Acompañamiento and the Sounds of Resilience in the Social Distance

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Abstract

This article draws from inquiry-based research that explored the efficacy of practitioners' efforts to create an asset-oriented field experience with preservice teachers and middle school students, responding to the challenge of building a virtual learning community during the pandemic. Through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), we investigated the pedagogical practices of one preservice English teacher who engaged three emergent bilingual middle school students in composing multimodal identity artifacts during a nine-week project. The findings of this study point to the value placed on acompañamiento—that is, learning "alongside" and "with" students (Sepúlveda, 2011). This aspect of the instructional design was found to be especially important in building a sense of community in the virtual classroom space.

Keywords: *acompañamiento, funds of knowledge, funds of identity, multiliteracies, preservice English teachers, asset-based pedagogy*

> *As transborder crises like climate change and COVID-19 endure, children worldwide are at the forefront of our collective consciousness. In a 2020 policy brief...the United Nations warned of the considerable impact of the pandemic on young people across the globe (Thakurta et al., 2021, p. 5).*

As instructors attempting to walk our talk by honoring the linguistic and cultural differences students bring to the (virtual) classroom, the three of us forged a collaboration because of and in spite of the pandemic. Catherine, a middle school English as a New Language (ENL) teacher, Jennifer, the field experience instructor for preservice English/Language Arts teachers (PSETs), and Mary Beth, the English education program director at the university, developed a partnership that would tap into the assets of emergent bilingual middle school students and PSETs alike. We also wanted to foster community despite social distancing, serving both middle school and college students in conditions that were less than optimal for learners at any level. Thus, the pandemic challenge became an opportunity for rethinking conventional in-person field experience: How might we create a field experience that was innovative and asset-oriented, teaching "to and through" diversity (Gay, 2013, p. 52) with PSETs and middle school students alike, responding to the challenge of building community virtually? In addressing this question, we hoped to provide enriched learning experiences for our respective students that would work on several levels: 1) to engage Catherine's middle school emergent bilinguals in learning English, 2) to engage Jennifer's PSETs in developing culturally sustaining instruction appropriate for Catherine's middle school students, 3) to build a

welcoming online learning community, and 4) to offer a testimony of resilience about emerging language learners and emerging teachers.

This article draws from a larger practitioner inquiry project (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) designed to explore the efficacy of our efforts to achieve those four goals. We highlight the teaching and reflective practices of one PSET, Brian (pseudonym), from Jennifer's field experience class, who engaged three of Catherine's middle school students in composing identity artifacts during a nine-week unit of instruction entitled *Soundscaping Funds of Knowledge & Identity*. The project involved both the PSETs and middle school students creating digital multimodal artifacts to represent key assets and identity traits in ways that moved beyond written text-only communicative practices. By leveraging an array of semiotic resources (i.e., sounds, visuals, words, etc.), PSETs and students were able to showcase multiple literacies throughout the process. Moreover, the emphasis on digital media in these activities resonates with the forward-looking NCTE Framework for 21st Century Curriculum and Assessment (NCTE, 2013), summoning schools to utilize a variety of digital tools for communication, expression, and problem-solving. This article traces the ways in which Brian cultivated an asset-oriented virtual pedagogy that fostered community as it built upon middle school students' funds of knowledge and funds of identity.

Literature Review

Funds of Knowledge and Funds of Identity

As Moll and his colleagues (1992) demonstrated, funds of knowledge (FoK) is a term that represents the accumulated skills and knowledges that reflect household and community practices outside of schools. As an extension of this concept, funds of identity (FoI) (Jovés et al., 2015), emphasizes the learner's lived experiences and those resources that a learner uses in defining oneself (Hogg & Volman, 2020). Taken together, FoK/I offer a platform for challenging deficit views of learners, rendering curricular materials that center on students' differences as strengths to be utilized, not as problems that need to be remediated. Moll et al.'s (1992) work is foundational to the groundbreaking line of research characterized by asset-oriented approaches to instruction, tapping into literacies informed by family and community ways of knowing, and leveraging such resources in the classroom, thereby making instruction culturally sustaining (Alim & Paris, 2017; Flint, Laman, & Jackson, 2021).

Multiliteracies, Multimodality, and Multilingualism

Complementary to the FoK/I approach, a multiliteracies pedagogy adopts a strengths-based design for teaching that disrupts logocentric definitions of literacy by inviting students' wide-ranging use of semiotic resources such as sounds and visuals (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; New London Group, 1996). Hull and Nelson (2005) describe multimodality as "a democratizing force, an opening up of what counts as valued communication, and a welcoming of varied channels of expression" (p. 253). Especially in a digital age where young people consume and create meaning through the affordances of many modes, it is now more than ever essential for teachers to provide students with opportunities to engage more equitably in the production of new knowledge through their multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

In line with creating an equitable learning climate, a pedagogy of multiliteracies rejects the privileging of one dominant language within the classroom (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). In asset-

oriented classrooms, the use of multiple languages and "translanguaging" are valued forms of expression that positively support students' belonging and engagement within the learning space (Auld et al., 2020). As cited by Auld et al. (2020), García and Li (2014) define translanguaging as:

> An approach to the use of language, bilingualism and the education of bilinguals that considers the language practices of bilinguals not as two autonomous language systems as has been traditionally the case, but as one linguistic repertoire with features that have been socially constructed as belonging to two separate languages. (p. 2)

Inviting translanguaging practices into the classroom as strengths thus positions culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students as creative experts, expanding pathways for sophisticated meaning-making that disrupt the boundaries of traditional composition genres (García & Li, 2014; Auld et al., 2020).

Acompañamiento: Walking the Talk

Sepúlveda (2011) emphasized that his role as a practitioner working with undocumented immigrants was to be sensitive to student precarity and to walk alongside students in their academic journey, supporting them through the process of becoming emergent bilinguals and thriving individuals in a dynamic community of learners. Walking with his students meant anticipating their learning needs and providing scaffolding so that they could effectively communicate in English and build new relationships in this learning community and beyond. In so doing, Sepúlveda hoped to offset the displacement and dispossession they experienced as immigrants. "Acompañamiento represents the creative acts of a people making space, creating place, and building community in an increasingly fragmented global world" (Sepúlveda, 2011, p. 568). Sepúlveda (2011) argues that this relational work is necessary for fostering a learning community.

While Sepúlveda (2011) could not have anticipated the pandemic, his research speaks to the importance of "the quality of the relationships we build as we stand or walk with others" (p. 559) in schools and in society. Sepúlveda's (2011) work speaks to this historical moment, for despite COVID-19 surges impacting youth, young adults and their teachers yearn for community, a desire that cannot be extinguished by sanitizers, social distancing, masking, and virtual pedagogies. As Sepúlveda walked alongside his emergent bilingual students, so too could we walk with Catherine's students as they improved their English communication skills and forged an online learning community.

Context of the Inquiry: The Soundscapes Project

As the pandemic spread, local university and public-school classes shifted to online-only delivery. Creating a new online field experience course for a full semester presented both a challenge and an opportunity that would require a tremendous amount of creative planning and coordination among several individuals over many weeks. Traditionally, in-person field experiences involved one or two PSETs working with a middle school teacher whom they would observe and assist throughout the semester. However, placing 15 different PSETs with 15 different teachers during a pandemic was not a feasible option. Nonetheless, it was important to all of us that PSETs still had an opportunity to apply firsthand the culturally sustaining teaching practices they were learning in their literacy methods courses, albeit virtually. In the online redesign, all PSETs would

work online in pairs as peer teaching partners and as mentors to the students of one veteran teacher.

To initiate the online field experience design, we contacted and met with Catherine, a well-experienced teacher of ENL at a local middle school. Together, we worked to develop a thematic unit plan entitled *Soundscaping Funds of Knowledge and Identity*, which would serve as the common exemplar instructional guide for students. We envisioned two cycles of inquiry for this project: 1) Jennifer would model scaffolding by inviting the PSETs to create multimodal FoK/I artifacts and offer support to PSETs throughout the design process; 2) the PSETs would follow suit, working in pairs to collaboratively design and teach a series of lessons to guide Catherine's students in creating multimodal FoK/I artifacts. Throughout the process, the PSETs would develop scaffolding in support of the middle school students, while Catherine and her middle school students, in turn, would support the PSETs in learning how to teach English. Table 1 maps out all the participants' primary roles and responsibilities throughout the collaboration.

Table 1: *Participants' Primary Roles & Responsibilities for the Soundscapes Project*

Participant(s)	**Primary Roles & Responsibilities**
University English Education Program Director (Mary Beth)	• Oversee courses, students, and instructors in the English education program • Crystallize the articulation of program courses and field experiences • Assist cooperating teachers, PSETs, and instructors in meeting their respective goals as well as course and program goals • Co-design a practitioner inquiry project to investigate the effectiveness of the online field experience and the FoK/I field experience
Field Experience Instructor (Jennifer)	• Co-design a practitioner inquiry and exemplar FoK/I unit plan in which PSETs could create differentiated/culturally sustaining lesson plans for their students • Model scaffolding by inviting PSETs to create multimodal FoK/I artifacts and offer support throughout the design process • Provide feedback to PSETs on their instruction through online discussion boards, teaching/inquiry e-portfolio submissions, reflections, and teaching evaluations.
Cooperating ENL Teacher (Catherine)	• Co-design an exemplar FoK/I unit plan in which PSETs could create differentiated/culturally sustaining lesson plans for middle school students • Coordinate the project's technical/physical logistics with school leaders, staff, and faculty • Scaffold instruction for and in support of participating emergent bilingual middle school students

	• Provide feedback to PSETs on their instruction through video teleconferencing
Preservice E/LA Teachers	• Conduct a practitioner inquiry tracking students' FoK/I using a teaching e-portfolio • Design/instruct weekly differentiated/culturally sustaining online lesson plans for small groups of emergent bilingual middle school students • Record, self-evaluate, and reflect on weekly online instruction
Emergent Bilingual Middle School Students	• Participate in weekly online lessons delivered by PSETs • Create multimodal FoK/I artifacts as guided by PSETs and cooperating teacher • Collaborate with peers and PSETs throughout the design process

In contrast to traditional academic discourse that relies almost exclusively on print literacies, the *Soundscapes* project welcomed middle school students' multiple literacies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) into the English/Language Arts (E/LA) classroom for the co-authoring of an interactive e-book that would showcase their assets and social identities to Catherine and the PSETs. Using a project-based approach with an emphasis on differentiated instruction, PSETs invited students to creatively compose with multimedia to share their backgrounds, interests, strengths, and identities. The overall project thus infused the PSETs' and middle school students' FoK/I into the E/LA curriculum as a way of building a (virtual) community of mentors, learners, and producers of knowledge.

In preparation for their virtual field experience, Jennifer provided PSETs with instruction on FoK/I (Moll et al., 1992; Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014), multimodality and multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009), practitioner inquiry (Hall & Wall, 2015), and pedagogical design for CLD classrooms (Heineke & McTighe, 2018). Then, Jennifer invited PSETs to create soundscape artifacts to represent their FoK/I. The PSETs subsequently used their multimodal FoK/I artifacts to model for Catherine's middle school students the use of various semiotic resources — i.e., sound, visual art, found poetry, and digital tools — to represent their richly diverse FoK/I. Additionally, Jennifer guided the PSETs in learning to use Microsoft Teams — the video conferencing platform approved by the cooperating school district — to virtually interact with students, some of whom would log in from school and others from home. It was often the case that Catherine's students who logged into the online lessons from home would choose to disable their webcams; thus, the PSETs would usually only hear these students' voices without seeing their faces.

Framed around the essential questions, 'What does it mean to be a (21st century) writer?' and 'How can our FoK/I contribute to our E/LA learning community?', we designed the *Soundscapes* project as both a unit plan and practitioner inquiry in which groups of two or three PSETs would co-develop and co-teach a series of five lessons over the course of nine weeks. The soundscapes project was carried out in full through five production phases (i.e., lessons) that included a pre-production and post-production phase (see Table 2). In the pre-production phase, PSETs guided groups of three or four students in responding to the following prompt with visual art and spoken/written language: 'What does it mean to be a writer?' PSETs then developed lessons for

production Phase 1, in which students created audio clips that captured meaningful sounds from their homes and/or communities. For Phase 2, PSETs guided students in composing visual artifacts that represented their FoK/I as inspired by their soundscape composition. Then, during Phase 3, the students narrated their soundscape/visual composition using written or voice-typed text. As part of Phase 3, PSETs also helped students to generate found poetry based on either their originally written narratives or from pre-existing texts that were meaningful to them, such as song lyrics or book passages. The final post-production phase invited students to reflect on the whole process of producing what Pahl and Rowsell (2010) describe as literacy artifacts — the soundscapes, found poems, and visual representations that captured their identities. PSETs guided students in sharing final reflections by visiting the original prompt describing what it meant to be a writer. PSETs were then able to compare their students' responses from the pre-production phase to that of the post-production phase as part of their practitioner inquiry.

Throughout the entire virtual field experience, PSETs kept an electronic teaching portfolio, where they tracked their students' FoK/I, designed differentiated lesson plans, and self-evaluated/reflected on their instruction. Two times during the field experience, each PSET submitted a recording of their online synchronous teaching for a formal evaluation via GoReact — an online password-protected multimedia-sharing platform that enabled each PSET to self-evaluate their teaching, and allowed Jennifer, as the field experience instructor, to annotate the recordings with written feedback. Moreover, through an online discussion board, PSETs shared journal entry reflections about their teaching practice in terms of how their students' FoK/I informed their instruction and pedagogical philosophies. In their final journal entry, PSETs shared an aspect of their virtual teaching they were particularly proud of. The virtual field experience inquiry concluded with the PSETs' development of a differentiated action plan for future instruction with their students.

Table 2: *Soundscape Project Production Phases and Descriptions of PSETs' Responsibilities*

Production Phase	**PSET Responsibility: Guide students in composing with...**
Pre-Production: *What Does it Mean to Be a Writer?*	Visual art and spoken/written language to describe what it means to be a writer
Phase 1: *Writing with Sound*	Sound recordings collected from home to capture FoK/I
Phase 2: *Writing with Visuals*	Visual artistic media to capture FoK/I based on soundscape composition
Phase 3: *Writing with Words*	Spoken and/or written sensory language to narrate soundscape composition and visual art Found poetry from meaningful/relevant books or song lyrics and/or originally written/voice-typed descriptions of soundscapes and artwork

Post-Production: *What Does it Mean to Be a Writer?*	Visual art and spoken/written language to revisit what it means to be a writer

Methods

Case Study Participant

Brian was a third-year undergraduate student majoring in middle/secondary English education. In a professional biography he sent to Catherine's middle school class prior to teaching, Brian shared his three goals for the field experience: "1) bettering my educational ability, 2) growing more natural in the teacher position, and 3) refining my philosophy of pedagogy." Brian was paired with James (pseudonym) to co-teach three emergent bilingual middle school students: Analisa from Mexico, and Marisa and Aurelia from Colombia. Similar to other PSETs in the field experience course, Brian and James opted to take turns in leading the online synchronous instruction.

For this case study, we chose to highlight Brian's lead instruction during the field experience. His e-portfolio documented an exemplar of "acompañamiento"—purposefully walking alongside his students during the learning process. Among the 15 PSET e-portfolios, Brian's teaching artifacts provided the strongest and most compelling evidence of a PSET purposefully eliciting students' FoK/I to produce culturally sustaining ELA instruction. In particular, it was the annotated video-recorded lesson featured in this article that Brian demonstrated his building of an inclusive online learning community by purposefully instantiating asset-oriented instructional practices that welcomed and honored his emergent bilingual students' FoK/I and multiliteracies. Additionally, his affirming engagement and care for students persisted through the field experience and materialized in a video he created for his students as a farewell gift. Of the 15 PSETs, he was the only one to index a depth of caring in the form of a gift to his emergent bilinguals. The video rendered an even deeper reflection about his priorities in teaching, learning, and building relationships with students. Finally, although Brian was fluent only in English, his teaching portfolio was the only one to demonstrate the use of translanguaging during synchronous online instruction, encouraging both English *and* Spanish in the students' artifacts. Encouraging students' repertoires of language and culture, Brian offered yet another way of creating a culturally sustaining virtual classroom.

Data Sources

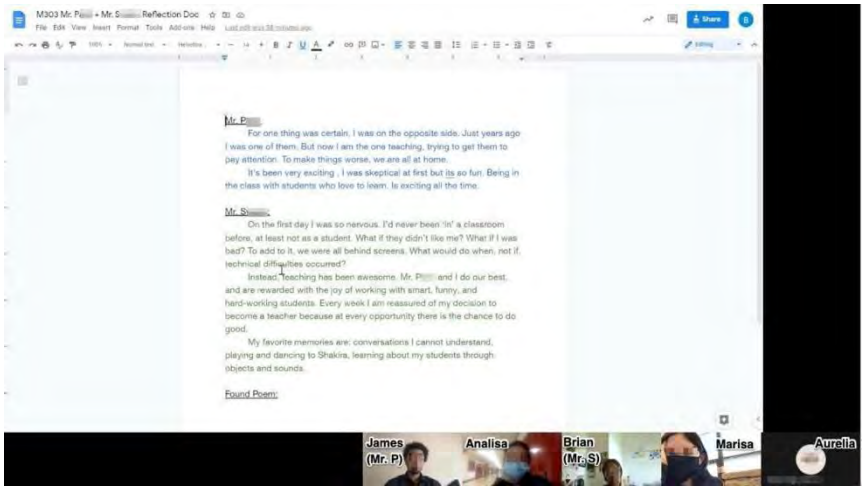
To conduct our analysis for this case study, we triangulated the data through a variety of artifacts that Brian submitted throughout the 16-week field experience course. The most significant datum was a 52-minute-long teaching video that Brian annotated for a formal evaluation. To limit the scope of this article, we highlight excerpts from Brian's teaching video and supporting documentation from additional assignments he completed in preparation for and in response to this particular lesson. We drew these supporting data from a teaching-and-inquiry e-portfolio where Brian tracked students' FoK/I for his E/LA lessons, collected student artifacts, and wrote self-evaluations on his instruction. Moreover, we included Brian's self-reflections from the journal entries he shared with Jennifer and fellow PSETs on the online discussion board. During the final week of his field experience, Brian also sent an unrequired three-minute "final send-off video" to

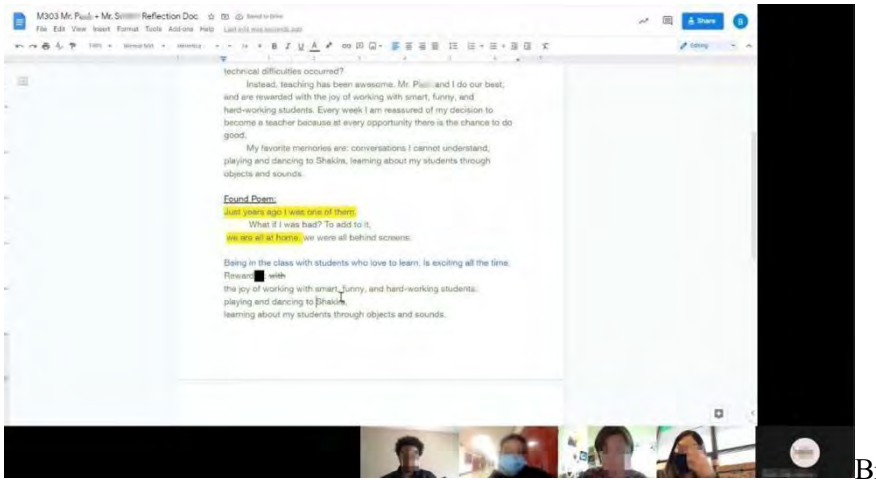
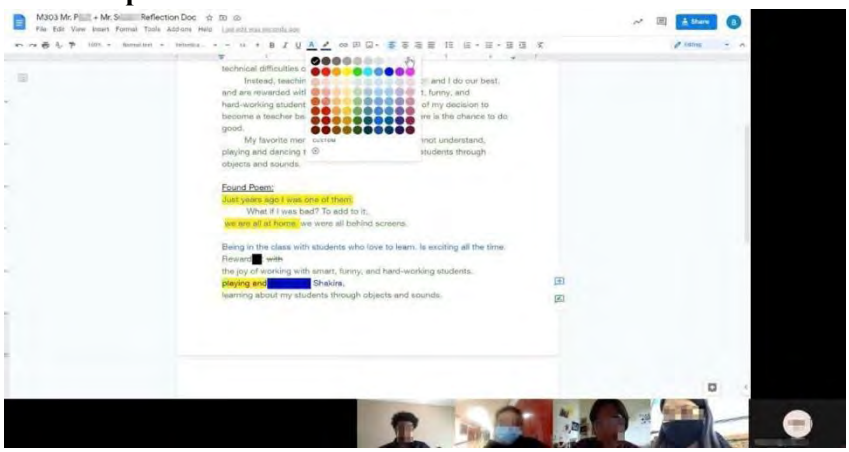
his three students, which we transcribed and included in the case study dataset, as this source provided us with additional information relevant to Brian's teaching experience.

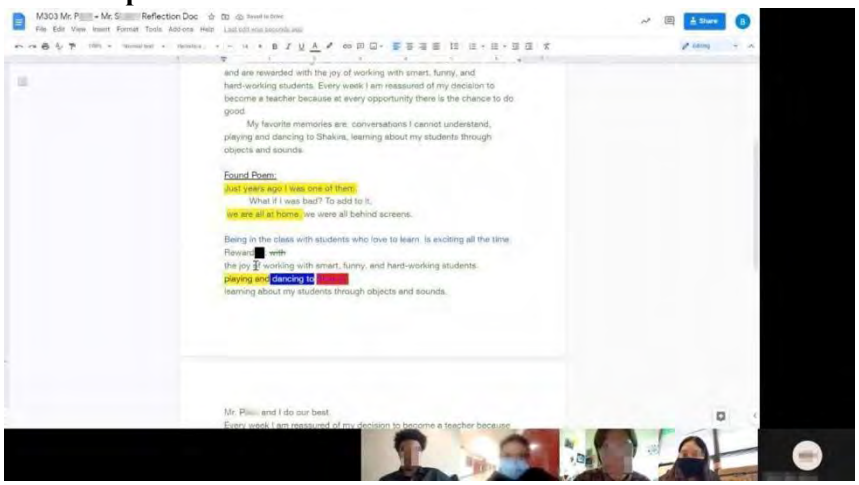
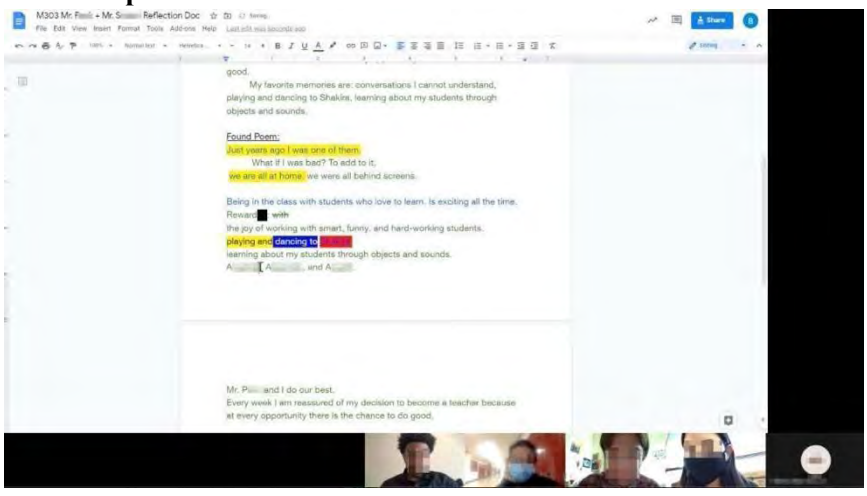
Collaborative Thematic Analysis

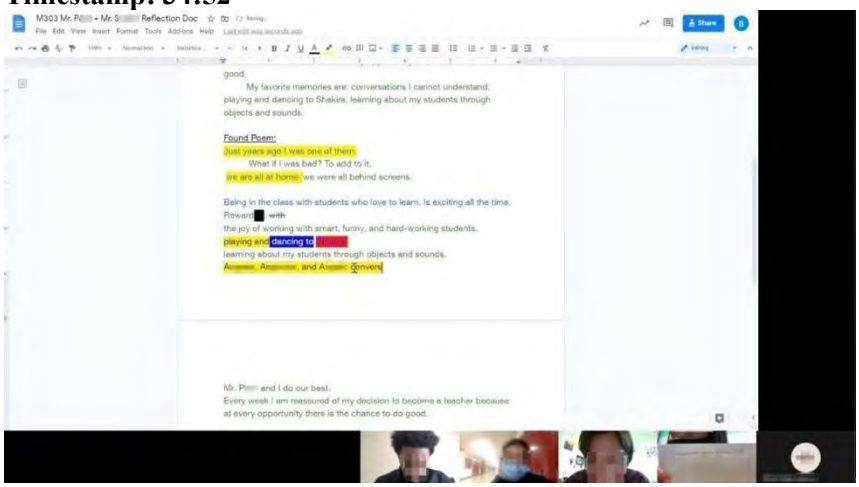
To carefully examine the data in a way that generated reliable results, we conducted a collaborative analysis that enabled us to collectively merge our insider-outsider perspectives as both teachers and researchers. Cornish et al. (2014) describe "collaborative data analysis" as "processes in which there is joint focus and dialogue among two or more researchers regarding a shared body of data, to produce an agreed interpretation" (p. 79). To establish trustworthiness, we carried out a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017) that began with transcribing Brian's teaching video. The transcription process allowed us to become fully immersed in Brian's teaching as we not only transcribed the dialogue, but also took video screen captures and wrote descriptions of the interactions that occurred during the virtual lesson, as illustrated in Table 3. After transcribing, we identified codes and recursively confirmed, revised, and added new themes, as seen in Table 4.

Table 3: *Excerpts from Transcription of Brian's Teaching Video*

Excerpt Description	Screen Captures of Activities & Transcribed Dialogue
Excerpt 1: Brian reads his personal narrative aloud Co-PSET James (Mr. P) and middle school students listen as Brian shares on-screen and reads aloud a personal narrative that he composed on a Google Doc in preparation for his lesson on found poetry.	**Timestamp: 21:08**  Brian: On the first day I was so nervous. I'd never been "in" a classroom before, at least not as a student… Mr. P and I do our best, and are rewarded with the joy of working with smart, funny, and hard-working students… My favorite memories are conversations I cannot understand*, playing and dancing to Shakira, learning about my students through objects and sounds. *Note: "Conversations I cannot understand" refers to the moments during Brian's previous lessons in which the middle school students would converse with each other in Spanish — a language in which Brian was not fluent.

Excerpt 2: Brian and students negotiate use of flag colors to represent Colombia in the poem Brian leads a collaboration, drawing from students' interest in Colombian singer-songwriter Shakira. Brian uses the highlighting feature in Google Docs to represent the Colombian flag within the poem.	**Timestamp: 28:11**  Brian (B): I know Shakira's Colombian and there are three colors of the Colombian flag. What colors should we pick? Marisa (M): Blue B: Blue, gotcha. This blue? [moves cursor to dark blue shade] Lighter? Darker? M: I think it's uh the color for us is .. has a dark blue and red. **Timestamp: 29:56**  Brian: There we go. Good call. Thank you Marisa. And then we'll make this red highlight and we won't have to change the text [Highlights 'Shakira' in red]. Oh, the white background. That's okay, we know. 'Playing and dancing' No it needs to be red. I don't know why it didn't change. Nice! We have a kind of little Colombian flag. I love that.

Excerpt 3: Brian includes students' names in collaborative found poem Brian facilitates the collaborative composing of a found poem, typing the students' names. Aurelia becomes excited by Brian's inclusion of her name in the poem. Marisa suggests that Brian write her middle name so that all the student names mentioned in the poem begin with the letter A.	**Timestamp: 31:40**  Brian (B): Could we type out 'conversations I cannot understand' in Spanish? I'm going to type real fast just a sec. I think if we can, it'd be so fun. [Types 'Marisa, Analisa, and Aurelia:'] Okay. Aurelia (Au): My gosh you know how to write my name! It is so exciting to me! Nobody knows that. Marisa (M): Fun fact. Actually my middle name starts with an 'A' too. B: Wow! So many As. And there's another Marisa. There's all sorts of names and stuff. That's crazy. M: Yeah actually just now that you are saying 'Marisa, Analisa, and Aurelia' and actually my middle name starts with an 'A' too. And it'll be really funny if you put it over there. B: I can. I'll put it.
Excerpt 4: Brian invites students to translate phrase from poem in Spanish Brian invites the students to translate part of the found poem in Spanish. Marisa volunteers to transcribe the phrase in Spanish. The students discuss and negotiate the translation. Using	**Timestamp: 33:30** 

a paper and pencil, Marisa writes and holds the translation up to the screen. The students are enthusiastic for Brian's inclusion of Spanish in the poem.	Brian (B): Can we do the 'conversations I cannot understand'? Like say that in Spanish? Y'all will have to tell me really slow but ... Marisa (M): Yeah I can do that. Okay so you want to try to say 'conversations that I cannot understand'? B: Mhm M: Okay so let me write it on a paper and I will show you. James (J): Okay Aurelia (Au): Que vas a decir, Marisa? *Translation: What are you going to say, Marisa?* M: Conversaciones que no puedo entender. *Translation: Conversations that I cannot understand.* Au: Pero que cosa? Hay muchas cosas. *Translation: But what? There are many things.* Au: Conversaciones [inaudible] pequeñas y muy grandes. *Translation: Conversations small and very big.* [Students continue negotiating translation in Spanish] M: Okay, gracias. **Timestamp: 34:52**  [Marisa holds up paper with handwritten Spanish translation] B: Oh, one sec. Marisa, will you say something real fast? M: conversaciones que no puedo entender. B: Uhh is that an 'E' or an 'R'

	M: An 'R' Au: That's it. B: Conversaciones que no puedo entender. M: [gestures 'okay' with both hands] B: ¡Perfecto! Au: ¡Perfecto! B: I love it. Love it, love it, love it.

Table 4: *Themes, Codes, and Excerpts for Thematic Analysis*

Theme	**Codes**	**Excerpts**
Making Learning Culturally Sustaining by Incorporating Shared Funds of Identity and Lived Experiences	Incorporating shared lived experiences	PSET Brian (B) reads his text aloud: …. My favorite memories are: conversations I cannot understand, playing and dancing to Shakira, learning about my students through objects and sounds. (Teaching Video Excerpt 1)
	Making learning meaningful by drawing on students' FoK/I	B: Could you say.. could we type out 'conversations I cannot understand' in Spanish? I'm going to type real fast just a sec. I think if we can, it'd be so fun. [Types 'Marisa, Aurelia, and Analisa:'] Okay. Aurelia (Au): My gosh you know how to write my name! It is so exciting to me! Nobody knows that. (Teaching Video Excerpt 3)
	Increasing sensitivity to diverse learners' identities	Aurelia's comment made me so so so happy, validated my value of knowing and using student names appropriately, and also made me sad at how people of diverse backgrounds often must reconcile with improper pronunciation or use a pseudonym in America. (Self-Evaluation)

(Re)positioning Students as Collaborative Expert Designers of Multimodal Identity Artifacts	"Giving more agency to the students" toward a "student-focused" pedagogy	I would like the class to be more student-focused or involved. (Journal Entry)
	Collaboratively composing by drawing from students' expertise and FoK/I	B: I know Shakira's Colombian and there are three colors of the Colombian flag. What colors should we pick? M: I think it's uh the color for us is .. a dark blue and red. B: Can we do the 'conversations I cannot understand'? Like say that in Spanish? Y'all will have to tell me really slow but … M: Yeah I can do that. Okay so you want to try to say 'conversations that I cannot understand'? B: Mhm
	Composing multimodal identity artifacts using translanguaging increased engagement	M: Okay so let me write it on a paper and I will show you. James (J): Okay Au: Que vas a decir, Marisa? *Translation: What are you going to say, Marisa?* M: Conversaciones que no puedo entender. *Translation: Conversations that I cannot understand.*
	Reflecting on student engagement with translanguaging through collaborative inquiry	B: I want to celebrate the line in Spanish (conversations I cannot understand). This was something James and I have celebrated since day 1 with our students, and this moment, them translating our English phrase to Spanish and excitedly including it, felt like the peak of the semester in my opinion. (Journal Entry)

"Learning Alongside" Students Toward a Humanizing (Virtual) Pedagogy	"Being responsive to the needs of our learners"	James and I agree that we are being responsive to the needs of our learners as much as we know them….
	Building a caring community of learners by developing relationships	I am engaging students with rapport, building relationships with students, and am going above and beyond in preparing for lessons …
	"Developing a strong relationship with students as people"	I think developing a strong relationship with students both as people and, well, students, helped tremendously (Teaching E-Portfolio)
	Learning alongside students (acompañamiento)	Y'all were just incredible and it was such a pleasure...to know you.to know more about you and to learn alongside you learn with you learn from you (Send-Off Video)
	Humanizing pedagogy	I'm so excited to see what the future holds for you all. You have so much potential as writers but even larger than that, as people.

Findings

Making Learning Culturally Sustaining by Incorporating Shared Funds of Identity and Lived Experiences

As evidenced by his teaching videos, journal entries, and self-evaluations, Brian intentionally designed culturally sustaining instruction by utilizing the collective FoK/I and lived experiences of both students and PSETs. For example, in his teaching video, Brian drew upon shared experiences from previous online interactions with his students and PSET partner (James/Mr. P) by preparing a personal narrative that he used to scaffold the collaborative writing of a found poem. During the virtual lesson, Brian read his personal narrative aloud to his students:

> On the first day I was so nervous. I'd never been "in" a classroom before, at least not as a student…Mr. P and I do our best, and are rewarded with the joy of working with smart, funny, and hard-working students…My favorite memories are conversations I cannot understand, playing and dancing to Shakira, learning about my students through objects and sounds.

Brian's sharing that he "was so nervous" and that he had "never been 'in' a classroom before" demonstrated his willingness to be vulnerable. Brian also inserted the perception of his students as "smart, funny, and hard-working," thus highlighting the asset-oriented qualities of his students.

Moreover, Brian mentioned his students' FoK/I and shared lived experiences from participating with them in the soundscapes project up to this point—e.g., "playing and dancing to Shakira, learning about my students through objects and sounds." In so doing, Brian named his students' assets in offering a testimonial to the "joy of working" with his students, reinforcing his care for them.

During Brian's facilitation of the collaborative found poem lesson on Google Docs, he decided to include the students' names as part of the composition. As he typed all three of the students' names, one of the students, Aurelia, exclaimed, "My gosh you know how to write my name! It is so exciting to me! Nobody knows that." This instance in which Brian intentionally wrote in his students' identities—their Spanish names—marked a particularly engaging moment in the lesson, as it immediately sparked conversations among the students about their middle names and names of extended family members. Another student, Marisa, even suggested that Brian include her middle name—Ana-Lucia (pseudonym)—in the poem to match her peers' names, since it also began with the letter 'A', giving the final version of the poem an alliterative quality, that Marisa described as "funny."

In a written self-evaluation of his online teaching practice on this found poetry lesson, Brian noticed how the simple act of knowing, pronouncing, and spelling Aurelia's name correctly was enough to spark her motivation to contribute:

> Aurelia's comment made me so so so happy, validated my value of knowing and using student names appropriately, and also made me sad at how people of diverse backgrounds often must reconcile with improper pronunciation or use a pseudonym in America.

Brian recognized the micro-aggressions that many CLD students have experienced upon entering school, beginning with a basic identity marker—a misspelled or mispronounced name. Brian's responsiveness to his students began before his first lesson—i.e., learning how to spell and pronounce their names.

(Re)positioning Students as Collaborative Expert Designers of Multimodal Identity Artifacts

Prior to teaching the lesson on found poetry, Brian wrote in his reflective teaching journal about his desire for "the class to be more student-focused and involved" by "giving more agency to the students." To address these goals and as demonstrated in his teaching video, Brian made several instructional decisions throughout the online lesson that increased student engagement and collaboration through the production of a multimodal identity artifact — i.e., the found poem. During his instruction, Brian leveraged students' FoK/I in ways that (re)positioned them as collaborative expert designers. Specifically, Brian led a collaboration in which he drew from students' interest in Colombian singer-songwriter Shakira. Moreover, Brian used the digital highlighting tool in Google Docs to multimodally guide students in representing the Colombian flag within the poem:

> Brian (B): I know Shakira's Colombian and there are three colors of the Colombian flag. What colors should we pick?
> Marisa (M): Blue
> B: Blue, gotcha. This blue? [moves cursor to dark blue shade] Lighter? Darker?
> M: I think it's uh the color for us is...dark blue and red.

Marisa's use of the word "us" when explaining the Colombian flag colors to Brian was particularly salient during this exchange because it emphasized the strong geographical connection she and her classmate had to Colombia as a shared identity marker.

In his personal narrative and during the lesson, Brian emphasized that one of his "favorite memories" with the students was engaging in "conversations I cannot understand," referring to moments during his previous lessons in which Marisa, Analisa, and Aurelia would converse with each other in Spanish — a language in which Brian was not fluent. Brian suggested that as part of the poem, that they translate this phrase into Spanish:

> Brian (B): Can we do the 'conversations I cannot understand'? Like say that in Spanish? Y'all will have to tell me really slow but…
> Marisa (M): Yeah I can do that. Okay so you want to try to say 'conversations that I cannot understand'?
> B: Mhm
> M: Okay so let me write it on a paper and I will show you.

At this moment, Marisa volunteered to take the lead in translating the phrase. As Marisa worked on composing the translation, Aurelia conversed with Marisa in Spanish to discuss what she should write:

> Aurelia (Au): Que vas a decir, Marisa? *Translation: What are you going to say, Marisa?*
> M: Conversaciones que no puedo entender. *Translation: Conversations that I cannot understand.*

After negotiating the translation, Marisa responded to Aurelia, "okay, gracias," and then held up to her iPad camera a piece of paper with the handwritten Spanish translation "Conversaciones que no puedo entender" for Brian to see. With the students' guidance, Brian proceeded to revise the poem:

> Brian (B): Oh, one sec. Marisa will you say something real fast?
> Marisa (M): conversaciones que no puedo entender.
> B: Uhh is that an 'E' or an 'R'
> M: An 'R'
> Aurelia (Au): That's it.
> B: Conversaciones que no puedo entender.
> M: [gestures to the camera 'okay' with index fingers and thumbs touching on both hands]
> B: ¡Perfecto!
> Au: ¡Perfecto!
> B: I love it. Love it, love it, love it.

Throughout this exchange, Brian purposefully used and permitted translanguaging as a way of positioning the students as expert composers.

(Re)positioning students as collaborative expert designers of meaningful multimodal identity artifacts promotes an instructional model that is both equitable and accessible (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; New London Group, 1996) and that can "successfully incorporate students' backgrounds by drawing in the 'students as experts'" (Lee & Walsh, 2017, p. 203). The students' responses to this moment were palpable. Brian said that the act of the students translating an English

phrase into Spanish "felt like the peak of the semester" because he and the students demonstrated rapid and intense turn-taking in the conversation. As Brian observed in a teaching reflection, "The collaborative found poem was a highlight for us and students, as they described 'loving it' and it as 'awesome,' and something Catherine asked us 'why students left with sparkling eyes, saying 'that was amazing.'" In other words, the emergent bilinguals who drew from their FoK/I to coauthor the found poem were highly engaged in this production of knowledge.

To put this pedagogical moment in perspective, we situate it against the backdrop of the academic performance of emergent bilinguals in U.S. schools:

> Academic identity and what it means to be recognized (or not recognized) as a well-performing student are significant, particularly to students who come from diverse linguistic backgrounds and who are often labeled as "at-risk" in the U.S. Historically, all English language learners are considered "at-risk" because languages other than English are not given value...viewed as a barrier. (Nuñez, 2021, p. 11)

Marisa, Aurelia, and Analisa each were recognized as the "well-performing student" in this exchange, and their knowledge of Spanish became an asset, not a "barrier."

"Learning Alongside" Students Toward a Humanizing (Virtual) Pedagogy

Acompañamiento involves building an inclusive learning community by honoring linguistic and cultural pluralism and by walking alongside students in the learning process. Brian did that intentionally and even virtually, exemplifying culturally sustaining teaching as symbiotic; students gained fluency in English as he learned Spanish, in acompañamiento. In a teaching journal he wrote prior to planning the found poem lesson, Brian acknowledged the amount of careful preparation and commitment that goes into designing a culturally sustaining pedagogy that would allow him to walk alongside his students during the field experience:

> I am engaging students with rapport, building relationships with students, and am going above and beyond in preparing for lessons...I feel that I have learned things from all of my students and vice versa, laying the building blocks of a working relationship and meaningful education.

While Brian's interactions in the "conversations I don't understand" segment may appear as improvisational, he mindfully created a lesson in which he could tap into students' FoK/I, triggering knowledge production about Spanish, Colombia's flag, and Shakira, for instance. In a final reflection, Brian continued to consider the value of building a virtual classroom community by "developing a strong relationship" with students as both learners and as human beings, thus emphasizing the practices of developing a humanizing pedagogy.

In his final send-off video, Brian emphasized to his students their "potential as writers, but even larger than that, just as people."

> We made, *you* made, the most of this very weird and very non-physical experience...I just wanted to say I'm really appreciative. This went, like the multimedia project, so so much better than what I had anticipated or expected and that's really down to y'all. Y'all were

> just incredible and it was such a pleasure to work with you and to know you, to know more about you, and to learn alongside you, learn with you, learn from you.

While we have no evidence to conclude whether or not Brian was familiar with the term "acompañamiento" prior to the field experience, his comments do point to the value he placed on the acompañamiento aspects of learning "alongside" and "with" his students, especially important to community-building in their virtual shared space.

Twenty-First Century Literacies

While student engagement was consistently demonstrated, Brian, Jennifer, Catherine, and Mary Beth also wanted tangible learning outcomes from this experience. What, finally, did students learn through this experience? We posed that question to Brian and to his students. Brian wrote in his teaching journal,

> I feel that students' horizon of writing expanded, particularly from the lens of multimedia. I remember on the first day students telling us they didn't like to write because they did not like using pens/pencils, and/or they were hard to use with a manicure. With this extension of what writing is, I feel that students either included themselves into that categorization now—even if it was drawing, music, or dancing…showing progress towards a conception of being a writer.

Brian heard the resistance to writing with pens and pencils and urged students to use 21st century tools to become 21st century composers. In so doing, the students showed their abilities to "develop proficiency and fluency with the tools of technology," a goal of the NCTE 21st Century Literacies Framework (NCTE, 2013). Brian valued his students' individual and collective array of literacies and leveraged them for multimodal communication and expression in the collaboratively constructed found poem. In this way, the students demonstrated their abilities to achieve another NCTE 21st Century goal—to "manage, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimodal texts," as they considered the design features of the composition they were creating, from the colors of the flag to the representation of Shakira. Participating in the collaborative found poetry experience, they were able to "manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information," in this case about language and culture, achieving yet another goal of the NCTE's 21st Century Literacies Framework.

Brian's students gave their insights about what they learned about themselves as writers and what they learned about writing at the end of the project. Analisa said, "We are all writers then in some form because we text and many other things in daily life. In class, we expressed through writing, drawing, and sound." Marisa said, "I feel that I know how to write, but I hesitate to say I'm a writer due to my perception of myself creatively. But, we can express ourselves through music (sounds, lyrics)." Aurelia said, "I am a writer. I know how and I like to do it (sometimes). Through images we also convey emotion." All three students moved to extended definitions of writing, from exclusively print-based to multimodalities. Brian was not the only person to consider "this very weird and very nonphysical experience" successful. Catherine followed up with the students almost half a year after the collaboration:

> [The students] all wanted to know if we were going to do something like *Soundscapes*

> again this year. They could see value in it at a time when not a lot of academic work seemed relevant. They didn't see the specific weekly tasks as "academic" even though they were reading, writing, and creating. They, of course, wish that the sessions had been in-person, but at a time when they couldn't be, having a project to look forward to was the next best thing. [Analisa], who really found her voice through the visual aspect of the project last year, has continued to create her own "Soundscape" pages. Beyond the craziness of "behind the scenes," seeds were planted and are flourishing.

Catherine's comments suggest that designing student "work" that highlighted multiple literacies and drew from students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds made the experience of schooling much more appealing to her class, even as those pedagogical moments occurred virtually, separated by much more than six feet of social distancing. Given that Analisa "has continued to create her own 'Soundscape' pages" and that the class has asked about doing a similar project in eighth grade suggests that those "behind the scenes' seeds" were not only "planted and are flourishing," but are also now bearing fruit.

When we started this project, we had no idea if an online collaboration would work, and we worried about the middle school students losing interest, given the pandemic and the online context. At the end of the project, Catherine recalled those sentiments and challenged their validity. She explained,

> At a time when student participation was at an all-time low, attendance was sketchy at best, and distancing, masking, and limited English just complicated the situation. From this was born an innovative opportunity for learning that was the embodiment of acompañamiento. What happened during the few weeks of this experience was nothing short of miraculous. The bonds the students created with their [PSETs] kept students logging into school at a time when they were completely disconnected otherwise. I saw students claim ownership of their learning, embrace the responsibility of being present, and become leaders of their craft. Perhaps what was most interesting was what happened behind the scenes. As the seeds were planted by the PSETs, students started collaborating with each other. They shared ideas about art, music, and writing. They compared cultural experiences. Most of all, they were present and communicating. In nine weeks, differences became assets. As per the mission of this experience, my students had become writers.

Catherine's testimonial about the power of this online partnership for middle school students and PSETs derived from her prior time with in-person university students in field experience. The engagement typically seen during in-person field experiences between her students and PSETs paled in comparison to this online collaboration.

Conclusion

Six months after the project, Catherine asked her students what they liked best about the Soundscapes project. She summarized their comments:

> Although they are working with face-to-face preservice teachers now, they preferred working in small groups and felt that the [PSETs] from last year got to know them better as

people. I do believe that the focused Soundscapes project gave them a long-term goal and sense of purpose…

Pairing small groups of students with small groups of PSETs cultivated a shared sense of purpose and belonging for both Jennifer's students and Catherine's students. In essence, the virtual learning opportunity itself became an authentic shared experience. Both groups went the extra mile to establish and sustain these relationships by walking alongside each other. The partnerships prevailed over the challenges of connecting virtually during a time of physical and social distancing.

Despite the logistical challenges and technical barriers involved in a project such as this, we were nonetheless impressed by the level of perseverance and empathy that our students demonstrated during the entire process. Brian's and his students' experiences in this project reinforce the value of asset-oriented pedagogies for cultivating student engagement and for enacting 21st Century Literacies. This study also illuminates the students' resilience in the face of the pandemic, remote learning, and participation in an educational system that often mistook their names. These students navigated 21st century literacy practices, not only in one, but in two languages, and they will be designing new social futures that encompass Shakira, digital media, soundscapes, and "Conversaciones que no puedo entender. Translation: Conversations that I cannot understand." Therein lies the hope.

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