. Various forms of capital nurtured through cultural wealth contribute to the knowledges students of Color bring with them from their homes and communities into the classroom (Yosso, 2005). It is my desire to engage in shifting of the research lens away from the deficit view of communities of Color that compels me to research and write about the assets of emergent bilinguals of Color. It is my White community that perpetuates deficit myths about people of Color, and my White community that measures others against Whiteness, finds fault and disadvantages students as they come up short through the lens of Whiteness. Thus, it is my responsibility to expand and deepen my own knowledge of the cultural assets of emergent bilinguals of Color, so that my new belief system will be able to impact the perceptions of my White community.

With this intention in mind, I refer to Yosso (2005) who describes seven capitals that contribute to community cultural wealth; aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capitals. Among them, linguistic capital refers to intellectual and social abilities acquired through experiences communicating in more than one language or style. Analysis of linguistic capital demonstrates that students of Color arrive at school with multiple language and communication skills from their uses of a variety of discourses and rhetorical styles. This cultural wealth is demonstrated in over 35 years of research on the value of bilingual education. Linguistic capital may include participation in storytelling tradition, listening to and recounting oral histories, parables, stories (*cuentos*) and proverbs (*dichos*). Specialized storytelling skills may include memorization, attention to detail, dramatic pauses, comedic timing, facial affect, vocal tone, volume, rhythm and rhyme. Linguistic capital also refers to the ability to communicate through art, music or poetry (Yosso, 2005). Additional research that describes linguistic capital includes Marjorie Faulstich Orellana's study (2003) that examined bilingual children who are called upon to translate for their parents and other adults. The study found that these youth gain multiple social tools including vocabulary, awareness of audience, cross-cultural awareness, real-world literacy and math skills, metalinguistic awareness, teaching and tutoring skills, civic and familial responsibility, and social maturity.

Another asset-based perspective comes from the WIDA consortium, an organization whose mission is to advance academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through high quality standards, assessments, research and professional development. One of the Guiding Principles of

Language Development of the WIDA consortium is “Students’ languages and cultures are valuable resources to be tapped and incorporated into schooling” (WIDA, 2010, p. 1). WIDA articulates this idea through their Can Do Philosophy which states that everyone brings valuable resources to the education community. In particular, linguistically and culturally diverse learners bring a unique set of assets that have the potential to enrich the experiences of all learners and educators. Educators can draw on these assets for the benefit of both the learners themselves and for everyone in the community. By focusing on what assets emergent bilinguals bring to the school community, they send the message that students from diverse linguistic, cultural, and experiential backgrounds contribute to the vibrancy of schools (WIDA, 2014).

WIDA describes the assets of linguistically diverse students in terms of both contributions and potential within four categories of assets: linguistic, cultural, experiential, social and emotional. Contributions in the linguistic category include “Knowledge of multiple languages, varying representation of ideas, metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness, diverse strategies for language learning” (WIDA, 2014, p.1). Their description of linguistic potential includes: “Bi- or multilingual practices, abilities which learners utilize to communicate effectively across multiple contexts, multiple ways of expressing their thinking” (WIDA, 2014, p.1). I am inspired by their description of linguistic assets to seek concrete examples among students and families. Within the other categories, WIDA describes linguistically diverse students’ ability to bring different perspectives, life experiences, and ability to navigate a variety of sociocultural contexts. I hope to gather examples that illustrate these four categories in story form, so alive that they entice thinking in a new direction.

Gonzales, Moll, and Amanti (2013) summarize the findings of a study in which several teachers conducted ethnographic studies of their ethnically and linguistically diverse students and their families in order to document the knowledge they encountered there. Their book is “based upon a simple premise: People are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge” (p. ix). They call this concept *funds of knowledge*. This was an approach to local households in which teachers as researchers and as learners visited families in order to learn from them and allow the new knowledge to impact their work. “Our approach to understanding families and their cultural resources also includes raising possibilities for changes in classroom practice” (p. 19). I have used their term funds of knowledge in this capstone to refer to cultural capitals, assets, and strengths.

### **Children as Translators: Linguistic Capital in Action**

Through several research studies conducted in California and Chicago, the researchers learned about children’s experiences as translators for their families. They assert that the work of child translators is both special and important, and more complex than one might imagine (Orellana, 2003). For the children, translating is a part of their everyday lives. The 280 fifth and sixth graders surveyed as part of the study have translated on a regular basis for a variety of community and family members. They translated everything from letters and phone calls to legal documents and bank statements. Through their experiences as translators, they learned such skills as making sense of complex information about a wide range of subjects. They learned to navigate sociocultural contexts by choosing language that is appropriate to the genre, topic, and context including determining the appropriate level of formality and language related to

social roles and levels of authority. It appears that the experiences translating may help the students do better in school. Those who the survey identified as active translators had significantly better scores on reading and math standardized tests than their peers. They learned about the realities of adult life through interacting with items such as monthly bills and jury summons. In one student quote that I found particularly impactful, a 14-year old girl knows the truly critical role that her skill plays in the family.

I'm not just trodding [sic] down people of my own age, but some people they just ask for things, like can I have a bike, can I go swimming, can I go to summer camp, can I have a new pair of Nikes?' ...Their parents keep saying, 'Do you know how hard I work for the money to pay the bills?' They don't know exactly how much is in their bank deposits, the bills and stuff. But I know personally because I write the bills. I write the checks. Cindy, age 14 (Orellana, 2003, p. 7; ellipsis in original)

It becomes apparent that Cindy has had experiences that many of her peers have not had, and that those experiences have led to knowledge of adult responsibility and household management.

Another participant in the study described his ability to understand the focal power of words and how they create common understanding, or misunderstanding. He learned this through the contrast of his having used an incorrect phrase and creating a miscommunication.

My best advice would be, it's a real important conversation don't try to make up a word for the word that you are translating because it might end up blowing the whole conversation out of proportion...Once I was translating and I could not

understand a phrase and I just made up a phrase for it and it ended up going, the conversation ended up going in a whole different direction and the whole conversation just got out of proportion. --Sammy, age 14 (Orellana, 2003, p. 9; ellipsis in original)

Orellana (2003) presents a powerful asset-based narrative about bilingual children that is inspirational in its ability to create new understandings. Through their experiences as translators, the children in the study have developed metalinguistic skills and understanding of adult responsibilities. Further assets of bilingual children include spontaneous biliteracy, which is described in the subsequent section.

### **Spontaneous Biliteracy**

Maria de la Luz Reyes's 4-year longitudinal study of the spontaneous biliteracy of young Latinos enrolled in a transitional bilingual program builds additional asset-based understandings of emergent bilinguals. She observed that when young Latinos are given the freedom to access their full linguistic resources, they engage in frequent translanguaging and transliteracy to support their learning. She refers to the acquisition of literacy in two languages without specific prescribed instruction in both languages as *spontaneous biliteracy*, using the term *spontaneous* to indicate a self-acquired ability. She defines the term biliteracy as having the ability to decode and encode meaning from written texts in two languages. Biliteracy includes constructing meaning by making relevant cultural and linguistic connections with print and learners' lived experiences, and manipulating the two linguistic systems to make meaning. In monolingual contexts, code switching (using a mix of two languages, in this case Spanish and English) is often considered a linguistic deficit. However, in this bilingual context, the students' ability to



use both languages to make meaning was seen as a normal practice. The students purposefully shifted between languages to showcase their competence. One of the students studied was Humberto. Unbeknownst to the teachers or researcher, upon entry into kindergarten, Humberto's father had warned him against losing his Spanish, explaining that if he did so, he would not be able to communicate with his beloved grandfather in Mexico. Such was Humberto's determination to retain his Spanish, that he did not speak any English for his first three years of school. However, Humberto's English acquisition continued unhampered. In first grade, his impressive understanding of academic content in English became evident after a science lesson taught entirely in English. He was able to easily explain in writing the main points of the lesson using highly technical academic Spanish. This is an excellent example of transliteracy, learning a topic in one language and quickly assimilating the knowledge into the literacy domain of a second language. Humberto's story illustrates the key roles that emotion, culture and language play in the development of literacy. He was given the freedom to use all of his linguistic resources in the way that felt best for him, and excelled academically because of it. (de la Luz Reyes, 2012)

A second student in this study, Illiana, came to kindergarten speaking only Spanish, and by the beginning of first grade was an outgoing English speaker. She made impressive academic gains. Although Illiana had no English phonic or reading instruction, by the end of second grade she was able to read fluently English books like *Strega Nona's Magic Lessons* by Tommi dePaola. Additionally, Illiana wrote in English following standard form in spelling, punctuation, and grammatical structure, all of which were self-taught English writing skills. She also commented freely in Spanish, deepening

her descriptions of the meanings and personal connections in the books she was reading. She was clearly engaged in critical thinking that was facilitated by her translanguaging abilities. In a conversation about books on the topic of working hard to realize your dreams, she pulled in examples regarding a character from a *telenovela* that many students watched at home. To the delight of the class, she made this real-life connection to the characters (de la Luz Reyes, 2012).

### **Assets of Bilingualism**

A chapter in García (2005) titled Bilingualism is Not the Arithmetic Sum of Two Languages reports research that shows bilingual children are more adept at certain thinking and learning skills than monolingual children. Bilingual children determine the appropriate language to use by quickly observing the participant, situation, context, and function of discourse. Bilingual children listen to a person in conversation and are able to evaluate the speaker's abilities in the language, subsequently choosing the interlocutor's most comfortable or proficient language and responding in that language.

Among themselves, bilingual children may choose to mix both languages for communicative purposes. Sometimes this practice is called code-switching (CS). CS appears to be a way in which young multilinguals begin playing with language. Research also shows that young bilinguals have both knowledge of their grammatical capabilities and are sensitive to the norms of code-choice (García, 2005). They are also aware of their social role in a conversation. An older sibling will frequently switch to the language with which the younger sibling feels most comfortable. Older children will frequently use CS to clarify when other children do not understand. Bilingual children as young as age 4 can determine the ability of their audience to understand mixed language messages. CS

is an acceptable and natural conversational strategy in many bilingual communities, and rather than a deficit or deficiency, it is a highly complex skill (García, 2005).

Two features of Spanish-speaking students acquiring English concern the literacy domains of reading and writing. Literacy skills acquired in a first language may act as facilitator of literacy in a second language. The similarities between English and Spanish are so extensive that transfer between the two languages considerably reduces the amount of time needed to become literate. Additionally, studies have shown that unique rhetorical traditions of Spanish appear in the writing of L1 Spanish speakers when they write in English. Those rhetorical traditions include longer sentences, fewer simple sentences, and more coordinating clauses used by L1 Spanish speakers than L1 English speakers (García, 2005).

As early as 1939, researchers documented that the linguistic flexibility of bilingual children is related to non-linguistic cognitive tasks such as categorization, verbal signal discrimination, and creativity (García, 2005). It has been suggested that the cognitive experience of becoming multilingual contributed to higher levels of mental flexibility, and superior concept formation. There is empirical evidence that bilingual children outperform monolingual children on specific measures of cognitive and metalinguistic awareness. Bilingual children have been found in research studies to score higher on metalinguistic, concept-formation, and creative cognitive tasks. Research shows that the assets of bilingual children are many. They are adept at a variety of thinking, learning, social and linguistic skills to a greater degree than monolinguals.

### **Sociocultural Context and Linguistic Assets**

Languages must be mastered not only in a structural sense, but also as tools of social interaction within sociocultural contexts, which determine the appropriate discourse of any social interaction. Culturally and linguistically diverse students acquire the ability to differentiate between the appropriate use of distinct linguistic codes as well as determine the social attributes of the speaking context and use language appropriately within different contexts (García, 2005).

Languages and the practices around their use are arguably the most significant and meaningful way of interacting within social communities. Bilingualism is a unique social entity that, at its essence, provides varied ways of expressing life. There is a great need to build successful schools that include high expectations, a respect for students' lives including their day-to-day ways of knowing the world that include the unique social entity of emerging bilingualism. This is schooling that honors both traditional notions of educational success while at the same time respecting assets of linguistic and cultural diversity. Languages intersect and interact with each other in a variety of ways, as do cultures. The future is not monocultural, nor is it monolingual (García, 2005).

One very important asset of proficiency in a language other than English for many students of Color is the ability of that language to retain an attachment to a group of shared ancestry. It turns out that the most important factor of maintaining a group cultural identity is the continuing psychological awareness of membership based upon conceptions of shared ancestry. Minority-group speakers who are no longer able to use their heritage language as a medium for all ordinary communicative purposes often retain an attachment to that language as a group symbol (Edwards, 2012).

## The Power of Storytelling

Human beings are wired for story. Neuroeconomist Paul Zak has found that hearing a narrative with a beginning, middle, and end causes the human brain to release both cortisol and oxytocin. These two chemicals trigger the fundamental human ability to connect, empathize, and to make meaning (Brown, 2015). Furthermore, education scholars have begun to use CRT and Latino critical theory (LatCrit) in educational research, both of which direct practitioners to capture the narratives of marginalized people. CRT and LatCrit are based in theoretical frameworks that prioritize the categories of race, gender, class and sexuality and place the marginalized participant at the center of analysis. They recognize that the voices of the students of Color who are often subjects of educational research are frequently absent from or silenced within the discourse. CRT and LatCrit identify storytelling, giving voice, or naming one's own reality as important tools for achieving racial emancipation. Storytelling benefits a marginalized person in many ways. First, it allows a person to reflect on his or her own lived experience. Second, it allows the marginalized participant to make his or her story public. Third, storytelling or counterstorytelling subverts a dominant story, usually a reality that is socially constructed by Whites. Finally, storytelling can be both empowering and transformative (Fernández, 2002). Of particular interest to me among these benefits is the idea that storytelling is a method of subverting a dominant narrative.

Counterstorytelling is a tool that CRT scholars employ to contradict racist characterizations of social life. Counterstories or narratives stand in opposition to narratives of dominance. There are three genres of counterstories documented within CRT: personal stories, other people's stories, and composite stories. Personal stories are

direct reports of experiences of persons of Color. Other people's stories hold the power to move listeners emotionally; when they are retold, they take on a larger than life quality. What begins as an individual experience gains validation and amplification through the act of re-telling. Composite stories or narratives represent a gathering together and synthesis of numerous individual stories (Merriweather, 2006).

Such stories are strategic, told in order to achieve a goal or advance an interest. They may reiterate dominant meanings or power relations, and through retelling contribute to the reproduction of these relations. People from both dominant and subordinated groups promote their interests in the stories they tell. The counter-narratives of subordinated groups serve to reveal their experiences and bring voice to their lived reality in the face of a dominant culture which often distorts, stereotypes and marginalizes that reality (Bell, 2003).

The observation that storytelling is a strategic method of subverting a dominant narrative (Fernández, 2002), combined with the fact that humans are wired for story (Brown, 2015), indicate that storytelling has the potential to be an effective method for interrupting deficit thinking about emergent bilinguals. Within this research study, I'll utilize the power of other people's stories as well as composite stories to challenge dominant narratives about emergent bilinguals.

### **Conclusion**

Emergent bilinguals and their communities hold a wealth of cultural capitals that enrich our school communities. In fact, a variety of research exists that describes the specific cultural and linguistic contributions of linguistically-diverse students and communities. Although this may be true, educators' perceptions of emergent bilinguals

have been affected by deficit thinking, an unconscious form of racism which compels educators to see students of Color as deficient and needy. A need exists to bring the assets of emergent bilinguals into the spotlight in order to create a mind shift among educators towards an assets-based paradigm. When planning for creating shifts in perception, it is important to consider that humans can be emotionally impacted by story, and that counter-storytelling is a tool that CRT scholars employ to contradict racist characterizations of social life. As a person who conducts professional development for educators, I need at my disposal a variety of stories that illustrate the cultural capitals, strengths, and funds of knowledge that emergent bilingual students bring to their classrooms. A more equitable educational system can be created when all educators understand that all people and societies have value. For these reasons I undertook a systematic review of ethnographic studies which illustrate the strengths and assets of linguistically-diverse students and communities. In Chapter 3, I will describe the research methodology used to collect and communicate stories which showcase the assets of emergent bilinguals.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Through a systematic review of ethnographic research regarding emergent bilinguals of Color and their families, I anticipated encountering compelling stories that could be used to counteract deficit thinking. I planned to seek out stories that illustrated the cultural wealth defined by Yosso (2005) as aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistant capital and the assets described in WIDA's Can-Do Philosophy (2014) as experiential and social and emotional assets.

In this chapter, the definition and steps for conducting a systematic review are presented along with the purpose and goals of this specific review. The research questions are stated as well as the theoretical framework of the researcher. Next, the inclusion and exclusion and criteria are presented. Then a description of the method for carrying out the comprehensive search is explained. Finally, the method for data extraction and synthesis is presented.

### Research Questions

A systematic review allows the researcher to formulate review questions that they hope to answer through the process of the review. The questions I intend to research will inform my ability to share stories promoting asset-based thinking about emergent bilinguals. The following question will guide me toward the discovery of stories and counterstories to use professionally. What stories exist that demonstrate the cultural capital and funds of knowledge that emergent bilinguals hold?



### Theoretical Framework

It is necessary in any research project to describe one's own theoretical leanings as the underpinning and foundation of any new knowledge generated. (Merriam, 1998)

The characteristics of my research may be described as emerging from both *interpretive* and *critical* schools of thought. Within *interpretive research*, multiple realities may be constructed by individuals. I believe reality to be a process and lived experience, thus my philosophy falls into the category of *interpretive research*. This methodology allows one to understand inductively the meaning of the data through a theory generating mode of inquiry. My philosophical tendencies also fall into the category of *critical research* in which education is considered to be a social institution designed for reproduction and transformation of social and cultural knowledge. Knowledge generated through critical research is a critique of power, privilege and oppression in educational practice (Merriam, 1998).

Further characteristics of a basic qualitative research are used in this study. I, the researcher, am the primary instrument for the collection of data through analysis of ethnographic studies. As well, this type of research builds concepts and hypotheses through analysis of the data collected rather than testing existing theory. The analysis involves the identification of recurring patterns in the form of categories and themes. Finally, within qualitative research, the product is a rich description using words rather than numbers to convey the results of the study (Merriam, 1998).

Throughout this systematic review, and the analysis and synthesis that follow, I continue to relate back to the frameworks described by Tara Yosso (2005) and WIDA (2014) within my own philosophical foundations of critical and interpretive research.

### **Steps of a Systematic Review**

The steps of this systematic review include the following:

1. Formulate research question and develop protocol
2. Define studies to be considered (inclusion and exclusion criteria)
3. Search for studies (search strategy)
4. Screen studies (check that studies meet inclusion criteria)
5. Describe studies (systematic map of research)
6. Data extraction
7. Synthesize findings (answer review question)
8. Communicate and engage (communicate and interpret review findings)

(Adapted from Gough, 2007)

The first step in a systematic review is to formulate the research question and develop methods, also known as protocol, to be used in the review (Gough, 2007). After I determined the specific question being asked, I considered implicit assumptions and conceptual framework related to the question. These considerations led to the methods used in the review. My specific question is: What stories exist that demonstrate the cultural capital and funds of knowledge that emergent bilinguals hold? I specified in Chapter 2 what is meant by stories, cultural capital, and funds of knowledge. Stories are qualitative data, and can be collected through ethnographic studies.

The second step in a systematic review is to determine the studies to be considered. This is accomplished through a determination of the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria describe the topics, foci, type of research method, and the times and places that a research study considered must include. The exclusion criteria

describe the topics, foci, types of research methods, and times and places for a study that will exclude them from the review (Gough, 2007).

After determining the types of studies to include, the next step is to search for studies that meet the criteria. A search strategy can include a variety of methods including electronic and hand searches, and sources such as bibliographic databases, websites, books and journals (Gough, 2007). After a number of studies are encountered, in step four of the systematic review the studies are screened for their adherence to the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The subsequent step in a systematic review is to screen the studies to confirm that they meet the inclusion criteria, and that they do not meet any of the exclusion criteria. After the studies are screened, the researcher describes the evidence found in the included studies. The researcher then synthesizes all the evidence considered in order to answer the review question. Finally, the researcher communicates the information generated through an interpretation and application of the review findings (Gough, 2007).

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

#### **Criteria for Inclusion of Studies**

The topic of cultural capital and funds of knowledge among emergent bilinguals is broad. For this reason, criteria needed to be put in place to limit the studies that would be reviewed. A study needed to meet all of the following criteria in order to be reviewed: study must be an ethnographic study of bilingual or emergent bilingual individuals or families; must be philosophically founded in assets-based thinking regarding bilinguals, emergent bilinguals, and people and communities of Color; must be no older than 25 years; must be peer reviewed and published in a reputable journal; must contain stories

about or perspectives of emergent bilinguals captured by the researcher; and study must be related to research question.

I will decide if a study is philosophically founded in assets-based thinking regarding bilinguals by looking for the use of the following terms: funds of knowledge, assets-based, strength-based. Studies using the following terms to describe students and families will indicate that the study does not meet this criteria: deficit, deficiency, at-risk, lack of, or low.

### **Criteria for Exclusion of Studies**

If the study met any of the following criteria it was excluded from the review: was conducted on monolingual native English speakers; is ethnocentrically biased to favor white cultural norms; does not attempt to capture and assets-based perspective of the persons being studied; is unrelated to the research question; is published in a language other than English or Spanish; is not peer reviewed in a reputable journal; is quantitative in nature.

### **Search Strategy**

The first step of collecting studies for this article was to consult the references list of Yosso (2005). The second step was to conduct an online search using Hamline University's Bush library online databases. In order to collect relevant studies and literature (journal articles) regarding the cultural capitals of emergent bilinguals the following databases were used:

- Education Full Text (EBSCO)
- Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)
- ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global Full Text

I documented my search activity in a Google Sheets table titled Search Record. An example of this table is included in Appendix A. The columns were labeled from left to right Database, Search Terms Used, Number of Results Found, Number Downloaded, Number Requested, and Notes. All studies that were not requested or not downloaded were those that appeared through the search criteria, but were not relevant to the research question. The search terms that I used were: linguistically diverse, ethnography, counterstory, storytelling, bilingual, multilingual, Hmong, Karen, Somali, community, cultural capitals, funds of knowledge, English language learner, linguistic capital.

### **Screening the Studies**

The next step in the systematic review was to determine whether or not each study met the inclusion criteria, and that it did not meet any of the exclusion criteria. In order to organize this process I created a Google sheets in which I kept track of each of the articles being considered for inclusion. The Google sheet titled Inclusion Criteria Grid contains columns to collect the following information: the title of each article being considered; the search terms used; each of the inclusion criteria; whether or not the article met one or more of the exclusion criteria; whether or not the article met all of the inclusion criteria; would the article be included in the study; the APA citation; and notes. An example of this table is included in Appendix B. The columns of the Google sheet titled Exclusion Criteria Grid includes columns to collect the following information: the title of each article being considered; the search terms used; each of the exclusion criteria; whether or not the article met one or more of the exclusion criteria; would the article be included in the study; the APA citation; and notes. An example of this table is included in Appendix C.

I considered each study first upon the exclusion criteria and documented the results in the Google sheet titled Exclusion Criteria Grid. If the study met any of the exclusion criteria it was documented in the Google sheet document, and was not used. I then provided an explanation of why the study was rejected in the column titled Notes. If the study did not meet any of the exclusion criteria, the study was considered as to whether or not it met each of the inclusion criteria. I documented the results in the Google sheet titled Inclusion Criteria Grid. If a study met all of the inclusion criteria it was documented on the Google sheets and was included in the study. When a study was rejected due to the fact that it did not meet all of the inclusion criteria, an explanation was provided in the column titled Notes.

### **Describing the Studies**

Following the determination of studies to be included in the review through application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, I described each of the studies included in the review in a Google Sheets table titled Study Descriptions. An example of this table is included in Appendix D. The table included a column for the APA citation for each study included followed by a column titled Human Subject(s) in which I input the name(s) of the study subjects. The next column is titled Study Description and contained a five to ten sentence description of the study including the location and language background(s) of the subjects. The Google Sheets table provided a map of the research activity.

### **Data Extraction**

Subsequent to describing the included studies, I conducted the data extraction. This included organization of the data gleaned from each study in the categories of cultural capital described by Yosso (2005) and WIDA (2014). I created a Google Sheets

table titled Cultural Capitals with each of the following categories designated as a row title; aspirational, navigation, social, linguistic, familial, resistant, experiential, social and emotional. The columns labeled from left to right are Cultural Capital, Human Subject, Story, APA Citation. The column titles Human Subject, Story, and APA Citation, will repeat until all data illustrating that cultural capital has been extracted from the various studies and entered into the table. An example of this table is included in Appendix E. I used this table to keep track of the story data from each study that illustrated each of these cultural capitals, as well as to document the ethnographic research study from which the story originated by including the APA citation of the study.

### **Synthesis of Findings**

The next step of a systematic review is to synthesize the findings in order to answer the questions posed and to share the findings. The goal in communicating these findings is to share information that will bring about some physical, social, economic or educational change (Gough, 2007). The specific change that I aim to achieve with this study is to change perceptions of emergent bilinguals through the presentation of counternarratives that upset deficit thinking.

In this study, data was extracted from ethnographic studies that told stories illustrating the seven cultural capitals described by Yosso (2005), paying particular attention to stories regarding linguistic capital. The stories extracted demonstrate as well the assets described in WIDA's Can-Do Philosophy. I determined at this point that although WIDA names four assets of language learners, their category "cultural" assets was already thoroughly addressed within Yosso's (2005) seven cultural capitals. For that reason, I determined that I would not create a separate category called cultural capitals.

The goal of this review was to create a repertoire of stories that illustrate an assets-based paradigm regarding emergent bilinguals of Color and their families. I used the data extraction Google Sheet titled Cultural Capitals described in the previous section to synthesize the findings of the systematic review.

### **Communicate and Engage**

The final step of a systematic review is to communicate and interpret the findings and then engage readers in recommendations for application of the findings. The data compiled is communicated in Chapter Four of this Capstone, which includes the stories that were found that demonstrate each of the cultural capitals. The subsections are titled Aspirational Capital, Navigational Capital, Social Capital, Linguistic Capital, Familial Capital, Resistant Capital, Experiential Capital, Social and Emotional Capital, and Conclusion. Appendix F contains descriptions of the studies included. Appendix G contains a list of those excluded and rationale for exclusion. Synthesis and interpretation of the findings can be found in Chapter Five of this capstone. As well, recommendations for application of the findings appear in Chapter Five.



## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The data for this study was collected through a systematic review, which included the following steps. First, I formulated my question and determined my research protocol. Next, I defined the studies to be considered by creating inclusion and exclusion criteria. After that, I began my search for appropriate studies using the ProQuest database. After identifying a group of studies that appeared to be relevant to my research question, I screened the studies using the inclusion and exclusion criteria. I then described the included studies creating a systematic map of my research. Subsequently, I began the data extraction process by examining each study to extract stories that demonstrated the assets and cultural capitals defined by Yosso (2005) and WIDA (2014). Next, I compiled the results, which can be found here in Chapter 4. Finally, I interpreted and reviewed the findings in Chapter 5.

Through the collection of these data, I sought to find the answer to the following question: What stories exist that demonstrate the cultural capital and funds of knowledge that emergents bilinguals hold? This chapter contains the stories that were encountered in the included studies that demonstrated each of the cultural capitals defined by Yosso (2005) and WIDA (2014). The stories will be presented grouped by the different capitals. All human subjects and schools named in this chapter are pseudonyms.

Descriptions of the studies included can be found in Appendix F. Excluded studies and rationale for exclusion from the data extraction process can be found in Appendix G.

### **Aspirational Capital**

Aspirational capital refers to the ability to sustain hopes and dreams for the future, despite real and perceived barriers. Aspirational capital is evidenced in those who allow themselves and their children to dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances (Yosso, 2005). Researcher Lilia Fernández (2002) interviewed Pablo in an ethnographic study that examined the educational experience of a Latino student in a public high school in Chicago, Illinois. Pablo's story exposes multiple forms of cultural capital, thus other elements of his story will appear in subsequent sections of this chapter. At age 11, Pablo came to the U.S. from Central American. He quickly learned English and mainstreamed into regular English classes by 10th grade. Pablo excelled in math. After a teacher recognized his exceptional math abilities, Pablo mobilized the power of aspirational capital and completed all the advanced math classes in high school, the courses needed to get him to college. While the school only required three years of math to graduate, Pablo instead took five years of math courses. "It used to be 3 years (required) for math (in high school...and I took 5 years..algebra, geometry, trigonometry, precalculus, and then calculus" (p. 51; ellipses in original) He was able to accomplish this by taking summer school classes. Pablo graduated from high school and went on to finish his Bachelor's degree.

Zahra mobilized her aspirational capital in concert with linguistic and familial capital as documented in Porter's (2013) study. Zahra arrived to her new U.S. school

from Morocco and quickly discovered that she was the only Arabic speaker in the school. Her search for a same-language peer to support her in her first months in the U.S. was unsuccessful. Determined to learn English, to make friends, and to succeed, Zahra created a method that accelerated her learning of English. Capitalizing on the fact that her father spoke both English and Arabic, Zahra wrote down English words phonetically as people said them, then she would take them home and say to her dad, “What’s this mean? Write it in Arabic.” Her dad would write it for her in Arabic, then she would write the words in English. And in this manner, she learned to speak English in six months. She made friends, and soon became the guide and supporter for other Arabic-speaking students.

Among the students in Cannon’s (2010) case study, Soua experienced the greatest gain in oral reading fluency during summer, which can be attributed to her aspirational capital. Determined to continue her forward progress in reading over the summer, Soua took it upon herself to read and reread her entire collection of first and second grade take-home books. She reported that she read the books, over 100 of them, up to fourteen times each. As a result, at the beginning of third grade, Soua’s reading fluency was equivalent to what is expected at the end of third grade for students at the 75th percentile. She was substantially ahead of her peers in all categories of oral reading fluency. Furthermore, at this young age, Soua was already focused on her career goals:

#### My Future

When I grow up, I will like to be a teacher or a doctor so I could have enough money to buy a car. And I would take my mom whatever and my family where they want to go. If I have a car, I will like to take them to the park and have some

picnic. If I grown up and got to be a teacher, I would tell my nephew how to do math and read and I will tell him how the third grade do so it will not be hard if he went to third grade. Or, if I don't want to be a teacher, I will be a doctor. 'Cuz like if you to be a doctor, you could help your family too. And when they were sick, you could bring like medicine to them to eat so they will not get sick (Cannon, 2010, p. 109).

Pablo, Zahra, and Soua all dreamed of possibilities beyond their present circumstances and took action to realize those dreams.

### **Navigational Capital**

Navigational capital refers to the skills required to maneuver through social institutions not created with communities of Color in mind (Yosso, 2005). Zahra's story in Porter's (2013) study illustrates navigational capital. Zahra took it upon herself to seek out the guidance counselor for consultation on graduation pathways for herself. The counselor explained to her that if she was willing to attend summer school she could complete high school in four years. Mobilizing her aspirational capital, she followed the advice of the counselor. Later she proclaimed:

And I did everything that she tell me and they push me one year so I don't have to stay in high school for five years, so I just stay for four years now so I will graduate this year and I was really happy with that cause I don't want to stay in high school for so long (Porter, 2013, p. 188).

Akello's and Amira's stories in Porter's (2013) study demonstrate navigational capital. They knew exactly how to get into the teacher's action zone through support seeking behaviors. Both Akello and Amira consistently requested help from teachers at

points of confusion, and did so with cheerful positive personalities that drew the teachers toward them (Porter, 2013). In this way, they navigated through a school system that was not designed to meet their needs.

### **Social Capital**

Social capital can be conceptualized as networks of people and community resources who can provide both instrumental and emotional support to one another to navigate through society's systems (Yosso, 2005). Pablo and his peers appear again in this section as exemplars of teens mobilizing their social capital in concert with their resistant capital. Pablo reported widespread truancy among students who were dissatisfied with the educational experiences they were receiving at Metro. He told how networks of up to 200 teens organized "cut" activities that were more meaningful to them than the class activities.

We would go to the daytime parties or go to the lake and drive around or something...even cut classes and stay in school ..go hang out at the gym... It wasn't like big numbers...maybe 200 people would go or something, 100 people, 150..." (Fernández, 2002, p. 55; ellipses in original)

This large network of teens created a system of emotional and cultural support to rely upon while navigating a system that had disregarded or failed to recognize their needs and identities.

The stories of Lii Reh, Klu Reh, and their families demonstrate social capital in the way that Karenni social networks continue after resettlement in the U.S. (Tadayuki, 2014). As was the custom in Thailand, the families of Lii Reh and Klu Reh do not lock the doors of their apartments except when they are sleeping. They freely visit the rooms

of their friends and relatives in their apartment complexes where many Karenni live together. While the American style rooms in which they live are designed to have some private space, they use their rooms for welcoming others who live at the same site. They don't use the doorbell to alert the person whom they are visiting, but rather open the door and call to him or her. They visit each other even when they have nothing special to talk about. This way of socializing is similar to the Karenni way of life in Thailand and Burma. By keeping this custom after resettlement, new social relationships are being created in the United States.

### **Linguistic Capital**

Linguistic capital refers to intellectual and social abilities acquired through experiences communicating in more than one language or style. Linguistic capital demonstrates the concept that students of Color arrive at school with multiple language and communication skills that come from a variety of discourses and rhetorical styles (Yosso, 2005).

The following is a story of the mobilization of linguistic capital that can occur when teachers value the linguistic capital of their students and take action to activate it within an instructional context (Griffin, 2014). In an urban school district in Texas, forty fourth and fifth grade ELLs participated in a three week Math, Science, and Language (MSL) summer program at Texas Christian University. The teachers structured the class in a way that mobilized and highlighted the vast linguistic resources that students bring to the school setting. They set up a learning situation in which they built upon the emerging and developing language skills of the ELLs, while at the same time calling attention to the language capital of their families. The study challenged the assumption that

linguistically and culturally diverse students have few family resources to draw upon when they enter school. Central to this vein of research are the curricular innovations that occur when teacher perceptions of households change as a result of recognizing families' linguistic and cultural funds of knowledge. The MSL team emphasized language as a tool for communicating within and across contexts and with a variety of audiences rather than privileging the language of school over other forms of language. They aimed to support students in their development of metalanguage. The team embraced the funds of knowledge concept while planning lessons. Within the instruction, explanation was given regarding the distinctions between the use of everyday language such as the word motor, and the specific technical language used in a science room, such as generator. The MSL teachers explained that a scientist would choose to use the word generator due to the fact the term conveyed the meaning of mechanical energy being converted to electrical energy. The MSL team understood the importance of oral language and so created a classroom environment that encouraged the productive noise of student talk. This was a key example of how they mobilized student linguistic capital in their instructional context. The teachers used the analogy of clothing specific to certain events and contexts in order to explain language use situated in contexts. For example, one would wear cleats for playing soccer, but a formal dress for a *quinceañera*. One set of clothes is not better than another, the different sets of clothes simply reflect the needs or expectations of a certain event. Additionally, the team consistently used a technique called the 5Rs to encourage precision in language use: revealing, replacing, repositioning, repeating, and reloading key vocabulary.

On the 6th day of the MSL program, Cecilia (one of the teachers) introduced a parent interview project and invited the student to become “linguisticians” - researchers who study language (Griffin, 2014). She referenced the idea of inquiry, or the big question that guides science and math investigations which they had been practicing in previous lessons. The big question of the parent interview would be “How do your parents use language in different contexts?” The class would gather information about the language spoken by parents at work and what specialized language was unique within their work contexts. Students worked together to create three interview questions. 1) What languages do you speak at home? 2) What languages do you speak at work? 3) When you speak with people at work, how are the words you use different from the ones you use at home?

Students translated the questions into home language where necessary and each went home with small digital recorder, the proper equipment with which to conduct an interview. The next day the students arrived to class eager to discuss their data. They listened to their parents’ responses and made notes on post-its. Then together they organized their post-it data into bar graphs led by student Lilliana, self-assigned data manager. It emerged that many of the families were multilingual, making it necessary to create a column for using two languages at home or at work. Then the story got even more interesting. The students began to share the words their relatives used at work, and from the responses the classmates made a hypothesis about where the parents worked. Amar shared that his mom used “charging” and “packing” at work. Classmates guessed she might work at a cell phone company, but it turned out that she worked at a grocery store. This sparked a discussion about the multiple uses of the word “charging”



reinforcing the concept of how meaning is situation in social context. Next, Lorenzo shared that his father used “sweets, register, reservations, and menu.” Classmates hypothesized that his father worked at a bakery or restaurant. Lorenzo smiled and shook his head no. After several minutes of discussion, Lorenzo offered the hint that it was not the kinds of “sweets” that you eat. Janet, one of the teachers, asked how the word was spelled, then explained that a “suite” was a kind of special hotel room. It turned out that Lorenzo’s father worked at a hotel. Lorenzo used his linguistic capital in his knowledge of the homonyms sweet and suite to give a hint to his classmates. It was a clear indication of the presence, mobilization, and growth of his linguistic capital. (Griffin, 2014)

In this story of the MSL program, the profound linguistic principle was developed by the students that language is situated in context and that one context does not have to be privileged above another. Furthermore, the notion of teaching students how to be linguists allowed students to look at language like a researcher. In line with the analogy about teaching a man to fish, the MSL team believed that creating linguists had more potential than any language program in which isolated words or concepts are front-loaded. The students in the MSL project mobilized their linguistic capital by learning to use a strategy that goes beyond the classroom walls, a self-extending learning system for language through metalinguistic awareness. (Griffin, 2014)

Porter’s ethnography (2013) tells the story of Shami, a student with linguistic capital. One might begin Shami’s story by saying that she emigrated to the U.S. as refugee after her mother and several members of her family were killed in a civil war in Sierra Leone. Shami had not had access to formal schooling and was identified by the school site as a student with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). Shami was

referred multiple times for special education, first at the end of her 7th grade year and again each year in high school at least one teacher filled out a special education referral. When Shami was in 9th grade, the literacy coach, also the researcher and writer of the dissertation, agreed to tutor Shami one on one. Receiving this individualized instruction, Shami quickly advanced from a kindergarten literacy level up through the elementary grades. The researcher discovered that Shami was able to hold extensive amounts of information in her memory: family recipes, appointments, rich stories from her country, and passages from the novels the coach read aloud to her. Whereas most high school students struggle to make presentations to their peers, Shami was able to deliver an organized and impactful speech to her math class. The year that Shami turned twenty-one in the 12th grade she presented her final math project. Her performance was so impressive that her math teacher posted the following to a social networking site.

Just witnessed a 21-year-old senior from Sierra Leone who had only 6 years of schooling TOTAL (never went to school in Sierra Leone, moved to US at age 15) never presented a project in her life, and struggles with English, rocket out an 8-minute solo presentation financially analyzing personal assets and debts. Two students were in tears because it was so impressive...perhaps the best moment at work in the past two years. Here's to Shami for shattering expectations! (Porter, 2013, pp. 4-5).

Despite Shami's natural talents of oracy, and the fact that she worked tirelessly to catch up to her peers, she was not successful within an educational ideology in which the literacy domains of reading and writing had been granted primacy over the oral language domains. She did not have the credits to graduate, and because she was not a special

education student, she aged out and could not return in the fall. Contrary to what Shami's story tells about a student with considerable linguistic capital, she was defined as a failing and deficient student. In all her files the words and phrases "cannot \_\_\_\_" and "does not seem able to \_\_\_\_" dominated. She was defined as deficient in that according to the perception of the school she had insufficient or inadequate knowledge and/or capability to access the curriculum, or to behave in appropriate ways. (Porter, 2013) Shami's story is an example in which the school system located the blame for a student's failure on the student herself rather than on structural problems within the educational system (Valencia, 2010).

In Porter's ethnography we also meet Josue, a student with considerable linguistic capital which he uses to entertain classmates and bring humor into some of the difficult experiences of his life. Josue was 21 years old at the time of the study. Like Shami, he was designated SLIFE status by the school district due to his interrupted formal education history. He had arrived to the US at age seventeen in 2009, bringing with him a 2005 9th grade report card from El Salvador. In a neighboring town he was placed in the 9th grade and made it to the 11th grade, but then dropped out. He later enrolled at Irvington High School (the study site school) for the 2012-2013 school year to complete the 12th grade. At the same time that he was attending school, Josue worked a full-time job on nights and weekends to make ends meet. He rented an apartment with friends. Not only did Josue have a good sense of humor, he was also a great storyteller. As an assignment Josue received a picture with the expectation that he create an original story. The picture was a woman with a deranged look on her face preparing to carve a glowing pumpkin. Josue created a story to share with the class that included dramatic elements, vivid images,

creative details, and a romantic resolution. He told the class that the woman was a witch and the pumpkin represented somebody's life. When she cut the pumpkin, the person would die because the light was someone's spirit. However, this time the witch was not successful in taking the life of her victim because the man whose spirit the pumpkin represented was in love and true love could not be destroyed (Porter, 2013).

To further illustrate linguistic capital in action, the following story shows what can transpire when emerging multilingual students are provided a space in which to allow their linguistic funds of knowledge to shine and grow. High school students were recruited to participate in a program called Language Ambassadors (LA) (Martin-Beltrán, 2014). The LA program brought together emerging multilinguals who were learning Spanish and English to engage in multilingual literacy activities that involved reciprocal teaching and learning opportunities among peers. The program ran for three years at this school and took place during a 45-minute lunch period as well as after school. The context of a public high school in the United States privileges a standard variety of English, and so the LA program aspired to create a Third Space in which students' wider linguistic funds of knowledge could be used for participating in multilingual literacy activities. Educational researchers such as Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, Tejeda, and Moje (Martin-Beltrán, 2014) have conceptualized the Third Space as a bridge across official and unofficial discourses, or as a navigational space in which students cross discursive boundaries. It may be described as a transformational space where there is potential for an expanded form of learning. Students in the LA program were designated as "English experts," "bilingual experts," or "Spanish experts." The titles were used as such to highlight the language strengths of the students, but they recognized that all were

developing proficiency in both Spanish and English. Language expertise or language dominance was not seen by the teachers as a static quality, rather as fluid and shifting across contexts. The students participated in conversations about prompts related to experiences learning languages, then they wrote about their experiences. Students worked in Spanish and English simultaneously and were grouped with peers who brought distinct linguistic expertise. LA participants were instructed to converse and compose in their target language, however they were encouraged to draw upon all of their linguistic resources as they worked with peers. The high school students activated multilingual repertoires and used translanguaging to mediate learning in a Third Space. The researcher, who collected data through 40 observation sessions, student writing, interviews, and audio/video recordings of peer interactions, found evidence of co-construction of knowledge and expanding multilingual repertoires. Students attempted to solve linguistic problems and co-constructed knowledge about language and literacy in their interactions around writing. The researcher examined language mediation and opportunities for learning by identifying language-related episodes (LREs) in the transcripts of the speech interactions of students when students asked questions about language or solved language problems together. She found that in the majority of the LREs discovered (479 out of a total of 589 episodes), students used translanguaging practices between the socially constructed languages of English and Spanish. The language minority students demonstrated the most linguistic agility in that they used more translanguaging as well as more of their target language than did their language-majority peers (Martin-Beltrán, 2014).

The following story demonstrates the mobilization of linguistic capital that occurred one day within the LA class. Three students, Yolanda, Eva, and Paulina, launched into a discussion about the appropriate use of the word *afectar* in Spanish. Yolanda was a student enrolled in level 3 Spanish who was born in the U.S. and raised in a Spanish-dominant bilingual home. She exited ELL services in elementary school. Eva was a newcomer to the U.S., born in Ecuador, who described her English as very limited. Eva was raised in a Spanish-speaking family and brought strong Spanish literacy skills from her schooling in Ecuador. Paulina was also a newcomer from the Dominican Republic with strong Spanish language literacy skills. At the beginning of the interaction, Yolanda requested help from Eva to support her in her writing in Spanish. Eva read Yolanda's essay and let her know that she should use *ayudar* (to help) instead of *afectar* (to affect) in her sentence because *afectar* would indicate harm being done. Paulina entered the conversation at that point and stated that *afectar* could be used to mean in good way, but Eva insisted that even so, *ayudar* (i.e. it is going to help my future) would sound better than *afectar* (i.e. it is going to affect my future) for what Yolanda was trying to say. The conversation was conducted in both English and Spanish as the students used their translanguaging skills to co-construct meaning and defend their word choices. Their metalinguistic awareness of the differing uses and connotations of cognates across languages grew during this interaction. Each student brought her sociolinguistic skills to the conversation and expanded her linguistic repertoire.

In another interaction, Anna, Angel and Juanita, grappled with the meaning of the word *igual* across two languages and how best to express 'embarrassed' in Spanish in an academic setting (Martin-Beltrán, 2014). The interaction allowed students to explore the

most academic or formal ways to state what they wanted to say. They built from each other's ideas creating more linguistic knowledge. Juanita was a bilingual student who was raised in a Spanish-dominant bilingual home in the United States. She had been identified for special education services in elementary school. Her teachers described her as a struggling student who rarely participated in class. However, the researchers found that she flourished in the LA program as she recognized her own skillfulness as a bilingual expert. In her interview with the researchers, Juanita shared that in LA she had the opportunity to be a teacher for other students for the first time. She identified herself as a bilingual expert and explained that Language Ambassadors taught her to be an expert in her own language. Juanita used translanguaging practices frequently in this Third Space context. The stories that emerged from the LA program counteract the deficit myths described by Flores (2005), that bilingualism is a barrier to academic success and that bilingual children are suffering from cultural and linguistic deprivation.

### **Familial Capital**

Familial capital refers to cultural knowledges nurtured among kin that carry community history, cultural intuition, and memories. This form of cultural wealth promotes a commitment to community well being while expanding the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship. Within the kinship ties mobilized in familial capital, members learn the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to one's community and its resources. Familial capital minimizes isolation as families connect with others around common issues and come to know that they are not alone in dealing with their problems. These stories of familial capital contradict the belief present

in deficit thinking that the families of bilingual children cannot or do not want to help their children (Flores, 2005).

Soua's story (Cannon, 2010) tells the tale of the cultural knowledge of familial capital being passed down from one generation to the next. In Soua's house it is the practice of her parents to reserve a teaching time after dinner. On the parent survey they stated: "We taught the child how to divide the times for herself and study when she finished dinner" (p. 105). Soua's winter break journal described how she then helped her nephew prepare for school. "When I was done eating lunch I teach my little nephew how to count to 100. And I also teach him how to write Abc too" (pp. 104-105). Soua's parents taught her the practice that family members share their academic knowledge with younger ones during a special time of the day, so now she participates in this practice as well, sharing her knowledge with younger family members in a like manner. In this way, the cultural capital of the family continues to expand and grow with each generation.

Also reflecting familial capital, in each of the homes in Cannon's study the children's playmates were nearly exclusively siblings. The children spoke frequently about their extended family networks and regular interaction with cousins. Weekends, holidays, and other events were opportunities for extended family members to connect (Cannon, 2010).

Other stories from the reviewed studies give a peek into familial capital in action. Pablo's peers cut school to translate for their parents, to work and bring home an income for their family, or to care for younger siblings (Fernández, 2002). Zahra was able to rely upon her father's help to learn English quickly (Porter, 2013). Isela's parents were able to enlist the help of multiple family members during a crisis situation in which a bead got



stuck in Isela's younger sister's ear. One uncle cared for the children, while another uncle helped Isela's dad remove the bead (Cannon, 2010).

### **Resistant Capital**

Resistant capital refers to knowledges and skills awakened through behavior that challenges and opposes inequality. This form of cultural wealth is grounded in the resistance to subordination by communities of Color. Research studies of resistant capital reveal that resistance may include different forms of oppositional behavior, such as self-defeating or conformist strategies that perpetuate the system of subordination. However, when resistant capital is informed by critical consciousness and recognition of the structural nature of oppression, motivation to work toward social and racial justice is born. Resistance takes on a different form, transformative resistant capital, when it includes cultural knowledge of the structures of racism combined with the motivation to transform oppressive structures (Yosso, 2005).

Pablo's story of how teens resisted inadequate schooling unfolds in a qualitative study grounded in Critical Race Theory and Latino Critical Race Theory. Researcher Lilia Fernández interviewed Pablo to examine the educational experience of a Latino student in a public high school in Chicago, Illinois. Pablo's narrative highlights how he and his fellow Latino classmates mobilized their resistant capital by choosing to cut school to participate in activities more meaningful to them than the inadequate schooling they were receiving. In his high school experience, cutting class was widespread and commonplace for himself and classmates. While some students attended daytime parties, others went to work, some headed home to take care of younger family members, yet others accompanied parents on appointments to translate for them. Students weren't

leaving school just for enjoyment; many had work and family obligations that were priorities for them over unsatisfactory schooling. Choosing enjoyment activities instead of being at school can be interpreted as a form of resistant capital especially for teens who did not see their cultural identities reflected in the school community. Finding time and space to consume and produce cultural forms and practices different from mainstream suburban White teens is an emancipatory exercise for marginalized teens. It is important to recognize the students' agency in the choice to cut school in that they were self-advocates, choosing the activity that was most meaningful for them at the time (Fernández, 2002).

Another story of resistant capital emerges in Kubo Tadayuki's 2014 ethnographic study examining the resettlement of refugees from Burma to Minnesota, Wisconsin, and California. The story is about the amelioration of a term meaning refugee used by Karenni people. The way in which the term has changed in its connotation is a story of resistance to being defined as deficient. According to Tadayuki's interviews with Lii Reh and Klu Reh, refugees dwelling together in one apartment use the term *Doukhadee lou nee dee* to describe their home conditions. The phrase when directly translated means "living like a refugee." The word *doukhadee* originates from Burmese and indicates suffering and those in trouble. However, *doukahee lou nee dee* has come to be used by Karenni living in the U.S. in a different way. *Doukhadee lou nee dee* (living like refugees) no longer simply means experiencing suffering as a refugee. Rather, the use of the term conveys the fact that even now, after resettlement, the Karenni continue to live as they had been doing in the refugee camps in their shared cultural values and experiences. The term refugee (*doukhadee*) is now used to signify that the lifestyle of the

refugee camp continues culturally, however without the sufferings linked to that experience. The term is used in expressions such as “because we are living like refugees, please join us and let us have dinner together.” In this context, the term *doukhadee* signals that according to Karenni custom, travelers or guests are offered food and drink. Thus, the expression can be translated as “we are still living as Karenni, so please join us for dinner” (Tadayuki, 2014). This story is an example of resistant capital in that a community of people resist being defined as victims or suffering. The term *doukhadee* is redefined to signify the positive attributes of a community who share a history and cultural practices. Through this reclaiming and re-imagining of the term *doukahadee*, Karenni rewrite their story as one of shared community cultural wealth. The story is also an example of social capital illustrating the strength inherent in a commonality of experience and shared culture of a people.

Porter’s (2013) ethnographic study of the strengths that students with limited or interrupted formal education possess uncovered a thought-provoking story of resistant capital in a young adult emergent bilingual. Miguel came to the U.S. from Guatemala and entered the study school as a 17-year-old 10th grader first enrolling in a school in a neighboring district. Miguel described a situation in his first U.S. school of mutual distrust between students and staff. Up to five police officers patrolled the school halls and would arrest students, handcuffs and up against the wall, for minor infractions and tussles without discussion or seeking clarification or input from students. The school he described served mostly African American students. In his first U.S. school, Miguel had experienced the trauma of an educational system with a criminal-justice orientation towards students of Color. During the research study in his new school, Miguel

repeatedly tested the trustworthiness of the adults by making potentially inappropriate statements, presumably to see how far the adult could be pushed before getting angry. For example, when the teacher asked him about a story he was writing, he told her that it was about a kid who peed in the auditorium. He approached the researcher frequently with similar statements intended to test the boundaries of the adult's emotional response. At one point he wanted to include a song with profanity in his presentation. The salient element of this part of Miguel's story is that the particular profanity used in the song was the N-word, and it turned out it had meaning for Miguel that he wanted to explore. The researcher let Miguel know that he must get the radio edit of the song. Miguel replied by engaging the researcher in a conversation about race stating, "But why you get mad at him (Wiz Khalifa) if he say n\_\_\_\_\_, he is n\_\_\_\_\_ too?" (p. 208) The researcher explained that she was not mad, but that the word is very offensive to some people, and that because they would be sharing the work with the school community students needed to follow the rules for profanity. Miguel replied "You know Ms., my grandfather was a n\_\_\_\_\_ too" (p. 208). Miguel was trying to engage in a conversation about his own racial identity with the researcher.

Miguel led with resistant capital. His resistant capital helped him to understand the emotional boundaries of the adults in his experience and afforded him the agency to opt out of experiences or activities that he did not find valuable. As a young adult who had likely not had the opportunity to engage formally in a critical analysis of race and power through which one develops the academic discourse to challenge systems of injustice, he instead spoke the truth of his experiences through his resistance. The experience of his resistant capital was not a pleasant one for the adults in the study.

Because of his tendency to lead with resistant capital, it was hard for the adults to get to know him, and he was not as likeable as other students in the class. Miguel's other forms of capital were not readily visible until the adult got to know him. His history at his previous school revealed possible reasons why resistant capital was necessary for him. Unfortunately, Miguel became trapped in a cycle of acting out against authority in response to the inequities within the school. Miguel was the only student in Porter's research who dropped out during the study. Miguel refused to take summer or afterschool classes to catch up on his studies (Porter, 2013).

Another fascinating story about how students mobilize resistant capital appears in Helmer's 2013 study of resistance in a Spanish heritage language (SHL) class. In a charter school in a town about an hour from the U.S - Mexico border, 16 students were enrolled in a class whose teacher was a white woman named Beth. Beth held a master's degree in Latin American Studies, was a community activist for Mexican-migrant rights and had lived for several years in South America. She had taught both high school and university-level Spanish. Beth was a native English speaker with advanced proficiency in Spanish. At the beginning of the school year, after complaints from students about learning verb conjugations, Beth decided to have the students read *How to Tame a Wild Tongue*, a chapter from Chicana feminist, activist, poet, and writer Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Within the chapter, Anzaldúa describes the "linguistic terrorism" she experienced as a result of not speaking Standard Spanish and how she picked up *Pachuco* as a language of rebellion against both Standard Spanish and Standard English. *Pachuco* is a term describing the Mexican-American subculture during the 1930s/1940s and has been associated with Chicano youth gangs and with conflicted

identity—neither Mexican nor American. Beth used Anzaldúa’s writing as an entry point for discussion of language varieties and the discrimination people face when they do not speak standard varieties of a language. Beth explained to students that some of their current slang had roots in the *Pachuco* language variety, for example *simón*, meaning, “yes, I agree with you.” In a subsequent lesson, Beth tried to engage Juan in an interaction about slang in an attempt to honor his linguistic knowledge. She asked him about a phrase he had taught her, but he resisted engaging in the conversation. The researcher, who was observing in the classroom, attempted to explain that Beth was just trying to relate to them, but both Juan and his girlfriend Allison slowly shook their heads no. While advocates of critical heritage language approaches would consider “the *Pachuco* lesson” appropriate, interview and classroom data from the study show that the lesson backfired. For Allison, an award-winning student and accomplished *mariachi* violinist, being associated with *Pachucos* ascribed a gangster or “ghetto” identity that was not part of her own Mexican identity or community. Her resistance to this comparison is not surprising when one understands the stigmatized linguistic and social ideologies surrounding *Pachucos* as disaffected youth who lack the means and ambition for social mobility, causing them to drop out of school and choose a party lifestyle. It is probable that students in Beth’s class interpreted the *Pachuco* linguistic comparison as an allegation that their Spanish, and by extension, they and their families, were substandard. In order to express their rejection of her disrespect to their identities, the students responded with a variety of oppositional strategies. The researcher observed their unwillingness to participate in class, not speaking Spanish when instructed, sulking, and complaining. In one example, when Beth gave the class directions in Spanish, Pedro told

her that his five-year-old brother spoke better Spanish than her. In like manner, Carla frequently asked Beth to speak English because she claimed not to be able to understand her Anglicized Spanish. Beth explained calmly during these interactions that she would be able to help them with their academic Spanish, which was likely internalized by the students as a further indictment of their Spanish abilities by a White non-native Spanish speaker. The students' resistant behaviors, in combination with some of the students' greater Spanish fluency, robbed the teacher of her authority. In the end of the year focus group interviews it became clear that the *Pachuco* reference had great salience for the students, particularly for Allison. Allison explains that she felt that Beth judged the kids and told them they talked like a bunch of *Pachucos*. Other students in the focus group echoed Allison's sentiments and mocked Beth's Anglicized Spanish. Students also defined the White teacher as other and asserted that she was in fact a Spanish language learner, despite advanced Spanish proficiency (Helmer, 2013). This story of resistant capital shows that students can exercise power over teachers through acts of resistance.

### **Experiential Capital**

Experiential capital refers to the knowledges and skills that come from varied life and educational experiences, exposure to unique topics, and diverse approaches to learning and expressing content knowledge (WIDA, 2014).

Pablo in Fernández (2002) has the experiential capital of one who has had personal life experience with systemic oppression. His high school experiences at Metro allow him the insight and critical analysis that can arise from personal identification with the struggles felt by students of Color. Pablo's story shows that he directly experienced the lowered expectations that were institutionalized practice towards Spanish-speaking

emergent bilinguals like himself. His narrative reveals how it felt for him when teachers underestimated the abilities of Spanish-speaking students learning English. He explained:

My first 2 years (were) pretty bad because I was in ESL actually...I was learning English...Being in the ESL class, it kind of isolates you a little bit... (in) a certain way, they lower your level, or expectations, the teacher does (p. 51; ellipses in original).

Additionally, his critical analysis of his experience reveals that the school placed little emphasis on content material in instruction and rather emphasized discipline and vocational traits. Pablo also noted the lack of academic rigor in what were called the advanced classes at his high school. He described how in advanced English he wrote only two papers during the entire year, read only *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, and completed short exercises. Contrasting his high school English experiences with the expectations of the university, Pablo realized that his English class, despite being labeled as the advanced class, had not adequately prepared him for his college writing assignments. He described a school situation in which most of the predominantly White teachers seemed to care little about students' learning, didn't like their jobs, and held patronizing beliefs about their students: "I know for a fact those teachers...saw the kids and (thought), 'Poor kids, they don't know anything.' So their level of expectations were...on the ground" (p. 52; ellipses in the original). He described teachers who struggled against the system. However, when these teachers started to push the academics to a higher level, they would get a reputation among students as being difficult and kids would cut their classes. The teachers were caught in a cycle of wondering whether to make the class easier so students would come, or make it hard and then lose



everyone to cutting. Pablo looked back on his experiences and analyzed the way the school was run. At the time he thought everybody was lazy and didn't want to go to class, but now he has realized that his educational experience was marked by tracking and low expectations of students learning English (Fernández, 2002).

Klu Reh, Karenni refugee in Tadayuki's (2014) study, tells a story of experiential capital in how he encouraged other refugees to get a driver's license, and offered them tips on how to live in the city. He said, "In America, the car is as important as the sandal is for the Karenni" (Tadayuki, 2014). This cross-cultural analogy demonstrates the metacultural awareness that arises when a person has experienced life in more than one culture. Klu Reh mobilizes this experiential capital to help his community navigate in a new country and culture by providing an analogy that will help them understand the ways of life in the U.S.

Amira arrived to the US from Morocco in 2010. Her journal showed her experiential capital; she explained that she liked her neighborhood in her native country better than Irvington, Massachusetts, because neighbors were closer to each other there. She described her neighborhood in Morocco where people were very simple and kind. But in Irvington, the neighbors didn't talk to one another. Some of her neighbors played loud music late at night, which Amira took as an indication that they didn't respect her family (Porter, 2013). Amira's experiential capital came through in this story; as a result of her varied life experiences of living in both Morocco and the U.S. she was able to evaluate her world and determine which ways of interacting within a neighborhood community were more comfortable for her, or more in alignment with her own personal beliefs. In contrast to a person who has only experienced one neighborhood, or one way

that communities interact, Amira has the benefit of understanding that there are different ways of knowing and being in the world.

Isela revealed her experiential capital in a conversation with the researcher. In their first meeting Isela revealed casually that her birthday is the following day. "I am eight years old today, but tomorrow I am nine." The researcher asked what her birthday meant to her. The researcher was being careful; given the family's financial status and the number of children in the family, she believed that birthdays may not be marked by large celebrations. Isela responded matter-of-factly that it depended on how many cans they had. Isela explained that the family collected aluminum cans and when there was enough money from their redemption that there may be a cake or possibly a pizza purchased in honor of the child celebrating a birthday. In the parent survey, Isela's mother indicated that birthdays were important celebrations in their family, and that when there was not enough money for a cake they would all gather and sing the *Mañanitas* song (Cannon, 2010). Isela understood the financial checks and balances that operate in a family budget. She did not assume that there would be special treats on a birthday because she had experienced the ways in which her family made financial decisions that allowed them to live within their means. This story echoes a theme from the Children as Translators section from Chapter 2 of this capstone. Some of the child translators understood the inner workings of their family's budget at a young age and had wisdom about finances beyond their peers (Orellana, 2003). To further demonstrate her experiential capital of managing a budget, Isela explained that her mom liked her to read, and that garage sales were a good place to purchase books. Her favorite book came from a garage sale and

Isela says sometimes they sell books for ten cents each, and she could get ten for a dollar (Cannon, 2010).

### **Social and Emotional Capital**

Social and emotional assets are described as personal interests and needs, awareness of and empathy for diverse experiences. Such capital includes the ability to form and sustain positive relationships, and broker meaningful interactions among peers and others within and beyond school (WIDA, 2014).

Zahra, as a result of her social and emotional capital, offered support, guidance and friendship to sisters Amira and Hajar when they arrived to the U.S. The bond between the three became deeper than just friendship alone, illustrating their ability to form and sustain positive relationships. Zahra's social and emotional knowledge grew as a result of the experiential capital she gained navigating an English-speaking school as the only Arabic speaker. Zahra exhibited a kind of meta-knowledge that comes from experiencing something difficult and reflecting on one's successes and challenges (Porter, 2013). She then translated her reflection into action in helping her peers, showing awareness and empathy for the experiences of others. When the researcher asked her what she would do if another Arabic speaker arrived to the school, Zahra responded that she would help them because now she could. In fact, Zahra was sought out by Arabic-speaking newcomers in the school. She laughingly said to the researcher: "When they came, they find me, all the people find me." (p. 223) After arriving, learning English, and figuring out the system, Zahra has become the guide for everybody else (Porter, 2013).

Amira and Hajar are sisters who came to the US from Morocco in January of 2010. Both were placed in the 9th grade at the request of their father. That year Amira and Hajar failed all of their classes and had to repeat the 9th grade. Hajar demonstrated her social and emotional capital in how she responded to failing all her classes. She explained that she was sad because she failed, that she had done her best, and then she said that she knew she would make up all her classes next year. Hajar did not complain after experiencing the failure of all her classes. She demonstrated resiliency and a clear purpose to succeed in concert with an internal locus of control by taking responsibility for this failure instead of placing blame. (Porter, 2013)

### **Conclusion**

In summary, a counterstory to the idea that emergent bilinguals bring only need to the school has been told through these stories. The students are abundant with cultural capitals and funds of knowledge that have enriched their schools and families. Furthermore, when educational communities come together to mobilize the strengths and capitals in their students, curricular innovations occur that create a more equitable educational experience for students of Color.

In this chapter I presented the results of my data collection. In Chapter Five I will discuss my major findings, their implications, and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

In this study, I attempted to answer the question: What stories exist that demonstrate the cultural capital and funds of knowledge that emergent bilinguals hold? This chapter will address the following topics: major findings, limitations of the study, implications for educators, suggestions for further research, and ways in which I will share what I've learned.

### **Major Findings**

With this study, I set out to compile a body of counterstories that I could add to my tool box, the sharing of which could reframe educators' perspectives regarding perceived deficits of emergent bilinguals. I encountered stories which demonstrated the cultural capitals described by Yosso (2005) as aspiration, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital and the assets described by WIDA (2014) as experiential, and social and emotional. Valencia (2010) described deficit thinking as a mindset which causes educators to disregard systemic factors in explaining why some students fail and instead point to internal deficiencies of students. The stories that appear in Chapter Four are counterstories to the deficit thinking described by Valencia. Furthermore, the stories provide evidence contrary to the myths that Flores (2005) described, such as the false notion that bilingual children come from homes in which parents neglect their children, or the wrong idea that emergent bilinguals are suffering from cultural and linguistic deprivation. Additionally the stories counter the deficit perspective arising from the Hart

and Risley study that linguistically diverse students fail due to a lack of exposure to sufficiently rich language. Finally, the stories contradict the unconscious assumption about the superiority of White cultural norms which can lead educators to center their efforts on trying to save children from families and lives they completely misunderstand (Marx, 2002). They also counter the assertion made by pre-service teachers in Marx's study (2002) that emergent bilingual students don't have systems of academic support at home because their parents speak a language other than English. The narratives uncovered in this systematic review reveal ways that emergent bilinguals hold a variety of funds of knowledge, a term used by Gonzales, Moll, and Amanti (2013).

Aspirational capital was one fund of knowledge that emerged from the studies. Stories of aspirational capital included examples of students taking summer courses in order to break out of the tracking pattern for EL students so that they could achieve the requirements needed to enter college or graduate from high school. One student demonstrated aspirational capital in combination with familial and linguistic capital in how she creatively designed a personal method to quickly learn English. Navigational capital was interlinked and perhaps indistinguishable from aspirational capital in some of the stories. Activating their navigational capital, students sought out adults for specialized knowledge about how to achieve goals, and used their amiable personalities to get the instructional support they needed.

Stories of social capital uncovered in this study included large scale organization of teens who participated in activities that allowed them to actively resist inadequate schooling. The stories of social capital also included the way in which the Karenni community stayed connected to one another by creating new social networks after

resettlement in the U.S. The Karenni way of social interaction is different from the individualistic and private lives of many Americans. Karenni move fluidly in and out of each other's daily experience seeing the inner workings of friends' day to day lives and claiming a presence as an integral part of them, a tremendous social strength.

Linguistic capital was a main focus of this study and the stories uncovered in this category provided a variety of challenges to deficit thinking. Stories of linguistic capital included curricular innovations such as the Math, Science, Language (Griffin, 2014) summer program and the Language Ambassadors (Martin-Beltrán, 2014), in which students were invited to mobilize and honor the language resources within themselves and their families. In another story, students used their linguistic capital to create vivid narratives and deliver powerful public speeches. Of central interest to me were the studies in which teachers intentionally mobilized linguistic capital by creating instructional situations in which metalinguistic knowledge could be built. These studies caused me to consider the significant instructional redesign that can occur when teachers approach students through the lens of cultural capitals. Fostering linguistic capital is like teaching a man to fish, a more powerful and effective method of instruction than front-loading vocabulary or concepts because it allows students to develop meta-knowledge that extends beyond the experience in the classroom. Students in the Math, Science, Language and Language Ambassadors programs had the opportunity to develop metalinguistic skills similar to those developed by children in their role as translators in Orellana (2003). Furthermore, as was described in García (2005), codeswitching is an acceptable and natural conversational strategy in many bilingual communities, and rather than indicating deficit or deficiency, it is a highly complex skill. Students in the

Language Ambassadors program were granted the opportunity to practice the complex skill of code-switching while they developed literacy in their second language.

Familial capital stories told the tale of cultural knowledge and family practices being passed down from one generation to the next and challenged the notion that linguistically diverse families cannot or do not help their children succeed, a deficit perspective that was described by Flores (2005). Familial capital appeared in the studies in that parents taught their children specific strategies for passing academic knowledge to younger family members. Stories of familial capital showed how extended family members are available during crisis situations allowing a family to rely upon itself to solve problems. Of equal importance, familial capital was present in the way that participants used their multilingual abilities to help family members in their future goals, or just in their daily living needs.

Resistant capital can be mobilized by students when they experience forms of deficit thinking described by Valdés (1998), such as when they are required to take courses that do not respect their potential or when they experience a lack of value placed on their heritage language and culture. Resistant capital takes on different forms and can be transformative when students are provided the tools of critical pedagogy. It can be gently powerful, as in the changing and re-imagining of terminology used to refer to one's community. Or, resistant capital can show up with a more rebellious quality. It can be ignited in people when their identities have been misunderstood or unfairly characterized. A theme among the stories of resistant capital was students of Color defying power structures endemic to the educational institutions that they participated in. Children engaged in behaviors and maintained attitudes that challenged the status quo



(Yosso, 2005) such as not attending class, or directly undermining the power of the teachers while in class. Resistant capital can also function as a personal tool of self-preservation when it is used by an individual to test the boundaries of trustworthiness of others. The stories of resistance indicate that this strength is the least understood and the only maligned capital of all the cultural capitals described in this study due to the fact that it challenges the power structures that are in place and creates discomfort for those trying to uphold the current system. It has also been, perhaps wrongly, defined as self-defeating behavior. Given the tools of critical pedagogy, resistant capital is the impetus for evolution towards a more equitable society.

Experiential capital led study subjects to develop empathy, knowledge beyond that of their peers, understanding of systems of oppression, and the metacultural awareness that arises from experiencing life in more than one culture. Empathy for the experiences of others caused study participants to take action in support of others during difficult times. Combined with reflection, experiential capital was a precursor to the ability to critically analyze racially inequitable systems with the unique perspective of one who lived the oppression. In another case, a student experienced the financial decisions that a family made that allowed them to live within their budget. Similar to the data described in Orellana's (2003) study of child translators, students in these ethnographies had experiences that peers had not had, and those experiences built knowledge of adult responsibility and household management. Experiential capital in all of these cases led to the expansion of social and emotional capital by way of enhanced empathy and awareness of diverse experiences. Social and emotional capital was seen in

the way that students reflected on their own successes and challenges and made mature decisions that showed empathy, resilience, and internal locus of control.

The cultural capitals work together; in many of the stories the theme emerged that the mobilizing of one capital led to the enhancement of another. Mobilizing linguistic capital led to greater social capital. Building experiential capital led to greater social-emotional capital. Mobilizing familial capital led to linguistic capital, aspirational capital, and so on.

There is a story that we tell each other in the educational community that emergent bilinguals bring only need to school. Nevertheless, within this research study, I was able to identify stories that challenge deficit narratives about emergent bilinguals. The counterstory can be seen here that emergent bilinguals such as Soua, Pablo, Allison, Miguel, Shami, Akello, Zahra, Lii Reh, Klu Reh and others like them are abundant with cultural capitals and funds of knowledge. The counterstories told in Chapter 4 contradict racist characterizations of social life such as the notion that linguistically diverse families are deficient and needy. Individual stories in Chapter Four can be called other people's stories; and when they are retold, have the potential to take on a 'larger than life' quality (Merriweather, 2006). Each subsection in Chapter Four describes a specific cultural capital; the subsections can be considered composite stories in that they represent a gathering together of numerous individual stories (Merriweather, 2006).

### **Limitations**

This study had limitations. First, the stories didn't always have the depth that I was looking for. Many were snapshots into the students' and families' lives rather than rich narratives with a beginning, middle, and end. Further, it was sometimes difficult to

extract a story through a second person re-telling or through the formal structure of research studies. While the stories I uncovered here are invaluable, they are not my own students and so there is a distant quality to some of them that may reduce the power of their retelling.

### **Implications**

I set out to compile a group of stories that I could use in professional development and conversations with educators, which I will do. Equally important, I believe now, is for fellow educators to go through a similar process to the one I went through in systematically identifying the cultural capitals of students. The stories I read caused me to recognize the urgency of moving toward instructional design that begins with considering students' assets. Teachers should have opportunities to experience this process then go a step farther by designing their units and lessons based upon student strengths. A process like this will foster teachers' ability to identify capitals in students and change the way instruction is designed. Educators should be able to identify ways in which their students are unique, rich in ideas, and how their special experiences and knowledges enrich our classrooms. We should know how our students and their families communicate and represent their learning and knowledge of the world.

A profound mind shift regarding resistant and linguistic capitals is due. Resistant capital, with its potentially transformative power, needs to be better understood and intentionally recognized as a strength in students. Students who lead with resistant capital should be invited to be leaders in critical studies about race, gender, sexuality, and social class. Furthermore, linguistic capital needs to be better understood and we need to learn how to plan for mobilizing this capital within instruction. The power of

translanguaging, the skills and abilities of multilingual individuals, the linguistic funds of knowledge held by families, are all invaluable resources to be tapped into to evolve and transform the educational landscape.

I came to these understandings by going through a systemic process of identifying capitals in the studies of other researchers. An educational community could participate in a similar process of identifying assets, capitals, and funds of knowledge in their own students. This could happen within a professional learning community.

Reading the student's stories in this study led me to ask how teacher perceptions of households can be affected as a result of recognizing families' linguistic and cultural funds of knowledge so that we can create a space in which students lead with their cultural capitals and strengths. When educators intentionally set up systems based on mobilizing student strengths, the educational landscape becomes more just, as was the case in the Language Ambassadors (Martin-Beltrán, 2014) and Math, Science, Language programs (Griffin, 2014).

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

This study led me to ask further questions. Firstly, I wonder how we can recognize and foster the power of resistant capital for students who lead with this strength. I wonder what would have happened for Miguel if his inquiry into a discussion of about race had been answered. To that end, I would like to see research into the impact that learning about social justice or critical race theory has on students who are mobilizing their resistant capital. Furthermore, given the power of the spoken word, I wonder about Shami and her skills of oracy. What happens for Shami and students like her when they are able to further develop and be recognized for their public speaking

abilities at school? How could students like Shami teach peers (and teachers) who come from backgrounds that rely on printed word the tricks and secrets of spoken word presentation? Research into these ideas could reveal the mind shifts need to take place in order for the linguistic asset of oracy to be shared as a community cultural resource within our schools. Finally, I wonder what happens for other White educators who go through the process of analyzing the funds of knowledge of students of Color. How are they impacted? In what ways does their instruction or instructional leadership change as a result? Research into these topics would further our understanding of strengths-based instruction models founded in the counterstory that emergent bilinguals are incredible funds of knowledge.

### **Conclusion**

The intention of gathering these stories was to be able to use them in a strategic manner to subvert a dominant narrative that emergent bilinguals bring only need to our schools (Bell, 2003). I will use the results of this study when designing professional development for educators, in coaching conversations with colleagues, and to advise school sites on assets-based thinking regarding emergent bilinguals.

In my position, I facilitate professional development for teachers on a variety of topics related to educational best practice for emergent bilinguals. I will use the stories compiled in Chapter 4 within the design and facilitation of training sessions. For example, I often facilitate the learning of WIDA's Can Do Philosophy (2014). WIDA's Can Do Philosophy provides an overview of the cultural, linguistic, experiential, and social and emotional assets held by emergent bilinguals and is the document which explains WIDA's assets-based philosophy. In order to illustrate WIDA's Can Do

Philosophy during future trainings, I will tell the stories that I encountered in this study in order to provide concrete examples illustrating the strengths of linguistically diverse students. Furthermore, I will design and deliver professional development that specifically allows teachers to understand the cultural capitals described by Yosso (2005) and WIDA (2014).

Also in my position, I coach educators on instruction for emergent bilinguals. In the case that a colleague expresses a belief that families of emergent bilingual students aren't able to help their children, or that the students are linguistically deficient I will be able to provide a counterstory. For example, I will share Soua's story (Cannon, 2010), whose family passed on the practice of sharing academic knowledge at a special time of the day. In like manner, I will share the story of students in the Math, Science, Language program (Griffin, 2014) who learned about the specialized language their parents used at work. Furthermore, I'll share the story of Zahra (Porter, 2013)) whose father helped her learn English in just six months by translating words into Arabic for Zahra to learn. I will also share the story of Shami, whose oral presentation skills surpassed that of her peers (Porter, 2013). Additionally, deficit perspectives arise in the comments made by participants in professional development sessions. When comments arise that reveal deficit thinking regarding emergent bilinguals, I will be able to choose an appropriate counterstory from the narratives compiled in Chapter Four.

I plan to open up conversations about resistant behavior with colleagues so that I can share the perspective that resistance is actually a cultural strength. I will share the idea that resistant capital develops in response to experiences of inequity, and when informed by critical consciousness, it gives birth to the motivation to work for social

justice (Yosso, 2005). To further illustrate this perspective, I will tell the stories of Pablo and his peers who resisted inadequate schooling (Fernández, 2002), Lii Reh and Klu Reh whose community redefined the word *doukhadee* (Tadayuki, 2014), and Alison and her classmates (Helmer, 2013) who resisted instruction in their Spanish Heritage Language class. I will include these ideas as well in professional development

In my role as an EL program coordinator, I have the opportunity to advise school sites on assets-based thinking regarding emergent bilinguals. I'll recommend that they adopt the practice of creating instruction informed by students' cultural capitals.

Within my role as professional developer, coach, and advisor, I will use the counterstories uncovered in this systematic review to counter deficit thinking regarding emergent bilinguals.











## Appendix E

**Cultural Capitals**

<b>Cultural Capital</b>	<b>Human Subject</b>	<b>Story</b>	<b>APA Citation</b>
aspirational			
navigational			
social			
linguistic			
familial			
resistant			
experiential			
social and emotional			

## Appendix F

### Study Descriptions

This section contains descriptions of the studies that were included in the data extraction process of this systematic review. Each of the studies described in this section met all of the inclusion criteria, and did not meet any of the exclusion criteria. They are ethnographies and case studies of emerging bilingual, or bilingual students and their families which contained stories demonstrating the cultural capitals the subjects possessed.

“Telling Stories About School: Using Critical Race and Latino Critical Theories to Document Latina/Latino Education and Resistance” was a qualitative study founded in Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit) examining the educational experience of a Latino student in a public high school in Chicago, Illinois. In the study, researcher, Lilia Fernández, interviewed Pablo whose narrative highlights how he and his fellow Latina/o classmates resisted inadequate schooling.

“Transnational “Myanmar”-Karenni Societies in United States: Experiences of Karenni Refugee Resettlement” was an ethnographic study examining the experience of refugees from Burma/Myanmar to the United States, specifically to Minnesota, Wisconsin, and California. Human subjects included Lii Reh, Klu Reh and families.

“Honoring Counterstories: Utilizing Digital Storytelling in the Culturally Responsive Classroom to Investigate the Community Cultural Wealth and Resiliency of Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education ( SLIFE)” was an ethnographic study that identified the strengths that students with limited or interrupted formal

education (SLIFE) possess. The aim of the research was to shift the focus from eliminating deficits to working with students' strengths in instructional design. It was conducted in an urban high school Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) English Language Arts classroom during a unit on storytelling. The students ranged in age from fourteen to twenty-one. Human subjects in the study were given the pseudonyms Shami, Josue, Amira, Hajar, Zahra, Duncan, Akello, Miguel (not all of the students' stories appear in this capstone).

“What Do You Want to Say?” How Adolescents Use Translanguaging to Expand Learning Opportunities” investigated how high school students learning English and students learning Spanish activated multilingual repertoires. The researchers examined how students used translanguaging to mediate learning in a Third Space. They collected their data through 40 observation sessions, student writing, interviews, and audio/video recordings of peer interactions. Using ethnography and microgenetic analysis they analyzed the learning opportunities in the Third Space and found evidence of co-construction of knowledge and expanding multilingual repertoires. Specifically, they examined how students attempted to solve linguistic problems and co-constructed knowledge about language and literacy in their interactions around writing. They explored how this context allowed students to mobilize their linguistic funds of knowledge as tools for learning. Human subjects included Yolanda, Eva, Raúl, Paulina, Anna, Angel

“A Twice-Told Tale: Voices of Resistance in a Borderlands Spanish Heritage Language Class” was a two-year critical ethnography, in which the author explores how Mexican American students in a U.S. high school resisted Spanish heritage language

instruction. The students' resistance stemmed from their perception that their teacher had unfairly characterized their linguistic and social identities. Despite her proficiency in Spanish, the students constructed their non-native Spanish teacher to be a Spanish language learner, thus disqualifying her to teach their heritage language.

“When the School “Faucet” Turns Off, the Sociocultural “Sprinklers” Turn On: Observing Funds of Knowledge among First and Second Grade English Learners Who Experienced Summer Gains in Reading” was a case study analysis conducted among emergent bilinguals from low socioeconomic backgrounds who experienced gains during summer. In an interview technique derived from the Language Experience Approach, qualitative data was collected from children and families in order to offer perspectives on their funds of knowledge and learn how skills and competencies acquired outside of school fostered their achievements in school.

“Language and Literacy Brokering: Becoming “Linguisticians” through Parent Interviews” is a study that highlights the extensive linguistic resources students through a unique summer school program designed for ELs. The program included 40 ELL students in 4th and 5th grade who attended a three-week Mathematics, Science, and Language (MSL) summer program at Texas Christian University. Through documenting learning events within the classroom, the researchers offer teachers of ELs a glimpse of how valuing of students' linguistic knowledge leads to curricular innovation and lays a foundation for future language development. Furthermore, the teachers built on the emerging and developing language skills of the ELLs while calling attention to the language capital of their families. The teachers recognized and appreciated parents as assets in their child's language development through student-led parent interviews. The

parent interview experience provided the MSL students with a concrete example of how linguistic resources present in their own families merge with the linguistic demands of most academic settings.



## Appendix G

### **Studies Excluded**

Some studies encountered during the search at first appeared to be appropriate to answering the research question, however upon further investigation they were determined to meet one or more of the exclusion criteria. Similarly, other studies were encountered from which it was not possible to extract a narrative or story to retell, and as a result they were excluded from the data extraction process. This section includes a description of the studies that were excluded and the rationale for exclusion.

“An Investigation Into the Funds of Knowledge of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse US Elementary Students' Households” While this study was in alignment with the assets-based paradigm that was central to the research question, the funds of knowledge construction of the data made it so there wasn't a re-tellable story or event that emerged to illustrate one of the cultural capitals.

“Making it in the United States: A study of Nepali Refugees at an Apartment Complex in Louisville, KY” This study met the exclusion criteria “Does not attempt to capture assets-based perspectives about the people being studied.” The following line from the introduction indicated to me the deficit thinking in the theoretical framework of the study: “Refugees are unique among immigrants in that they often lack the education and language skills needed to prosper in the cities they are moved to. Life is a constant struggle and refugees can have difficulty assimilating into their new culture.” In particular, the words ‘lack’, ‘struggle’, and ‘difficulty’ signaled a tone and trajectory in

the study that would not construct the participants in a way that would reveal cultural capitals.

“Bilingual education in a community language: Lessons from a longitudinal study” Despite having some qualitative data by way of answers to some of the survey and interview questions, the data presented in this study was mostly quantitative. The data included compilations of survey results from families and students and the test results of students. I didn't find any stories in the article which could be retold to illustrate cultural capitals. However, it was a study to refer to in the future in support of two-way bilingual program in Karen-English.

“More Than English: Karen Refugees Negotiating Their Lifestyle in a Cosmopolitan City” This study met the exclusion criteria “Does not attempt to capture assets-based perspectives about the people being studied.” This following line from the abstract indicated to me a deficit based perspective within the dissertation: “Life is ever more difficult because they have low cultural capital, which is cultural knowledge that is widely accepted by the elite or majority of the country. In order to accustom their lives better, the Karen must increase their cultural capital.” The fact that the research appeared to be rooted in the notion that Karen must increase their low cultural capital indicated that the study was not likely designed to uncover stories of strength or assets.

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