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ABSTRACT

Project FOCUS is aimed at enhancing literacy education for non-native speakers of English through the use of photography. It was offered as an elective course within a family literacy program for Hispanic adults. This collection of writings and photographs originated in the program. The collection begins with an overview of Project FOCUS, personal notes on some of the participants, and information about the varied activities of the class. Subsequent sections contain student poetry, narratives, essays, and photographs. The writings are in either English or Spanish. Section topics include the following: "Quien soy yo?/Who Am I?" language experience stories; "La ninez y la familia/Childhood and Family"; "Mothers Are Teachers"; "Soltando las riendas/Letting Go"; "The Neighborhood/El vecindario"; and "In My Opinion." (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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on **FOCUS**

photographs and writings by
students

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introduction/acknowledgments

For 31 years El Centro del Cardenal (The Cardinal Cushing Center) has been providing a comprehensive array of services to Boston's Latino community. The agency's goal has always been to provide the educational and supportive services necessary to empower the community to become active participants in the larger society. One of the vehicles to attain this goal is Project HABLE (Hispanic Adults Basic Literacy in English). As partners with Boston's Adult Literacy Initiative and the University of Massachusetts' Family Literacy Project, we are always searching for new and compelling ways to engage students in the creation and direction of their own education. Thus, Project FOCUS was created: an activity aimed at enhancing the language and literacies of the students in the program through the use of photography.

The image market, though, is overflowed with pictures of the poor, and economically and socially disadvantaged as perceived by professionals who are merely documenting a problem in the tradition of documentary photographers such as Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans, among others. Intentionally or unintentionally, photographers place their own judgmental values upon the images they capture. And accurate documentation of a situation cannot be solely achieved by the photographer's image of the same, unless he or she is part of the reality portrayed in the photo. Testimony: visual, written, or both, provided by the subject whose situation is being examined, can produce a more focused definition of his/her reality. Evidence of this is beautifully presented in Wendy Ewald's Portraits and Dreams (1985), in which children of the Appalachians so eloquently define their own world through pictures and tales in an honest and yet empowering manner. Furthermore, the educational application of photography is also evident in the work of Deborah Barndt and the Participatory Research Group in Toronto, Canada. Their work entitled Getting There is an exemplary result of active student involvement and direction of their own educational process.

The concept of FOCUS is, thus, inspired by the work of many who have come before us, among whom are John Berger, and of course, Paulo Freire; and by my own interest in photography, the arts, and their role in education. Nevertheless, the project's development and evolution is solely shaped by its participants: the students of the HABLE/Family Literacy Program, Loren McGrail (ESL Family Literacy Specialist at El Centro), and fortunately, me (I say fortunately, because it gave me a creative break from the administrative and bureaucratic routine that comes with being Director of Education). The project also had the participation of Aida Quiles (formerly of the Adult Literacy

Resource Institute), who shared her energy and talents during the initial stages of the project.

Special thanks are due to The Polaroid Foundation, who donated photographic equipment and supplies, the Association for Community Based Education (ACBE), El Centro del Cardenal, the University of Massachusetts' Family Literacy Project, and to the many individuals who offered their support and interest in the project: Elsa Auerbach, the staff of PA'LANTE and HABLE (for their understanding), and Silja (for her encouragement). And for her endless originality and energy, I give thanks to Loren.

Y nuestro mas sincero agradecimiento, naturalmente, a los estudiantes que participaron en el proyecto.

Beatriz Strohmeier
El Centro del Cardenal
Boston, MA
September 1988

Abril 12, 1988

PROYECTO FOCUS

El proyecto "FOCUS", es muy interesante, a mí me gusta mucho, porque hay muchas personas que tienen sentimientos muy profundos y que - le nacen inspiraciones al ver la belleza de la naturaleza. Yo pienso que es una buena oportunidad para las personas que se pueden inspirar.

A mí me gusta oír a las personas que -- tienen esas inspiraciones, digo me gusta oírlas porque yo no soy persona que se inspira, quizá influye el sistema de vida que he tenido desde mi niñez y la vida que he llevado de adulta, pero a pesar de yo no ser una persona que se inspira, me gusta estar y admirar las personas que lo pueden hacer.

Margarita Henríquez

development of the project

Like many community adult education programs, ours is faced with the commitment to actively involve the students in defining and taking charge of their education while they upgrade their communication skills in their native language, Spanish, and in English. At the same time, there is a great lack of materials that reflect the student's immediate cultural reality, which would naturally engage them in their own educational process. As teachers and as learners, we understand that materials which are relevant, culturally and historically sensitive to the students will generate enthusiasm.

According to Paulo Freire's and Ivan Illich's educational philosophy, learners should be the creators and directors of their own education. "In the literacy methodology of Paulo Freire, drawings were initially used to focus on important elements of the social reality of the participants. The process of involving students in describing and analyzing the visualized situations of their daily lives aided the literacy process as well as the process of developing critical social consciousness." (Barndt. Just Getting There Participatory Research Group, Toronto, Canada, p.15) Barndt further supports this methodology by stating that if students themselves make the visuals, the literacy process follows naturally.

In our program, and probably in most programs or schools, the most satisfying and successful classes have been those which involve the collective production of materials, whether it is a Recipe Book, a Book of Folk Remedies, or a video. In any case, students feel naturally comfortable and supported when working together, and they take great pride in coming up with a product they can share with others. And of course, this also applies to teachers, providing them with an opportunity to be equal partners in the learning process. For these reasons, we decided that Project Focus would utilize a participatory approach, thus, empowering the participants to develop the project in its entirety. To further emphasize the participatory nature of the project, FOCUS was offered as an elective course within the HABLE program. Most importantly, the fact that this project had no precedent, i.e., no set curriculum and no expertise in using the rather complicated and finicky cameras (more on this later!) made it a truly participatory and collective experience.

As an elective course, this meant that students from different groups or levels of ability in either English or Spanish could participate in the project if they so desired. The facilitators of the project saw this as an opportunity to encourage students to express themselves in any language they

Months before, some students had expressed interest in doing Spanish literacy activities and Spanish GED besides their ESL classes. However, when some Spanish language activities were introduced in class, there was a level of resistance on the part of some students. Oftentimes, students would say, "I am here to learn English. Teach me English..." So, with FOCUS being an elective in which students chose, not only most of the activities, but the language in which they wanted to communicate, the "resistance" or the "taboo" of infusing Spanish writing in an ESL program was overcome. Furthermore, with the project facilitators operating between languages, the activity became evidently "allowable" to the participants.

The experiences revealed in this handbook are based on work done over two teaching cycles of approximately three months each. The activities, the approaches, and the treatment of language and picture taking were dictated by the stage of development of the project and by its participants. Naturally there were significant differences between the two cycles.

Cycle I

As I already mentioned, the first cycle of FOCUS was an elective course selected by students from different levels. Also, there weren't any materials nor previous experiences to guide us along. Prior to organizing the "class", though, Loren, Aida and I had endless lists of ideas for the project, most of which were later eliminated as students forged their own. Nevertheless, one thing we did establish was the role and the level of participation each was to have based on our individual strengths and interests, i.e., Loren would offer guidance in the writing process, Aida would guide students through activities aimed at defining themselves, and I would focus on activities to help develop an eye for picture taking. While this is slightly oversimplified, it is important to mention because it helped students understand that they, as individuals, also had specific talents and abilities, which combined, would make the project whole.

All these roles evolved as the project developed, and also, everyone switched roles around, as new abilities and skills were gained. For example, one student gained excellent command of the camera, and therefore, everyone relied on him to teach them to use the camera or to help solve technical difficulties. I, on the other hand, learned a great deal about teaching writing from Loren, which I began to apply as participants wrote in Spanish, and so forth.

During the first cycle of FOCUS, a majority of the students' writing was in Spanish. This probably happened because Aida and I, being Latinas and Spanish-speaking, tipped the balance a bit for Loren. Also, the mixed levels of the students required that most communication take place in Spanish. More significant, though, is the fact that self-expression and self-definition was initially more important

than "language development" or correctness in either language. During the first cycle, also, (and definitely more so than in the second cycle) Loren, Aida, and I did a lot of modeling in the first few meetings as a group, so as to get the project rolling along. Students wanted to know exactly what they were getting involved in, and initially demanded much guidance from us.

The first time we met as a group we spent a good amount of time discussing the project and its possible outcomes. All the participants expressed why they were there and what they expected. This type of discussion took place many times throughout the duration of the project. We then plunged right into an exploration of images and how we react to them, utilizing some Polaroid slides of familiar scenes to the students: objects, people, and corners in and around El Centro where the program is located. This activity served the dual purpose of introducing students to the different elements of photography, i.e., light, focus, composition, etcetera, and providing them with the sense that, as photographers, they are empowered to choose how they want to present their subject. What followed is what set the stage for the rest of the project. There is something to photography in terms of its abstractness that allows people to conjure up an opinion, especially when there are no words attached to the image. Regardless of their level or language ability, not a single student in the class proceeded to just describe factual information of what was in the picture, but rather, took it [the photo] to another level. They, instead, wrote what the image evoked in them. (I will expand more on this in the activities section) This, more often than not, occurred in Spanish.

For a moment we thought there was something we were doing wrong, as we had anticipated that students would produce materials in both English and Spanish, and in equal amounts. So, I asked the group point blank whether this was of concern to them, since they had at one point indicated that they wanted to "learn English". To this, they replied that "English will come later...when we feel comfortable with what we are doing." We found that when students wrote about strong emotions or deeper feelings, they did so in Spanish, if they could write in Spanish. Otherwise, they would use English, or a combination of both, either orally or in writing. Working in a bilingual writing project, both students and teachers should bear in mind that both languages are equally important, and ultimately, the students will decide which language best expresses what they want to get across.

Some of the students who participated in FOCUS the first cycle were Angel, Neftali, Ruth, Lucy, and Jose. These students really set the pace for the second cycle.

Cycle II

In contrast with the first cycle of FOCUS, the second cycle was not an elective in the sense that students from all different levels could participate. Upon completing one cycle of elective courses, students performed an evaluation of the overall "experiment", and determined (by a majority) that only the more advanced level groups would participate in the electives offered. By this time only Computers and FOCUS were offered as requested by the students.

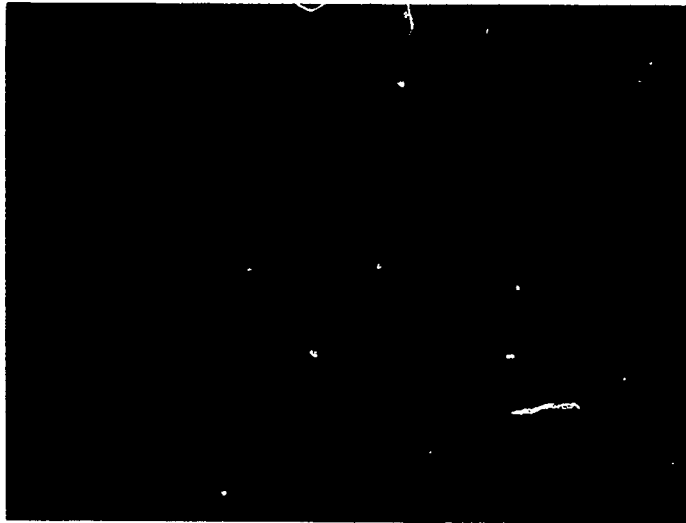
One of Loren's Family Literacy classes was composed of students with an intermediate level in English. When we presented them with the choice of participating in FOCUS two days per week, they agreed. So, we were on again.

The second time around, we had a precedent and the experience we gained from the first cycle. And above all, we had the first group's work to help us embark on the project. There were also books on photography, slides, and other ways of expressing what pictures do to us. Students especially appreciate the fact that there are no boundaries on what was right or wrong. Whatever interpretation they offered about an image was respected. And there were many different interpretations, as you will see...for emphasis was on expressing feelings. Students saw photography as a tool not only to report experiences, but to interpret and react to them as well.

Several exciting things happened into the second cycle. Angel, a student who had participated in the project the previous cycle, joined us. He was instrumental in guiding the other project participants through several activities. For instance, he trained the new project participants on the use of the Polaroids, and also, on different occasions, he talked to the students about his experiences the previous cycle, thereby setting the stage for photo and writing activities. Something else that happened this cycle is that students were interested in developing photos and writings around a theme. Out of this cycle, emerged the "units" on **Mothers are Teachers and Neighborhood**, marking a difference from the "free form" works of the first cycle. This outcome may be partly attributed to the fact that this group was used to working as a "class", and already had an established group dynamic built in, whereas the participants from the first cycle of FOCUS, were individuals from different classrooms.

Nonetheless, I find that the possibilities of what students choose to create and produce are limitless and equally fascinating. Those of us involved in the project are certain that, if implemented in another setting, another program, or with a different population of students, the project will yield different products every time.

Some of the students who participated in the second cycle of FOCUS are Margarita, Mayra, Tita (Blanca), and Angela.



From darkness
we begin
seeing ourselves
for the first time
exposed
slowly
we begin
to focus
make clear what we want to say



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the students

The students who participated in FOCUS cannot be categorized under a certain "type". They did not undergo a selection process to get in the project. On the contrary, they chose to get involved because something attracted them when they received the initial project description included among the other elective course offerings. After discussing further general details on the project in a group, some students decided to leave and others opted to stay.

Within the two groups of students (6 @) in FOCUS, there were different levels of ability in English, Spanish, and general education. Moreover, there was a wide range of cultural differences as well as differences in life experiences. This range included young adults with ample formal educational experiences to refugees with survival literacy skills, suffering from war-related trauma, to immigrants who have lived in U.S. urban centers most of their lives, and so on. Whatever our backgrounds and experiences, the project meant different things to everyone, and it had a different effect on each individual. For some, the project had transformational powers, allowing them to get in touch with their creative self; for others, it served as a bridge to literacy; and yet, for most, it was a vehicle to increase our self-confidence through a process of self-definition and analysis of our present situation.

What follows are some notes and comments about some of the individuals who participated in the project. These comments will help the reader understand a little better the impact FOCUS had on each student. We, therefore, suggest that you refer back to this section while you are looking at the photographs and writings by the students.

NEFTALI

There were two moments when Neftali showed interest in the activities of FOCUS. One was when he looked at pictures of Nicaragua in a calendar. He was very moved by those images, and how similar they were to his country [El Salvador]. He took that calendar home and kept it for a couple of weeks. The other time was when the class was doing a Language Experience activity together. He tried to speak more in English, but mostly Spanish would come out. Still, for him to speak even in Spanish was a major effort since he was a very reserved person.

When he talked about some of the traditions in El Salvador around Easter time it seemed to be a very emotional experience for him, making him feel he was now in another world.

Neftali tried taking some pictures, but they came out black. He gave up, and instead, brought pictures of his nephews and nieces, that he had taken with another camera. He was clearly very much in tune with these children, and it

made him happy to talk about them.

Neftali made us wonder about the relevance or the appropriateness of this project for someone in his situation: someone who is not ready to be so open and expressive about his/her feelings. Where he felt this was respected in the class, he hung on, although passively, until the cycle was over, seemingly enjoying other people's contributions to the class.

JOSE

Jose, also from El Salvador, was very open and talkative, although not in English. He had a great need to express himself in Spanish, and when given that opportunity, that is where he wanted to be. He had not reached that point of allowing himself to make the choice of whether or not to go into English. He would go into English when there was no other choice. But given the choice, he needed to be in a secure place, and that place was Spanish.

Along these lines, also, when given the choice of producing his own images and writing about these images vs writing about other people's pictures, Jose opted for writing about other people's pictures. For example, he made a collage of pictures that everyone took of the murals on Mozart Park in Jamaica Plain, and wrote about it. He wrote about sailing in a ship, approaching land: the idea of all being in the same boat.

For Jose, holding a camera seemed pretty bizarre. It was a major experience for him. It gave him a sense of power. Probably, he associated it with tourists, a world he did not feel he belonged to, but there he was now, walking around with a camera. He was very insecure at first about not knowing how to take pictures, not knowing how to use the camera. Everyone in the group immediately jumped in and reassured him that all of us were also learning how to operate these cameras; that there were no experts. He wanted to try it again.

Next time the class met, he brought a picture he had taken at home. It was mostly black with a tiny glare in the center of the picture. He wrote in Spanish that this is how his room looks when he gets back from work every night around midnight. He lies in his bed in the dark, able to see only the glare of a wall clock. He had a funny sense of humor about this, and yet, also wanted to be creative about it.

He had a very good command of the oral language [in Spanish]. He was very much interested in writing "leyendas", or stories, fiction and fantasy. This allowed him to be more removed from reality, therefore, making him less vulnerable.

RUTH

Ruth was a given. She was somebody whose skills were highly developed, somebody who was already involved in writing poetry on her own. Actually, she was instrumental

in getting the rest of the class to write poetry. Poetry was the medium that the whole group selected instead of narrative prose. People were interested in writing poetry and responding to her poetry with their own poems. It was her poem "Recuerdo de lo que fui" and her picture of the tree trunk that inspired Angel to write about the Dead Tree "El Arbol Muerto". Her originality and level of sophistication were also evident when one day she brought to class a sequence of pictures of hands accompanied by a poem entitled **Manos Descarriadas** "Hands Gone Astray".

In terms of her development in English, two things occurred. Her oral skills developed, and she grew more confident in helping Loren. Loren's level of Spanish comprehension was on par with Ruth's level in English, which made them realize they were equals, and thus, allowed them to share more. The other was that she was the only one who wrote in English when Loren asked everyone if they would write a reaction/response in English about a classmate's piece. Ruth was the only one in the class to do so. Her response was to Angel's poem entitled "El Arbol Muerto". From the beginning she had said that she wanted to improve her English. Even though she would first write everything in Spanish, she would then try to translate into English.

Ruth had not been in the states very long. Project FOCUS served as bridge for her, as a transition. She brought in pictures of Puerto Rico, and was able to express to the class in Spanish much more about herself and about her goals... Would it ever come out in a straight ESL class?... because it would not have come out in English if Spanish were banned. This class gave her a sense of security to express herself, and to connect with images of her past as well as to make images of the present. These would lead her to talk about her future, what her goals were, and the importance of having her own family.

For Ruth, the project provided a creative break from the other classes. For someone who has been in an educational system all her life, not having dropped out of school and having gone to the University of Puerto Rico, this class was a different educational experience, a very untraditional concept. She was also able to appreciate the concept of "electives".

LUCY

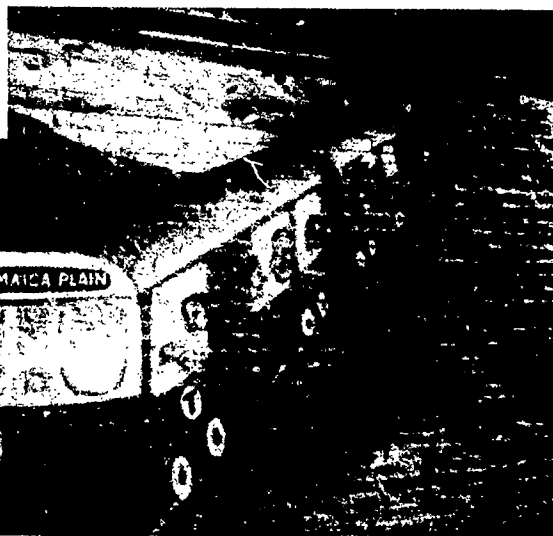
During the first cycle of FOCUS, everyone had a role. Lucy was the translator. Her oral skills in English were very good in comparison with other members of the class, while her literacy skills in either English or Spanish were a challenge. She would say: "I can't write, but I can speak and I can translate." And she was allowed that. In this way she would compensate before her classmates with more developed literacy skills. She would translate for Loren what everyone said in Spanish, and viceversa. This placed her in a very important position within the group.

It seems that Ruth and Lucy took the class together to support each other. Lucy is Ruth's sister-in-law, and as such, had a close relationship with her. It was interesting to observe how they collaborated with each other, helping each other out according to the strengths each one had in the particular language they were working in.

Lucy, however, was always willing to try more things in English, and pushed herself to write in English. Nonetheless, she also wrote a couple of things in both Spanish and English, side by side, on the same theme. It's hard to tell in which language she wrote first, though.

The field trip we took to see the murals in Mozart Park in Jamaica Plain really had an effect on Lucy. The mural depicts the development of the Latino community around the old trolley line. This evoked very strong feelings in Lucy about the demolition of the old Orange Line train, and the changes it brought to the neighborhood in which she grew up. This trip, being part of "the class", also enabled her to really take a good look at the mural and the neighborhood, and to see them from a different perspective. To validate the trip as an educational activity, and to give herself permission to enjoy it more, she wanted homework. Writing about it would serve as proof to her family that it was part of school. This was part of a larger issue which would surface sometimes with regard to "untraditional" class activities, especially in situations where a student did not have the moral support from relatives to be in school.

Lucy had a creative side to her which she wanted addressed. She, along with Ruth, took the class very seriously, and consistently produced a lot of work. Two of her pieces appear in the units entitled Who Am I? and Childhood and Family.



CARMEN

Carmen did not take any pictures, but wrote two poems. The first poem was an ode to the sun: "Cada mañana..." She wrote it in her notebook, during class, and accidentally left it behind when she went home. The following day I told her that I had read her poem, which embarrassed her, until she heard me say that I thought it was really good. Immediately, she opened up about her personal life and circumstances.

She wanted to take the time in which FOCUS met to reflect on her life, her situation, and to write poetry; something she had not done for a long time.

ANGEL

For many years, Angel had some very rough times, feeling lonely and without much support. He had been a creative being, but his creativity was dormant during this period of crisis. He then joined the church and this got him back to a "clean" lifestyle, but still, the creative in him was dormant

as he was not allowed to express it fully in his circles. When he joined FOCUS, he saw writing and self-expression as something he had to do, almost as a duty, thus, allowing himself to reclaim his creativity through photography and writing. He had been writing poems and some songs with religious themes for church. But with FOCUS he felt freedom, and the ability to write about whatever he wanted to express: songs, poetry, feelings about nature, memories...

Angel surfaced as a leader through mastery of the camera. He taught almost everyone (including the teachers) to use them. This was important because it reassured him that he could be creative, and also, that he was very good technically. He was good with the mechanics of the camera, and he had the ability to teach others. One funny thing is that he went and got himself a job in an electronics company that makes Polaroid cameras. So now, he knows them inside out.

I would say of all the people in the class, he experimented with the cameras the most. He was not just writing and taking good pictures, but he actually went out with that kind of eye, looked and saw things, set up things [the way Ruth did], and had a great variety of subjects. He wasn't just taking pictures of trees, or something he didn't have to ask permission of, but he also dared to go up to strangers and ask if he could take their picture. The first pictures that he took, in fact, were of students he did not know at El Centro, students he found attractive. He would actually tell people "I need to take this picture for a project..." He took pictures of everything: trees, animals, people.

Another of Angel's achievements is that he co-facilitated a workshop on FOCUS at a teachers' conference in Rhode Island. He wanted to speak in English. There, he expressed that the project allowed him to feel really sure of what he was going to say: that he had something to show, and therefore, he had something to speak about. It wasn't just out of context when someone asked him "how did you learn English?", but he could say "Well, I took this picture and with this picture, I can find words because there is an image that I can describe..."

Angel participated in a second cycle of FOCUS. By this time, he was speaking mostly in English and writing in English. When responding to photos of the "neighborhood", Angel was the only one to write in English. He also had taken a series of photos of animals in the zoo near his house, and talked and wrote about them in English. This transition from Spanish to English was quite remarkable.

The project transformed Angel, by allowing him to again get in touch with his creative self, to develop leadership skills, to be artistic, and to be outspoken about his feelings.

MARGARITA

Margarita took her time integrating herself into FOCUS. Perhaps it was that, being very career-oriented, she really wanted to learn how to use the computer (another elective course offered in the program), but also, she felt she was not a creative person. She wrote that, although she very much admired the creativity of other people in the class, she did not have the same ability of expression.

Shortly after declaring her lack of creativity, Margarita walked into class with a series of photographs, beautiful and original photographs of her children accompanied by an essay on childhood. This was a complete turnabout for her which surprised all of us, as we had already "written her off" the project. She said that the image of her children going to school was very powerful as she watched them from the window. It was something she experienced everyday, and it led her to reflect about childhood.

Her work received such a positive reaction from the group that it sort of glued her to the project, leading her to become an advocate of the project. She would even complain when other people were not producing enough pictures and writings. She even involved her whole family in the project by enlisting their participation in a workshop held at the ALI Day (city-wide literacy students' conference). Her husband and children openly expressed their pride for her work and the remarkable progress she had made in learning English. One of her boys mentioned how surprised he was about her ability to write in English [without asking him for help!].

Margarita's development in English was very steady. In her regular class, she had been working on the Mothers as Teachers sequence on teaching her children about God. So, for Loren, it was a surprise when she wrote such a free piece with metaphors, etc. on Childhood, allowing herself to go that extra step. On another occasion, we went to a big political rally at Faneuil Hall, and Margarita assumed the role of a reporter, running around with her Polaroid documenting the event. Reporting on this rally was a reflection of her task-oriented nature.

ANGELA

There are people who always do their homework. Angela was one of them. The project was not what Angela really needed at the time, but nonetheless, she got into it to see what her abilities were. Except for the one piece she wrote on the flag, which was very original, she developed themes based on what people talked about in class. She would do re-writes, pay attention, work on her piece, and she knew where she wanted to go with her writing. It was exciting when she wrote about the flag in Spanish because there was a sense of

freedom. The subject evoked feelings of nationalism and independence in her. Curiously enough, although she is Dominican, having spent years in Puerto Rico, she felt more aligned with the struggle of the people of Puerto Rico for self-determination.

Angela was instrumental in developing the Mothers as Teachers assignment, and really benefitted from the revision process which Loren discusses later.

Unfortunately, Angela had to stop coming to school before completing the cycle. Occasionally, she would drop by and ask about the project, and what people were doing and writing about.

MARIA

When you read Maria's piece about the Park, you might think that she is very open about expressing her innermost feelings, and with such ease... Not so. For her, writing and taking pictures was a struggle, even though for some reason she persisted on staying with it. In the group, she found encouragement and allies who had shared similar struggles with family problems, discrimination, lack of formal education, etc. And in Loren, her teacher, she found enough comfort to open up with her writing. Since they both lived in the same neighborhood, she often arranged to meet with Loren at her house outside of designated class times. This was crucial in providing Maria with the right time and space she much needed to develop her writing. We realized how engaged she was with her writing when, determined to include at least one piece at the ALI DAY Focus Workshop and Exhibit, she appeared at Loren's house on a weekend to go over her work.

In the class discussions, Maria shared very personal stories about her childhood, her father, and her education. She seemingly blossomed in her expression, as a result of the class and the support she found there.

BLANCA (TITA)

Tita kept to herself for a while and later attached herself to Mayra, who was very outspoken. But she distinguished herself from Mayra in that she produced a lot of writing and a lot of pictures. Tita would do her homework, and she also liked to translate her work using a dictionary. She would be concerned about her penmanship, and how neat the paper looked at the end. About Focus, she said that it got her back to writing poetry at home.

Her writings about nature, the neighborhood, and about teaching her children show immense potential and sensitivity.

MAYRA

Mayra was very outspoken. Her strength was in the spoken word, and so, it was a struggle to put it down on paper or on film. When her attendance became sporadic, and her commitment to the class decreased, the FOCUS group began to apply pressure on her. They charged her with taking a lead role in the ALI Day workshop and exhibit. This was when Mayra became aware of her importance as a member of the group, and how the group relied on her to adequately represent them as a class and as creative individuals. From that day on, she decided to not only attend daily, but also, she got herself elected to the student council as her group's representative.

Mayra's work is included in the Mothers are Teachers and the Neighborhood units.

OTHER FOCUS PARTICIPANTS:

There were some students who did "stints" with Focus; they either joined the group late in the cycle, or did not stay long enough to ground themselves to the entire process. Some of their work, though, is shown in this handbook.

GLORIA

Gloria brought her daughter to an outing at the Charles River and asked Angela to teach her to use the camera. She learned quickly and took pictures mostly of her daughter. Apparently, she enjoyed the short time she spent with the FOCUS group, despite her "academic" and "goal-oriented" attitude towards school.

One of her pieces appears in the Mothers are Teachers unit.

ANA

While participating in the Mothers Are Teachers sessions, Ana was questioned extensively by her peers about what and how she teaches her children. Ana had written a piece about teaching her kids their address, how to memorize it, etc., and in her writing it was not clear how she actually taught them. Her peers gave her a lot of suggestions on how to clearly write about the steps she took in teaching her kids. Ana, however, was more concerned about the grammar of her composition, rather than the content.

FOCUS was one of Ana's first experiences coming to the HABLE program. At first, she was quiet and passive, but slowly she integrated herself to the group. Conversations about the neighborhood and the ten year struggle to build new housing in the South End aroused her interest, as did a discussion about dropping out of school and school experiences. Writing about these experiences will come with time, though.

**some
participants...**





"In our method, the codification initially takes the form of a photograph or sketch which represents a real existent, or an existent constructed by the learners. When this representation is projected as a slide, the learners effect an operation basic to the act of knowing: they gain distance from the knowable object. This experience of distance is undergone as well by the educators, so that educators and learners together can reflect critically on the knowable object which mediates between them. The aim of decodification is to arrive at the critical level of knowing, beginning with the learner's experience of the situation in the 'real context'."

-Paulo Freire
Cultural Action for Freedom (p.15)



activities

Slides

To make slides, I utilized 35 mm Polaroid Instant Slide film which can be developed with an automatic slide processor in minutes, and mounted as slides quickly thereafter. The advantage of doing this is that there is a product that can be readily utilized the same day, when students are still very eager to respond to images still fresh in their minds. Slides also can be projected to generate group discussion or group writing activities.

Modeling

In the initial meetings of FOCUS, we modeled picture taking and writing. The slides were a very effective way of modeling different ways of presenting a subject, i.e., focusing on angle, light, emphasis, texture, composition, and subject matter. The slides also allowed us to model all types of writing: writing that is not complete, phrases, combining both languages, descriptive writing, feelings evoked by an image, onomatopoeia, and so forth. It was a way to introduce not only the "elements of style", if you will, but to assure the students that it is okay to write in any way, shape, form, or language they chose to.

The result of this was that both students and teachers shared what they wrote about the same images, thereby, establishing a participatory relationship between students and teachers. One of the slides that we chose to write about was of a poster depicting a somewhat abstract image of an old firehouse in Ponce, Puerto Rico. This is what we wrote:

Parque de Bombas
Bright primary colors
jump out at me.
Building with eyes
Seeming to see me
And follow me around.
Building with crown/headpiece/jester.
-Aida

I like the colors of this building. I see a face, the windows are eyes. He is wearing a hat. This looks arabic to me. I want to know what the date means.

-Loren

Rojo y negro son los colores de Ponce, el pueblo de las quenepas. Parque de Bombas, donde los bomberos tocaban danzas, bombas y plenas en las retretas todos los domingos. Los leones, helados chinos, la catedral, el coche y Garay, vejigante a la bolla: pan y cebolla. ¿Y Uvita, y Coco y Maruca? Tienen que estar por ahí, en el parque de bombas.

-Beatriz

Bueno, la foto es el parque de bonveros en Ponce. La ultima bes que estube en Ponce fue cuando tenia 14 años y me trae muños recuerdos.

-Mayra

Photography books

We always had a number of Photography books on hand, for students to look at when they wished. At one of our first meetings, though, we spent some time looking at A Sense of Place, by Janice Rogovin, because it is about a neighborhood where many of the students live. We also wanted to show that many of these books are in black and white, since students at first thought it was unusual that they would be taking black and white pictures. Students enjoyed looking at different photographs in books and calendars, and often took these home with them to share with their families.

Using the cameras

Polaroid had donated 5 cameras, Model EE 100, which accepted either color or black and white film. We chose to work with black and white because it was easier and cheaper to reproduce or photocopy. In my estimation also, the viewer's attention was more on the subject, than on the colors of the picture. It would also be a new experience for the students.

Aida translated the instructions into Spanish, and prepared a vocabulary list for students. She then trained the students to operate the cameras. As I had mentioned earlier, these are finicky cameras, in the sense that they are not easy to operate. Students had to learn how to set the distance by calculation, and then, set the light on the camera. It took a lot of practice and a lot of wasted film to gain command of these cameras. But some students appreciated the challenge, and expressed interest on learning to use a 35mm camera.

Field Trips

It was important for students to go out to photograph together. They expressed the need to support each other while learning to use the cameras, at the same time that they, together, discovered new subjects to photograph outdoors. Some of the places we visited were Jamaica Plain Pond, Hyde Square in Jamaica Plain, where there are some very compelling murals, the South End neighborhood, and the esplanade along the Charles River.



Public Hearings

In May of 1988, there was a public hearing held at Faneuil Hall in Boston, to protest cutbacks in statewide funding under the Gateways Cities Program. All the students from El Centro went to the hearing, and one of the FOCUS participants proceeded to document in film scenes from the event, while other students composed a letter to Governor Dukakis.



5 / 10 / 88.-

Dear Governor Dukakis:

We are students at the Cardinalushing Center. We are studying English. We need help! We need money for supplies, more rooms and more teachers. We feel bad because you are giving us very little money next year. We think the money is very important for continuing our Table program. We need English for our work, and for communicating to other people.

Please help us, Governor. Because you are an immigrant son, we know you understand our problem. We hope you will cooperate.

Sincerely the students from level I.

Guillermo Ariles

Rosario Hamed

Carmen Melendez

Walter Rodriguez

Lorena McBride



CARDINAL'S
STEWARDSHIP
APPEAL

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

20



Conferences and Exhibits

One of the project participants, Angel Pagan, co-presented in a workshop on FOCUS at a conference entitled Environments for Literacy Development, organized by the New England Multifunctional Resource Center for Language and Culture in Education in Providence, Rhode Island. The workshop attendees, mostly teachers, were really moved by Angel's work and presentation.

A number of FOCUS participants also exhibited their work and co-facilitated a workshop at a city-wide conference of students from Boston's Adult Literacy Initiative programs held at the University of Massachusetts.

Another exhibit of FOCUS was featured at El Centro's annual fundraising event.

For each one of these events, all students collaborated on the preparation of materials and information to be distributed, thereby, enabling them to choose the work they wanted to share with others.



¿quién soy yo?

23

¿Quién soy yo?/ Who am I?

Aida's idea was to encourage the FOCUS participants to respond to this question from the very beginning. In order to do this, she planned two activities that might help break the ice.

Everyone was asked to bring to class an object or anything which they thought characterized them. Some people brought stuffed animals, kitchen implements, coffee containers, or nothing. But almost everyone brought pictures: pictures of their families, children, Puerto Rico. Out of these, many words were generated. Words like *mar* (sea), *café* (coffee), *naturaleza* (nature), *familia* (family), *pobreza* (poverty), *temporadas* (seasons) became responses to the question.

It was evident that everyone had a very strong connection with nature. A trip to the pond in Jamaica Plain confirmed this further when people began to identify who they are in relation to nature. The crisp autumn air and the long shadows on the ground, however remote from tropical reality, nonetheless, evoked more esoteric feelings in everyone.

In some of these writings, which for the most part are in Spanish, the writer replies that "he is but a season...a flower in the countryside which is today and vanishes tomorrow." (See Angel Pagán, *¿Quién soy yo?*) The photographs are of trees and sunlight, and of a grave-like slab of stone. Lucy also photographs and writes about trees and the seasons to which she compares our lives. Ruth, on the other hand, replies "I am a white and furry puppy, a small and old house, a small land surrounded by water. I am a tropical climate that escorts the feasts to our patron saints, salsa and merengue..." (Ruth Loran, *¿Quién soy yo?*)

Other photographs and writings that appear in this section deal solely with nature: *Mundo*, *El árbol muerto*, and *Recuerdo de lo que fui*. The latter two are written about the photograph of the tree trunk by Ruth. Originally, Ruth presented her photograph with the poem *Recuerdo...*, and Angel, inspired by these, wrote *El árbol muerto* (The Dead Tree).

The **Nature** pieces are included in this section because many of them were created in response to the question Who am I?

¿Que escondes?

Será comienzo de un nuevo avance
o simplemente una común y corriente,
dejas ver algunos de tus secretos,
más ideas escondidas quedando.

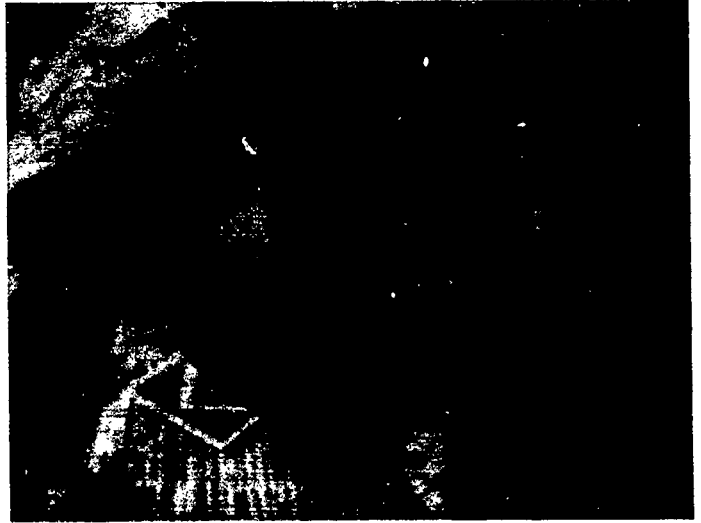
*

Blanco y negro eres,
una tomada de la otra,
eres un complemento de ellas;
¿Que escondes?

*

A caso dirás
¿Quién soy?
¿Que soy?
¿Dónde soy?
¿Cuándo soy?
Algo dices:
¿Que es?

Pensar y pensar
para radicar
sobre algunos días
o esto presentar
¿Que días?
¿Que horas?
¿Que escondes?



John A. Davis
December 15/1987
Boston

¿Quién soy yo?

¿Soy temporada?

Aplicándolo a mi vida puedo decir que he sido temporero. Cuando niño pensaba como niño, pero solo fue por algunos años. Al pasar el tiempo deje de ser niño, de pensar como niño y de actuar como niño, ahora he llegado a mi juventud y todo ha cambiado. Me resta esforzarme, ser valiente y seguir hacia adelante, ya que esto será por algun tiempo. En el futuro hay ciertas etapas de la vida que tendré que pasar, -llegaré a la vejez, y hasta mi muerte, porque el hombre es como la flor del campo que hoy es y mañana desaparece.

Por eso soy temporada,
temporada en la tierra que he vivido.

-Angel Pagan



RECUERDO DE LO QUE FUI

Por Ruth Loran Amador

Arbol de tronco fuerte,
en el pasado deslumbroso,
Hojas en el suelo tienes,
señal de maños criminales.

Con el pasar del tiempo,
solo recuerdos dejas,
Hojas en el suelo tienes,
para en ellas caminar.

Alegría a tu alrededor,
sombras en tu interior;
raíces sembradas,
señal de vida.

Morirá tu físico
más tu recuerdo perdura;
através del tiempo,
crecerás mas bello.



EL ÁRBOL MUERTO

Por Angel Pagan

Solo queda el tronco de un gran árbol. Sus raíces penetradas
en la tierra de donde fue derribado.

Seco y hueco ha quedado con el paso de los tiempos lo
rodean secas hojas arrastradas por el viento.

El leñador lo ha cortado para sacarlo del medio. También de él
tomó leña para cocer su alimento.

De él hizo fuego para calentar su cuerpo frente a la chimenea
en el tiempo del invierno.

Ya todo ésto ha pasado y en un silencio sereno ha quedado
abandonado el tronco de un árbol muerto.

MUNDO

AGUA, SOL Y TIERRA,
FORMAN NUESTRO MUNDO;
ARBOL Y PIEDRAS,
COMPONENTES DE EL SON.

AGUA ALIMENTA NUESTRA SED,
SOL NUESTRO CUERPO ALIMENTA,
TIERRA ALIMENTA NUESTRO FRUTO,
MUNDO SUELO DONDE VIVIR.

HOJAS EN EL SUELO,
SIMBOLO DE INVIERNO;
SOL REFLEJADO EN EL AGUA;
PIEDRA DIVIDE AGUA Y TIERRA.

MUNDO PARTE DEL UNIVERSO,
!TIERRA! PLANETA FORMAS,
DESGRACIADAS SERAS
POR MANOS QUE NO TE CUIDARAN.

Roberto Linares Amador
Nov 18/1987.



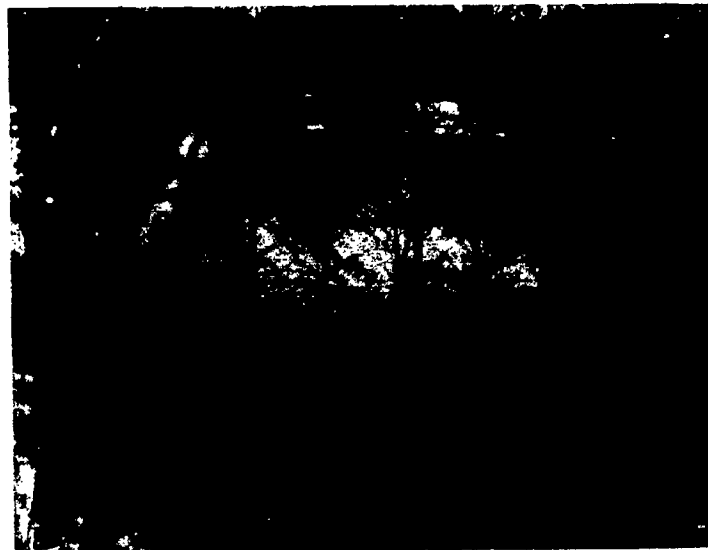
11/4/87

EN ESTAS FOTOS QUE YO
E TOMADO DE ESTOS CUATRO
ARBOLES. LAS COMPARO CON
LAS ETAPAS DE NUESTRAS
VIDAS. EL PEQUEÑO ARBOL ES
CUANDO UNO ESTA EN LA
NIÑEZ. EL ARBOL GRANDE Y
VERDE ES CUANDO ESTAMOS
EN NUESTRA JUVENTUD. EL
ARBOL QUE TIENE LAS HOJAS
AMARILLAS. LO COMPARO YA CUAN-
DO ESTAMOS A MEDIANA
EDAD. Y EL ARBOL QUE
SE ENCUENTRA COMPLETA-
MENTE SIN HOJAS. ES CUANDO
ESTAMOS VEJES SIENDO. ESTO
ES MI SENTIMIENTO. Y POR ESTO
TODOS TENEMOS QUE PASAR.
LUCY AMADOR

11/4/87

THIS PHOTOS I HAVE TAKEN
I COMPARE THEM WITH OUR
LIVES. THE SMALL GREEN TREE
IS WHEN WE ARE IN OUR CHILD-
HOOD. THE BIG GREEN ONE IS
WHEN WE ARE TEENAGER.
THE YELLOW ONE IS WHEN
WE ARE IN OUR MIDDLE AGE
AND THE ONE WITH OUT
LEAVES I COMPARE IT WHEN
WE ARE ELDERLY PERSONS
ALREADY. YOU CAN'T SEE THE
COLORS BUT I COULD EXPLA-
NE IT AND YOU COULD IMAG-
INE THEM. WELL THIS IS
THE WAY I FEEL. THAT WE
ARE ALL GOING AND WENT
THROUGH OUR LIVES.

LUCY AMADOR



lea stories

Language Experience Stories

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) was used in the first cycle of Project FOCUS to stimulate students to write in English. When given the choice, most students during the first cycle chose to write in Spanish though they continuously expressed the desire to write in English.

We did two LEA stories. The first was a response to a photo Beatriz had taken which she entitled "Petroglifos". I asked the students to write a few words or sentences in English about the picture. After they wrote for about five minutes, I asked if anyone wanted to share what they wrote or if they wanted to say something now. The result is this quasi-poem. What stands out as significant for me is one Salvadoran student's comment about Holy Week. Again, another example of how elusive and mysterious images are when not wedded to text. The next day, Beatriz came to class and shared what feelings the image of the petroglyph had evoked in her. She read her writing to us. Then we had a discussion about what petroglyphs are and why she chose to photograph them. Some of the students said they had seen petroglyphs in their countries and knew they were carved by Indians long before the conquest, but they didn't know what they meant. This experience allowed the participants to see their common cultural roots. Also by writing about the photo and then referring to the photographer's interpretation made us aware of the multiple and ambiguous nature of photography.



volcano
mountain

The sky have a lot of clouds.
The world uninhabited only the day,
the night and dark.
The sky are blue and the cluds are white.
The rock reminds me of the beach
where I bathed during holy week.
For me remember in the prehistoric history.
I feel sad the cluds are gathering
night is coming.

-group writing about Beatriz's "Petroglífos"

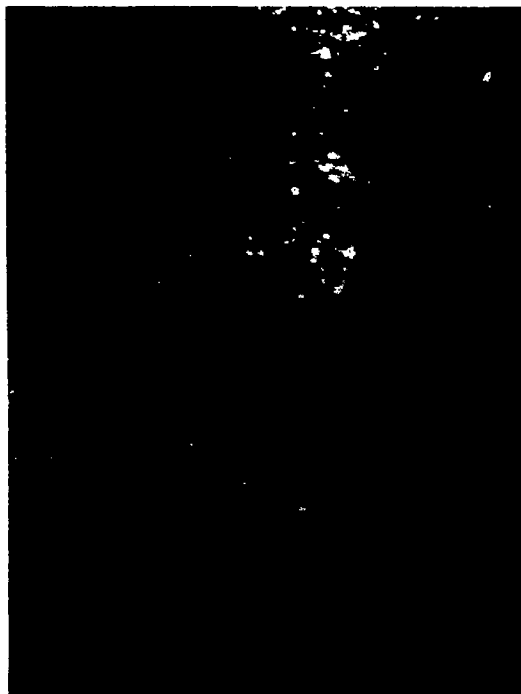
Ojos indios
que miran el cielo
de Jayuya
y Utuado
boquiabiertos...
Espantados
de lo que estaba
a punto de suceder.
CONQUISTA.

Indian eyes
staring at the sky
of Jayuya
and Utuado
with wide-open mouths...
Shocked
by what was imminent.
CONQUEST.

-Beatriz

Esta otra fotografía fue tomada a la luz del día. Yo la tomé porque los rallos del sol se reflejaban en el agua y también me gusto al ver la foto despues de tomada porque parece que es de noche y es como si las estrellas se estuvieran reflejando también en el agua.

-Lucy Amador



"A photograph is a meeting place where the interests of the photographer, the photographed, the viewer and those who are using the photograph are often contradictory. These contradictions both hide and increase the natural ambiguity of the photographic image."

-John Berger and Jean Mohr
Another Way of Telling

The second LEA story came from the group just speaking and me writing what they said. I decided to add a line about wanting to swim in the moonlight. This seemed to have sparked off some students' memories about swimming. What emerged was a LEA where there is a real narrative flow; students really listening to each other and responding. Since some of the students spoke in Spanish and I translated, what follows is more of a transcript than strictly a LEA story.

It's beautiful to see the night coming.

To contemplate the stars in the sky and see the reflection in the water.

When I feel sad I like to go to a place like beside the ocean and think about the nice things God give us and I can see myself in the sky and I pray to the lord to give me clarity.

I want to follow the light, to jump off the rocks and swim in the moonlight and to see where it goes.

In my country, Puerto Rico, we celebrate the 4th of July and we go to the beaches in the night and we go in the water and feel refreshed.

In El Salvador, there is a tradition Christian during Holy Week. We go to the ocean and go in the water. Some people believe that if you swim, if you are sick, your sickness will go away.

And then the priest gives the benediction to the people. For 3 days the people don't eat anything and then after going in the water, they drink 3 glasses of ocean water to break the fast slowly.

la niñez...

4.)

La niñez y la familia/Childhood and Family

Most of the work presented in this section was produced in the second cycle of FOCUS with the exception of a piece by Lucy Amador. Although she responds to the question Who am I?, we felt it fit rather nicely in this unit.

Margarita Henriquez had written a piece about not having the ability nor the inspiration to take pictures or write an original piece. Imagine our surprise when she brought the photographs and writing on Childhood! To understand the process she underwent to produce this piece, we have included her first draft, her second (handwritten) draft, and a final version typed by her.

Ana Rodriguez photographed her children on the sidewalk outside her home in Villa Victoria. Other photographs she made (not printed in this book) were also of children playing outdoors. Her poem entitled La niñez (Childhood) speaks about the joy they reflect when running and playing outdoors. She wishes she were a child again to play together with them and remember her childhood, the most beautiful period in one's life.

This particular theme was born of the commonalities shared by all of us, observers of our childhood through the experiences of our own children. The theme, then evolved into Mothers Are Teachers, sparked by Angela and guided by Loren.



5/12/88

Empezando con el programa
focus para familiarizarme
con la cámara le tome
estos retratos a mis hijos
en mi cuarto y tratando
de tomar fotos a través
del espejo para que se
reflejara la imagen en
el espejo.



Blanca Marzán

42



OH Childhood! "Beautiful time of Life!" I want to be a child again.

In childhood, children don't have problems, childhood is like a candy that gives us life, a "Sweet Time".

When the children begin school, this is like a glass of water that is half full, half of life. They are drinking from this glass of life.

During this time they start to learn. and to know about the world. They never think about problems that other people have.

They aren't worried about these kinds of things. They are living a happy life.

In other words they are having a good time.

Margarita Henriquez



April 15, 1988.

a child
"in childhood" beautiful time
of the life! I want to be
child again.

In the infancy didn't have
problems. The childhood is like
~~how~~ a candy ~~what~~ the life
~~gives us~~ ^{has} given us.

"nice time"! when the children
are going to the school, it's how
a glass of water ~~that~~ they
are drinking of the life ^{and} this time
they start to learn, to know

about ~~of~~ the life, but ~~never~~ they
think about ~~the~~ problems ~~the~~
that the people have.

Later when the infancy says
good bye, they change to youth
(adolescent), it's when the glass
of water is ~~at~~ half of the life,
even ^{when} they know about their ^{little} problems
of life. ~~the earth~~ they aren't worry about
this things. Kind of things -

they are living a happy ~~time~~
life in other words they are having
a good time. Margarita Henriquez

during



"Oh childhood!" Beautiful time of life!" I want to be a child again.

In childhood, children don't have problems, childhood is like a candy that gives us life, a "Sweet time".

When the children begin school, this is like a glass of water that is half full, half of life. They are drinking from this glass of life.

During this time they start to learn and to know about the world. They never think about problems that other people

have. They aren't worried
about these kinds of things.
They are living a happy life,
in other words they are
having a good time.

LA NIÑEZ

Me gusta ver los niños jugando
porque en ellos se refleja
toda su hermosa alegría.
Unos corren y otros brincan
y otros saltan de alegría.

Quisiera ser una niña
para estar juntos con ellos
y recordar aquellos tiempos
como cuando yo era una niña.

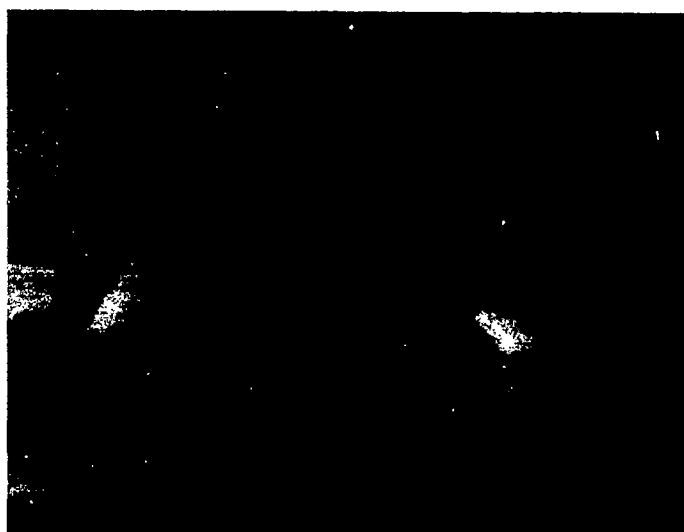
Si te pones a contemplar
toda esa hermosa niñez
no la cambia por ninguna
porque es la mas hermosa
del mundo.

Ana Rodriguez

MOTHERS



**ARE
TEACHERS**



**WRITINGS BY STUDENTS IN
THE FAMILY LITERACY
CLASS AT EL CENTRO
DEL CARDENAL**

Dear Readers:

We are mothers and students at El Centro Del Cardenal in the Family Literacy class. These stories come from our experiences as mothers teaching our children everything from how to use the toilet to how to pray to God.

We have worked very hard on these writings. We wrote and re-wrote them many times before they were typed. We helped each other by asking questions for clarification and by asking for more details. For example in Blanca's writing she didn't tell us that the sneakers were velcro and in Mayra's writing she didn't tell us what she and her son were cooking. Our teacher, Loren, helped us with grammar by making grammar worksheets from our writings and by helping us self correct in groups. It took us many weeks to finish our writings and take our pictures. We took our pictures with the Polaroid Land camera.

We hope you enjoy our writings and learn something from us and our experience. Please write us at the Cardenal Cushing Center and let us know how you feel about our writings. And if you feel inspired, send us your writings so we can read about you. Thanks.

Sincerely,

The Family Literacy Class

P.S. Ana Rodriguez and Angela Montero are missing from the picture on our cover.

" MOTHER'S TEACHERS "

I taught my daughter to eat by herself, when she was baby. I also taught her how to play, to use the - toilet, to find her clothes and put them on.

When my daughter was 5 years old, she told me -- "Mom I want to go to School. I send her to private -- School for several months. Soon we came to live in -- Boston. Here she went to School.

Now she is 7 years old. Everyday I help her made the homework, and to look for something. Sometimes -- she is lazy and she said "Mom help me tie my shoes." When I don't have time I said "I can't". She said, "Yes, you can because you are my mother and all mothers help their children."

Now she likes to go to School and share with me - her class. I want my daughter to learn good habits for a better life.

Angela Montero

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Untitled.....	Maria Rivera
Untitled.....	Ana Rodriguez

Colette is almost 2 years old. I am trying to teach her to read. Yes, read. I'm not trying to teach her how to read words but how to enjoy reading and books.

Everynight before she goes to bed, she asks me, "Mommy, read, read." So I say, "Ok, bring me some books." Then she sits in my lap and we look at the pictures and talk. I rarely read what the words say instead I ask her questions like "show me the doggie" or "what color is the bird?" sometimes she grabs the book and reads by herself or to her "babies", her dolls. Othertimes she asks me questions like, "Mommy, what's this?"

What I really love is the way she sings the alphabet song to herself. Sometimes I hear her singing to herself in bed. Lately, when we go for walks she points out letters and starts to sing. She doesn't know any individual letters yet except some of the letters in her name. I put some letters with magnets on the refrigerator door. Mostly she likes to just play with them and that's fine. I want her to know that learning is fun. Maybe that is what I really want to teach her.



Loren McGrail



THE PROBLEM WITH VELCRO SNEAKERS

When I was teaching my two younger children to learn to tie their shoes, I had a hard time with one of them. Carlos was my hard time. He took one month to learn the same thing. Three or four times a day I asked Carlos to tie his shoes, and a few minutes later his laces were untied again. He is a little lazy but I know he tries hard.

I bought two pair of sneakers for Carlos and one pair it's a laces sneakers and the other pair it's velcro sneaker. All the time he uses the velcro sneaker and I asked him why you don't use the other pair. He kept his mouth closed. Two weeks ago I bought a new pair of lace sneakers for him and he used it very well and I don't have a hard time with him about that.

I think he likes his sneakers.

Blanca Marzan

LEARNED HOW TO COOK

Sometimes, my eleven year old son Miguel sees me in the kitchen and he comes to me and asks me to show him how to cook.

I tell him yes, we going to make white rice. First we put 8 cups of water inside the pot, then when the water is boiled I put $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups of rice inside the pot with 3 tbp. of oil, and 1 tsp. of salt. Then I let it cook at high heat for 10 minutes, then I put it on low heat and then I stird the rice, and let it cook for 20 minutes or until it's cooked.

Then when we finish making what we are going to make, I tell him we are going to make beans. First , take a pot and put 6 cups of water, add two cans of beans, $\frac{1}{2}$ medium onion, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. of garlic podwer, 1 tsp. of chopped green pepper, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt, $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. of tomate paste, i cube of beef bouillon, and then I let it cook for about 30 minutes. After we finished making the beans, he tells me, "Mom I love when you show me how to cook".

Mayra Nieves

" LEARNED TO PRAY "

I have taught my three sons every night before they go to their bed, they should pray to God. The name the prayer is "Padre Nuestro", "Ave Maria", -- "Senor mio Jesucristo".

Sometimes I stay with them, but when I am busy I don't stay to pray with them. They pray by ---- themselves, I know they pray by themselves because when I have finished my duties, I go to their room and I ask "Are you finished praying ?" And they say "Yes" So I say, "OK Good night."

Also I have taught my children to go to church every Sunday, because I think it is important we say thank you to God for the life he has given us. Some times I go to sleep late on Saturday nights and on -- Sunday, one time I woke up late and my children told me "Mother we are late to go go church, please hurry up".



Margarita Henriquez



ABOUT NATALY RUBIO

I want to say something about my wonderful little girl. Her name is Nataly, she is 2½ year old. She is a very nice girl, she is very sweet, she smiles a lot.

Two weeks ago, I started to teach her to use the toilet. The first day when I started to teach Nataly about the toilet training, I told her, "Nataly, It is time to leave your pampers because you aren't supposed to use pampers anymore, You are a big girl now." So I explained to her, when the babies are bigger they don't need to use pampers anymore. She hasn;t used pampers since the first day.

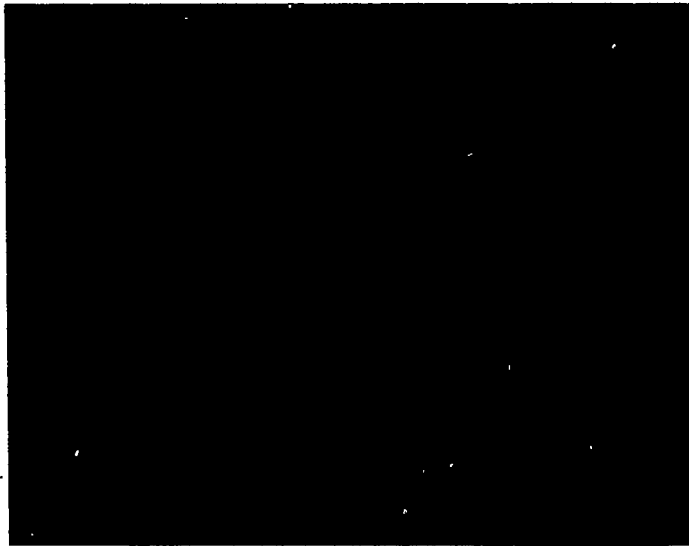
She is a very nice girl. She tells me every 10 or 15 minutes, "Mamy I want to make peepee, and she goes to the bathroom and uses it very well. That same day in the night I tried to put the pampers on Nataly for night time but she didn't want them. She told me, " Mamy, I don't want to use pampers. I don't like pampers". Before she went to sleep, she went to the bathroom and she told me, "Ok, mamy I'm already to go to bed, and she slept without pampers. She didn't have any more accidents in the bed. Sometimes when I stay outside of my house with her, she tells me when she needs to go to the bathroom.

From the first day of training to today Nataly is doing everything well and she likes using the toilet. I'm happy with her.

I don't remember what I taught my three children when they were young. But now I'm teaching them about the importance of education. For example, my son Jose who is 15 wants to get a job and go to school at the same time. Sometimes he wakes up in the morning and tells me, "Mom, last night I dreamt I got a new car like a Mazda". I say, "Well, when you finish school and have a good job you can buy a car." He says, "O.K." He listens to me. He wants to be a bank manager. He wants me to save money for his college education. I don't know if I can. He wants me to get a job and make some money. I don't want ot get a job until they finish school and I can get a good job. I want to work in a Beauty Salon but it doesn't pay very well. This is a problem between me and my children. They are happy that I go to school but now they have to go into the other room when they want to speak English.



Maria Rivera



ABOUT NATALY RUBIO

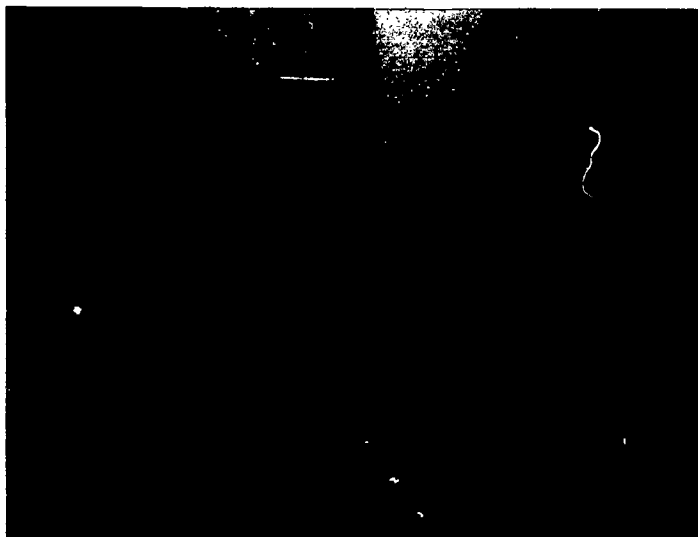
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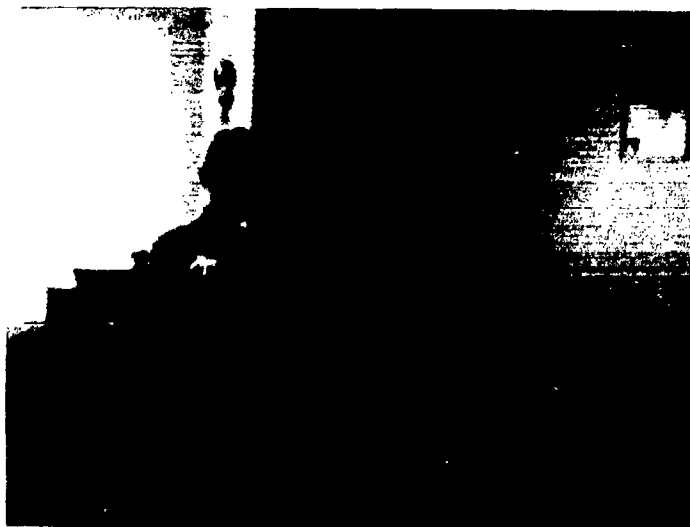


Maria Rivera

When I had to teach my sons the address, I taught them by reading and writing. I taught Omar first. I taught him reading and writing first. It took him four weeks to learn. I had patience teaching him. Then I taught my younger son. His name is Jasmani. He is only six years old. I taught him by reading and writing also. It took him about five weeks to learn the address. One day when I was sitting beside him, I asked him about the address. He told me that he knew it. I was surprised and happy. When we moved, I taught Omar the new address by reading and writing. He took only two weeks but Jasmani, he didn't pay attention to me. So one day I asked Jasmani about the new address. It took him about five weeks to learn. I had fun teaching my two children.

Ana Rodriguez

5/25/88



Mothers Are Teachers

These writings came out of some work I was doing with my students around the theme of who teaches our children and what do they teach them. I made two stacks of cards. One stack contained words like "friend", "brother", "elementary school teacher", while the other stack contained phrases like "learning to fix a meal", "learning to read", "learning to accept other people's differences". I laid out all the phrase cards on a table and went over the vocabulary. Then I drew a card from the stack of people cards. I asked the students to match the person with a learning activity or activities. We all took turns and discussed our choices. When one of the students drew the card for Mother we all decided that mothers taught almost all of the learning activities. This is an obvious fact but in the context of my Family Literacy class this revelation led us all to feel quite important (and exhausted). Some of the women started to talk about what they did with their kids and others talked about what other family members die. It was clear to me that there was a lot of interest and energy around this issue. However, I was not quite in tune with my students and instead I assigned them the task of interviewing someone who had taught something to someone instead of having them write about what we had just been talking about. I mention this blunder because the assignment I gave was a good assignment but totally out of step with my class. Luckily, one student, Angela, came in next day with a piece of writing about her daughter. She had written about how she had tried to teach her daughter to have good habits, Since no one else had done the other assign homework, I asked Angela to read her paper aloud and let the others hear what she had to say. Everyone decided this was a much better assignment. I thanked Angela and admitted to the class my mistake in assigning them something they weren't much interested in. I mention this too because, for me, part of a participatory classroom involves sharing ourselves, both our strengths and our weaknesses. It was important for us as a group, and for me, the teacher, to admit fallibility.

The next day, almost everyone in the class came in with a writing. Following Angela's brave lead, I asked people to read their writings or to let me or another classmate read them. I phrased it this way so that everyone would feel comfortable. It seemed that many of the students preferred my reading of their papers because they said I "made them sound good". Sometimes we had several readings of the same paper because, this being an ESL classroom, we are also improving our pronunciation and aural/oral skills. The point in reading out loud was to give the author immediate feedback from an audience other than just the teacher. At the end of each reading, we talked about what we understood, what we liked, and what we had questions about. Sometimes I modeled this process and other times, it just naturally happened. I

made it clear we were there not to give grammar corrections unless the mistakes got in the way of our understanding. This was both a relief and a difficult concept for my students to grasp. This reading process was followed for each student. This meant that we sometimes read or listened to a piece of writing everyday. The point is that this is a very flexible and organic way to deal with a student writing and one ideally suited to the Adult ESL classroom where classroom attendance is never very consistent.

The second stage of this process approach was to work on making some grammar corrections. for the first four students I experimented with making grammar worksheets based on their most common mistakes.

from student writings:

1. When I was teach my two younger son to learn tie their shoes. I have a hot time with someone.
2. Sometime when my son sees me in the kitchen he comes to me and ask me to show him how to cook.
3. I taught of mi daughter to eat when she was bebe, and to play, go to the bathroom, looking for her clothes.
4. He likes it I show him how to cook. (when, when)
5. I always to her new habits for a better life for her. (tried, try) (teach, taught)
6. Betsy who six years old in a week. (have, is) (learn, learned)

Choose the correct sentence.

- 2 -

7. He is a little lazy but I know he tries hard. He is a little lazy but he knows he did well. He is a little lazy but know he did well.
8. I think is natural because she is a little girl and she doesn't have all responsibility. I think it is natural because she is a little girl and she doesn't know how to be totally responsible yet.
9. I told him then we made the beans. I tell him then we make the beans.
10. Three or four time a day I ask Carlos tie the shoes, and a few minutes ago his tie is not tied.

Three or four times a day I asked Carlos to tie his shoes, and a few minutes later his laces ~~still weren't tied.~~ were untied again.

As you can see, I tried a number of different ways to work on error correction. I used a variety of approaches to see which one or ones helped them the most. Though the students really enjoyed doing these exercises (I think because it made them feel secure to be doing something they were accustomed to doing like correcting errors), I feel I had jumped the gun and that this kind of exercise might have worked better after the second draft. I say this because their second drafts, due to extensive rewriting, often showed that these errors were avoided and not necessarily corrected.

On the second drafts, I decided to mark mistakes by putting a * on the line or underlining a word. I also wrote each student a letter in which I asked them for further clarification or information.

Feb. 29, 1988

Angela -

This is a lovely piece of writing. It shows lots of thought, care and love. A few questions. I am confused about what happened when your daughter was 5 years old? Were you in college in P.R. and then came to Boston. If so what happened when she was 6 years old? I am confused. Please check the places in your paper I underlined. You say she likes to share with you. What does she like to share? I think your talking about her jealousy is another story. I like your ending. You need to work on the title "mother's teachers" means the teachers of the mother. For example Molly and I are your teachers. Do you mean something more like mothers are teachers?

When the students got the second drafts back, some of them started to share them with their friends. Again, taking the lead from them, I encouraged this peer correction but didn't force it. It was around this time that I showed the students some previously made books of student writings. The students decided that they also wanted to have their writings published. This helped motivate them to do yet another draft. However, with publication came a renewed concern for producing error free writing. It became apparent to me that I had a much greater tolerance for errors that they did. We discussed this and came up with a compromise which was that I would do a final proofreading with them for spelling mistakes and anything else they wanted me to check like verb tenses, but that I wouldn't necessarily change their syntax.

As people started to complete their third drafts, I asked them if they wanted to use the cameras from our FOCUS project and take pictures of the kids to go along with their writings. For some of the more reluctant writers, this was a further inspiration to finish all their drafts. We were going to make a book with pictures! At the very end of this lengthy process, I brought in a writing about my daughter and some pictures I had taken. I decided to do this because I felt so motivated by their stories and wanted to be included in the book. Also by showing them my unfocused and not particularly good pictures I wanted to show my lack of expertise in this area.

The last phase of this writing process was collecting all the students' many drafts, stapling them together and giving them to everyone so they could all see each other's progress. This proved in some ways to be the most exciting part of this process because it was very clear, whether in pencil or pen, that everyone had developed or improved their writing from the first draft. This was written proof that they were "learning English" or "making progress".

What we also learned from all of this was that, yes, we, mothers, are teachers but not just for our children but for each other.

Mother's teacher

I taught of my daughter to eat when she was babe and to play go to the bathroom, looking for her clothes, when my daughter was 5 year I taught she had go to school now she is 7 years old she to know to order all cloth shoes and her toy now she know different things but sometime forgive all, I think is natural because she is a little girl, and she doesn't have all responsibility I always tried taught good habit for better life for her.

Angela M.

2/11/88

February 29, 88

"Mother's teacher"

I taught my daughter to eat by herself when she was baby.

I also taught her how to play to use the toilet, and to find her clothes and put them on.

When my daughter was 5 years old, she told me Mom, I want to go to school. I went to college for several months, soon we coming to live in Boston, here, she go to school, she is 7 years old,

* Everyday I help ~~to~~ her make the homework, and to look for some things. Sometime she is lazy and she "said Mom" help me to tie my shoe, when I don't have time, I said, "I can't."

she said "yes, you have can because you is my mother and all mother ^{so} help her child. now, she likes go to school and share with me. Sometime my daughter feel jealous, when I take care another child.

I feel good with my daughter

February 29, 88

I taught my daughter to eat by herself when she was baby.

I also taught her how to play, to use the toilet, and to find her clothes and put them on. When my daughter was 5 years old, she told me Mom, I want to go to school. I send to private school for several months, soon we coming to live in Baton, here she go to school, now she is 7 years old, everyday I help her make the homework, and to look for some things, sometime she is lazy and she said Mom help me tie my shoes. When I don't have time I said "I can't" she said yes, you can because you are my mother and all mother to help her child. Now she likes go to school and share with me her class.

I want my daughter to learn good habits for a better life.

letting go

68

61

Soltando las riendas/Letting Go

Letting go and releasing our imagination and creativity was the most fun. For some of us, FOCUS was refuge from bureaucratic hurdles, from ESL, from personal problems, from stolen welfare checks, from custody battles, from our war-ridden countries, and from our set daily routines and habits. Instead, we allowed ourselves to look at all these realities from another perspective by stepping back and looking through a different lens.

The works showcased in this section are examples of "letting go". They represent a critical perspective on who we are, and where we are going. They talk about social urban realities, about freedom, about the sun, and yes, even about a pig(!). It includes a little bit of everything: a "photostory" (*Manos descarriadas* "Hands Gone Astray") a first and second draft of Jose's reaction to his peers' pictures from Jamaica Plain accompanied by his own photograph (*Erase una vez...* "Once upon a time...), a couple of brief reactions to a single photograph, and a poem without a photograph.

There were many more of these...some of which we never saw. Students didn't always show everything they produced, and all of us respected that. After all, feeling that mutual respect is what gave us the confidence to share and reveal some of these works.

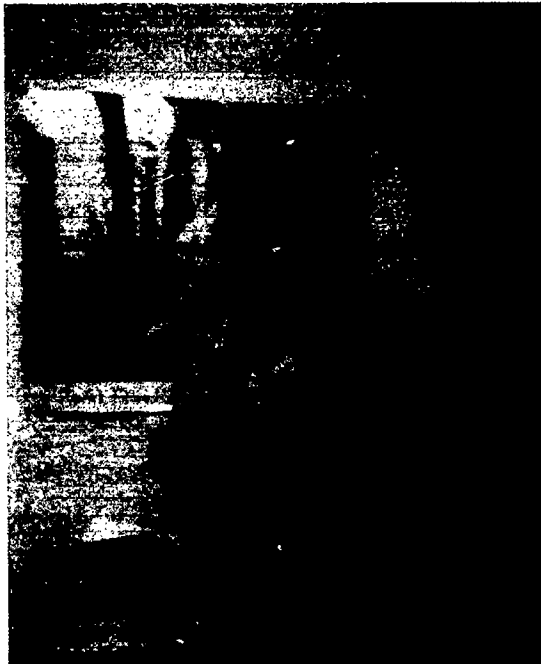
3/15/88

I going to look about this picture

This picture is was taking in my teacher house. Me and my friend we went to our teacher house to celebrate a Valentin Days for a little time. And my friend and I we have a piece of paper the teacher wrote a bulifuly sond I forget the name of that son. And now I look the window and on tree two beautiful big plants. And a beautiful picture and the wold.

Maria Rivera





I was singing a beautiful song few days before San Valentine day. This was in my teacher's house. The song I was singing talked about a beautiful feeling we have inside us. The title of this song is "May we also" something beautiful that each one of us have. That something is big like a sky beautiful like a sea. Many times we need explore ourself to discover what is that something. Many times we dreams wake-up with this feeling, but one day we found that something that we dreams wake-up and we understand that is infinite, bigger than all, because that something is

The Love

Angel

71

3/15/88.

obra

Verase una vez
 navegando iba en un buque de velas
 sobre las aguas de un pequeño lago -
 cuando desde sus inmediaciones observaba
 lo bello de la naturaleza el sol
 Resplandecía su luz sobre todo
 a lo lejos vi una gran ciudad que
 en medio de una montaña -
 sobre el frente de una estatua ar-
 queológica imaginandome en aquel momento
 tal vez podría algunos de los dioses a quienes les
 rendian tributos los indigenas -
 que al acercarme a la orilla de el lago
 de un río y me acordaba de mis paseos

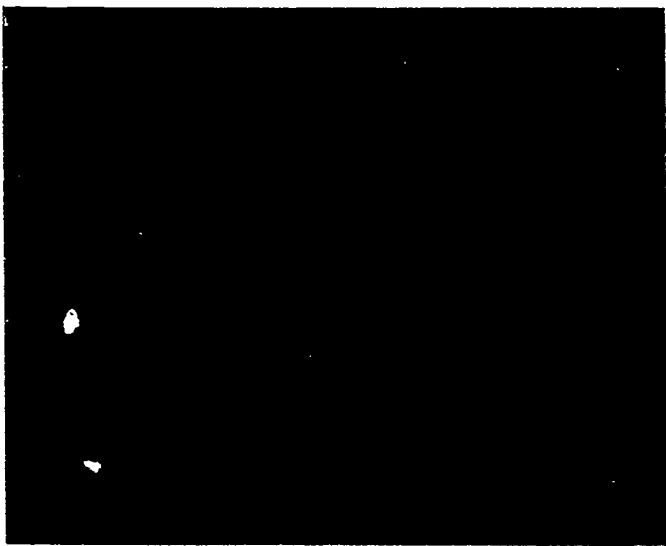
y medite que un grande hoja la
 belleza de Dios sobre toda la humani

un día navegábamos mis profesores
 y compañeros de estudio y camé en
 en un buque de velas sobre las aguas
 de un pequeño lago desde sus in-
 mediaciones observamos lo bello de la natu-
 ra el sol Resplandecía su luz sobre todo
 a lo lejos vimos una gran ciudad
 que lucían sus grandes edificios sa-
 saltando en medio de una montaña
 sobre un gran muro el ilustre de
 estatua arqueológica imaginandolos
 aquel momento que tal vez podría
 algunos de los dioses a quienes les
 rendian tributos los indigenas
 nos acercamos mas a la orilla de
 aquel lago con destino a la ciudad
 estábamos el punto de un ferrocarril
 y tan cerca de un pasaje luego Pequeño
 nuevamente a la escuela hacer comen-
 de el viaje tan maravilloso

①

José Alvarez Aguilar

Diciembre 1987



②

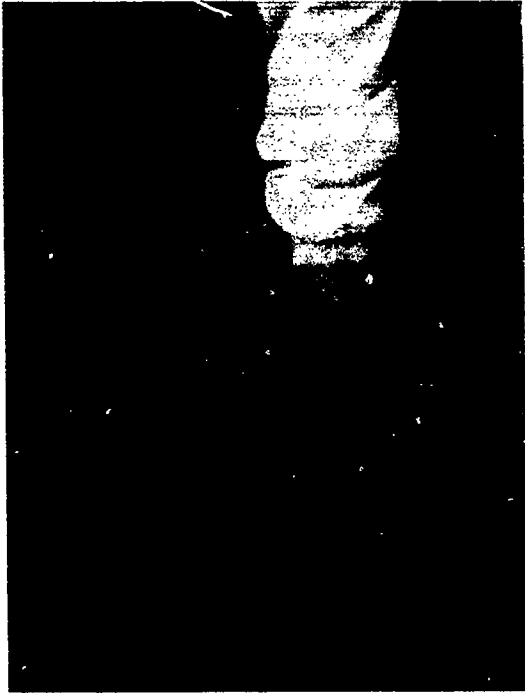
José Alvarez Aguilar

Diciembre de 1987

I took this picture
because I think
this pig is different
to the pigs from my
country. I never see
a pig so clean like this one.

4/88.
Angel Pagan





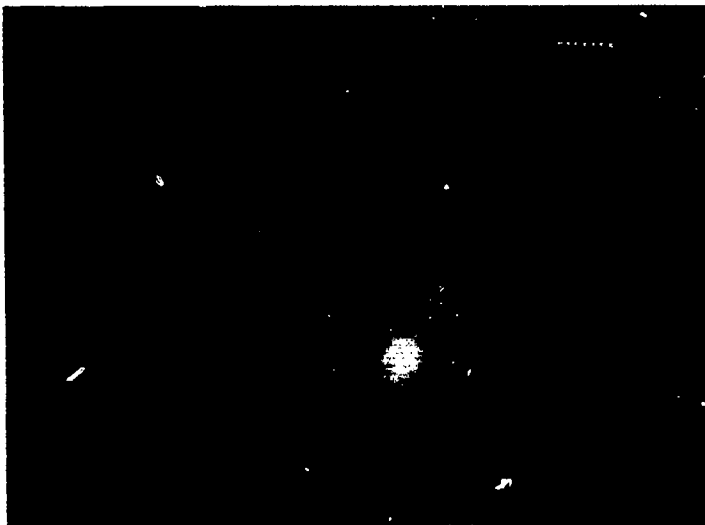
MANOS DESCARIADAS

ESTA MANO SOLA Y DESAMPARADA,
CAMINA POR LAS CALLES OSCURAS,
BUSCANDO PROBLEMAS;
!Y SIN CARINOS TENER!

ENCUENTRA OTRA MANO SOLITARIA,
SIN SABER PARA DONDE VA,
AMIGAS EN VICIOS Y DROGAS,
Y SOLO CONFUSION LES QUEDA.

ESTAS MANOS VAN JUNTAS A TODOS LADOS,
UNA CON MAS FUERZA DE VOLUNTAD,
INVITA A LA OTRA A BUENOS LUGARES,
Y SIN SABER VAN HACIENDO BUENA AMISTAD.

ESTAS MANOS UNION Y PAZ ENCUENTRAN,
MAS A DROGAS Y VICIOS RECHAZAN,
CONFIANZA E SI MISMA Y POSITIVAS;
Y A TODAS PERSONAS AYUDAN.



*Let's be united
Nov/19/1987.*

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March 15, 19888

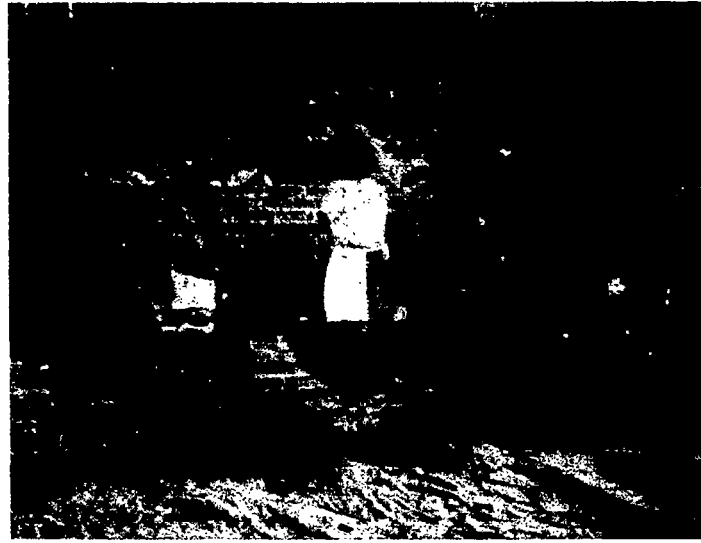
LA BANDERA

Siempre que veo una bandera me gusta mirarla y contemplarla porque en ella se refleja el sentir de cada pueblo y la libertad de los hombres "Libertad Divino Tesoro" triste de aquellos que no la tienen que anoran algun dia ver sus pueblos florar libres como esta bandera y como los pajaros que nacieron libre y en algunos casos el hombre la hecho prisioneros.

Oh divina bandera quien te viera, quien te viera mas arriba mucho mas.

Angela Montero





Women, the color of dried bricks
and just as strong
vibrant in their white aprons
invite me to buy summer
fruits in their baskets
here in J.P, Nicaraqua

Cada mañana entras Por mi Ventana.
Tocas mi cara suavemente te siento

Cada mañana muy ansiosa me levanto
Temprano y abro mi Ventana Porque
se que vas a venir yo te siento Cuando
tocas mi cara suavemente ^{cada mañana} eres es luz
que necesito Cada dia eres rayito
de sol el que alumbrá mi vida
Con tu luz lentas brillantes a todo el dia
y en la noche mientras descansa'ss por me
pregunto donde descansa mi lindo y
brillante sol de cada mañana y cada dia

Carmen Vázquez 11-19-87

the neighborhood

"If we want to put a photograph back into the context of experience, social experience, social memory, we have to respect the laws of memory. We have to situate the printed photograph so that it acquires something of the surprising conclusiveness of that which was and is."

-John Berger
Ways of Looking (p.61)

El vecindario/The Neighborhood

The following writings and pictures come from a quick field trip I took with the class. We took the cameras and went out to practice taking photos. Tita's writing reveals her bilingual sense of self, more comfortable in Spanish but at first thinking she had to write in English. My writing is a response to a series of photos I asked Angel to take for me because I wanted to write about the graffiti.

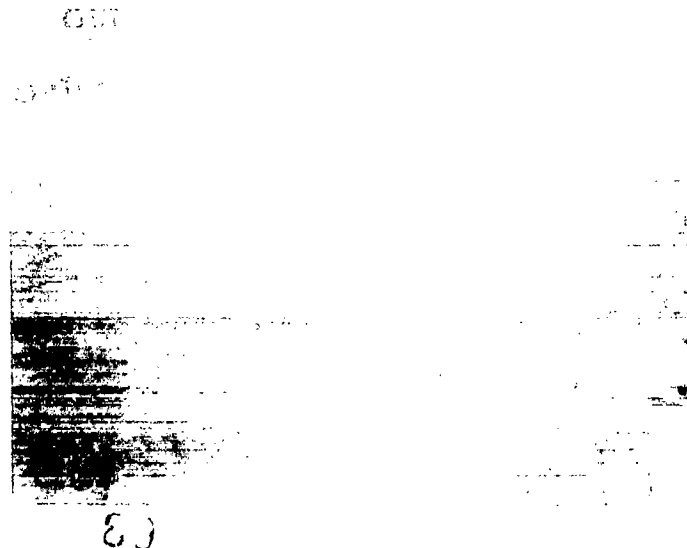
The Wall

This is my neighborhood. This is a wall near my house near the Center. Everyday I look at this wall and read these messages and feel outraged, too.

"Condoms not Contras", guns or Butter, you can't have both. There's only so much money to go around. I would rather see us spend money on saving lives than killing lives. I would rather see the star embrace the cross. There is a cross above the star. It's not in the picture but I believe whoever crossed out the "I love Jews" also put/made the cross. I am outraged by this too.

The wall speaks. I hope we are listening.

-Loren Mc Grail



Blanca

3/15/88

When I find out this church me llamo mucho la atencion. Esas imagenes al frente tienen un colorido bien bonito y atraen a la vista. La iglesia se llama San Juan el Bautista. En el centro tiene la imagen de Juan el bautista cuando estaba bautizando a Jesucristo en el rio Nilo. Esta iglesia queda a la vuelta del Centro del Cardenal.



Every picture tells a story, so it goes, but not always the same story. The following is an account of an activity that backfired or that 'moved' in its own direction. It is also a good illustration of what happens when teachers 'let go' of their own ideas and agendas, and let the class direct itself.

It was towards the end of the cycle in our FOCUS class and I was concerned that nobody was really writing or taking pictures about things other than people. So, in an attempt not to impose but rather to guide, I thought it would be interesting if we all took pictures of our neighborhoods and write about them. I was also interested in getting the students to try and write on a series of pictures, to get beyond just writing one page per picture. I was interested in seeing them create and develop their writing around a certain theme and also to see if they could or would write about something personal which wasn't necessarily about them or their family. Hence the neighborhood idea.

I decided I should model what I had in mind so that they would be very clear about what I expected. Also I wanted to participate in the class as a picture-taker, not just as a writer/teacher. So I set out with my Polaroid to take pictures of the things I saw on my way to and from my daughter's daycare center.

I found myself attracted to the different kinds of gardens in my neighborhood. I wanted to expose the sharp contrast of wealth in my neighborhood as seen in its gardens--from the exclusive manicured condo gardens to the Chinese vegetable victory gardens.

My plan was to bring in my photos, talk about them, tell the class why I took them and then give them their own cameras and hope they would go out and do something different. This is not what happened. What did happen was something quite wonderful and surprising. It was wonderful because it happened in Spanish and surprising because I never could have predicted or planned this.

Instead of showing and telling the students about the pictures I had taken, as planned, I asked them what they saw when looking at them as a group. This open approach allowed each student to see and express what she saw in the picture. One student, for example, said in looking at my picture of the victory garden that this reminded her of her father; that they used to have a garden like this and that her father had died in a garden like this on her birthday. We were all quite taken aback by this sudden and serious comment, but while I was searching around for something comforting and appropriate to say, it seemed as if others had picked up on the idea that these pictures reminded them of gardens back in their countries. They all agreed that my pictures of the fountain and detailed iron work (originally representing my view of the wealthy) looked like parts of Old San Juan and that this made them feel homesick. They became quite animated and I could tell they wanted to continue talking about this in

permission" to continue to speak in
ted a few times to get clarification
nish was still very rudimentary.
hey had spoken at length in front of
ld have only done this with Beatriz.
ing and acting out a "bilingual

rvous and unsure of what to do next
plan had evolved into something
s was where the energy was, and that
om this. So I asked them if they
their ideas down and that we would
nutes. I told them to write in
elt like. Beatriz and I have always
choice to decide which language to
hen we have done this, Beatriz would
those who wrote in Spanish and I
se who wrote in English.

This photos reflect the antiquity of
the capital of my country (Puerto Rico)

Its old streets, but historic,
its churches full of memories,
that the century cannot erase.
It's a memory I have in my heart.

I never forget, and they make you long
for your country.

It's beautiful to remember something
you think is forgotten.

I know now everybody can't forget
their roots, like me.

-Elanca (Tita) Marzan

Esto refleja la antigüedad de la capital
de mi país (Puerto Rico).

Sus calles viejas, pero históricas y sus
iglesias llenas de recuerdos,
que ni los siglos han podido borrar.
Son memorias que uno lleva en el corazón.

Nunca se pueden olvidar, y que te hacen
revivir y anorar a tu patria.

Es bonito recordar cosas que uno creía
olvidadas. Yo sé ahora que nadie puede
olvidar sus raíces, igual que yo.

-Blanca (Tita) Marzan

Al ver esas fotos

Algunas de ellas me trasladaron a San Juan, la capital de Puerto Rico donde yo cuando niña paseaba mucho, en compañía de mis hermanos y mi madre.

Son partes que traen recuerdos y nostalgia para mí. Son partes que yo quisiera volver a visitar y llevar a mis hijos, enseñarles donde yo jugaba y visitaba mis abuelos, que por cierto los quiero y los extraño mucho, especialmente mi abuelo que él nos llevaba a el morro y a la Plaza de Colon y la catedral que por cierto es bien antigua.

Me gustaria visitarla de nuevo.

-Mayra Nieves



Recuerdos me vienen a mí al ver esa foto donde esta la fuente, me imagino la pequeña plaza a la que íbamos los domingos por la tarde a pasear, donde encontrabamos mucha alegría de niños corriendo alrededor y la paz que transmitían las personas mayores que se encontraban descansando son bellos recuerdos que se hacen sentir alegre, triste y nostalgica. Alegre porque me imagino que estamos viviendo esos viejos tiempos, tristes porque ya pasaron estos tiempos y lejanos porque eso fue mucho tiempo atrás y ya no vamos a volver a tener esos momentos aunque volvamos a estar en el mismo lugar pues ya hemos vivido muchas cosas despues de estos tiempos.

-Margarita Henriquez

At the end of 10 minutes, I asked if people needed more time. Everyone said yes, so we all wrote for another 10 minutes. I wrote also since I was dying to tell them my interpretation of my pictures. When everyone stopped writing, I suggested that we read our writings aloud. Everyone agreed but looked a little bashful and uncomfortable. They all had written in Spanish except for Angel, who wrote in English about me, the photographer, who had taken a picture of Jesus. I told them this was no problem and that I would ask for clarification when I needed it.

There is no adequate way for me to explain or express what happened next. We all read our pieces, laughed and made comments to each other. This was a very empowering and vulnerable experience for me; to be listening to my students read to me in Spanish. I felt vulnerable because I could not be their teacher in the old sense and offer corrections in either Spanish or English. I also felt vulnerable because my Spanish was not great so I really had to listen and sometimes ask a lot of questions. Yet, I felt empowered because I felt they were now treating me like an equal by not trying to please me by writing in English. The class had reached that level of intimacy one always hopes for; so much so that they were able to discuss with both interest and understanding Maria's struggle to write in Spanish, and why she would rather make many mistakes in English than lose face in Spanish.

After we had all read our pieces aloud, I admitted to them the surprising turn my lesson had taken and how surprised I was at first that my pictures of my neighborhood looked like places in their home countries. I also felt it was important for me to tell them about how I felt listening to them talk and read in Spanish. We all agreed that my Spanish improved over the course of the class, but also that this had been a very special class.

And the end of the story is that they did want to go out and take pictures of their neighborhoods and to write about those pictures. And as could now be expected, people took very different pictures ranging from inner city parks to trees.

LA NATURALEZA

La naturaleza es algo bello
que nos dió el creador
y debemos aprovecharla ahora
que estamos en la temporada
de verano.

En este tiempo la disfrutamos
ya que aquí no es un país
tropical donde la tenemos
todo el tiempo y no la
sabemos apreciar.

Aunque aquí disfrutamos
todas las temporadas porque
vemos como cambian. Pienso
que los que mas gozan la
temporada de verano son
los niños porque no se
sienten como un pajarito
en su jaula.



Blanca Matzan



"THE PARK"

This picture reminds me when I was 11 years old. This is the park where I played with my sister and niece all day and night.

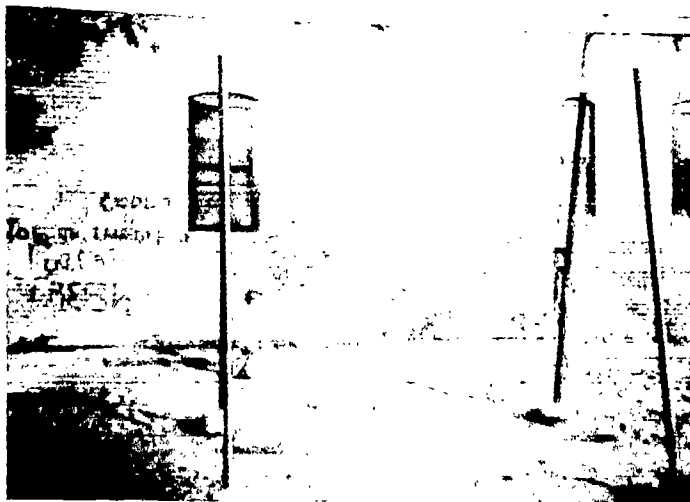
In this building on the 3rd floor: I lived in these area when I was young. I remember when I wrote some words like the ones that you see in that wall. When I pass through there, I get tears in my eyes, and sometimes when I played there my father always looked at me and called me.

"Mary it is late"and I felt mad and in my mind I wanted to live alone and to do what I wanted.

And now he is dead and I miss him a lot because he took care of me more than my mother. And now I feel sad because my father died on the same day of my birthday.

These two pictures make me think more than you can believe.

MARIA RIVERA



In my opinion the Focus Program is interesting, because I can express my ideas about real life.

Sometimes, when I saw some pictures, I remembered things, I had experienced in the past.

Other pictures I saw took me places I had never been and gave me new experiences.

My teachers and my classmates shared a lot in Focus Program.

I feel we have a family with us.



BLANCA MARZAN
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