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LESLLA aims to support adults who are learning to read and write for the first time in their lives in a new language. We promote, on a worldwide, multidisciplinary basis, the sharing of research findings, effective pedagogical practices, and information on policy.

LESLLA Symposium Proceedings

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Implementing Photovoice with LESLLA Learners to Stimulate L2 Development, Identity Expressions, and Social Justice

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ABSTRACT

This participatory exploratory action research study reports on the primary stages of my investigation to transform pedagogy and inquiry with Latinx Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults (LESLLA) learners. Based on a sociocultural perspective, I investigate how complementing the responsive instructional approach of the Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011) with the participatory justice-oriented research method of Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) can empower LESLLA participants to articulate transnational identities, confront linguistic and cultural gaps and power structures, and document their language learning practices through digital photographs or other visual media. The preliminary findings reveal that initiating and negotiating participant-led tasks and fusing formal and informal learning styles in a multilevel community-based setting not only helps develop an inclusive community of practice but advances multimodal literacy practices, reflection, and hands-on learning.

INTRODUCTION

Context and Teaching Puzzle

My interest in Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults (LESLLA) and culturally sustaining pedagogy and research grew out of my three-year volunteer ESL practice at Casa del Corazón (pseudonym, House of the Heart, hereafter CC), a community-based organization (CBO) in a suburban multiethnic southern US neighborhood. My students were migrants with low or no literacy in their first languages (L1s) who were learning a second language (L2) while developing print-literacy and numeracy skills, knowledge of content area, and classroom norms (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015). I was curious whether implementing the Mutually Adaptive Paradigm (MALP) (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011), a framework that systematically mixes (in)formal learning standards, and

Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997), a method that inspires informants to visually document their sociocultural realities, would promote inclusive learning and advocacy in my classroom.

When I started teaching at this CBO in summer 2014, this organization provided adult education, a basketball league, consular support, language interpretation, and legal referral services to around 300 members. The courses lacked fixed curriculum, assessment, instructional and technology resources, and adequate Internet connectivity. Given the open enrollment policy, students could take time off to work or to care for their families. About 10-15 English language learners (ELLs) from Mexico and Guatemala with collectivistic orientations (DeCapua, 2016; Marshall & DeCapua, 2009) and dissimilar alphabetic literacies joined the classes. About 50 percent of them spoke Spanish as their L1 and the others spoke Tzotzil, Tzeltal, or K'iche as their L1s. Indigenous students spoke Spanish as their L2. Most of them attended ESL courses for the first time; about eight of them continued their studies and became long-term participants in this study. Except for the two 14-year-old newcomers, they were between 26 to 56 years old and had dropped out from school to assist their families in agriculture and contribute to their income (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2007). Typically, male learners were without family commitments; females were raising their children as single parents in apartments shared with other immigrants. Speakers of indigenous L1s who had attained print-based literacy and content through Spanish language in elementary schools and had fled their rural communities to escape poverty and discrimination were likely to face increased challenges to develop English fluency. Students had resided in the US between 10 to 15 years, employed in low-wage occupations in construction, agriculture, and landscaping that require minimal L2 fluency, literacy, and numeracy skills. Many of them had acquired L2 fluency through marginal workplace interactions and by watching television in English language and few could communicate using basic vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing. Others could comprehend isolated everyday vocabulary but could not introduce themselves in English language. Those with low-intermediate L2 knowledge could answer questions related to everyday topics and fill out forms with some assistance. Despite cultural and linguistic barriers, they were determined to master linguistic skills to gain membership in communities of practice. Some aspired to get involved in their children's education, expand their work opportunities, and socialize with L2 speakers.

Administering standardized intake assessment was difficult because evaluations typically assume test-taking and other print-based literacy practices (Marshall & DeCapua, 2013) and are unavailable for CBOs without public funding. I assessed students' English language and literacy abilities through an interview grid and a writing prompt. Specifically, I encouraged responses in English and Spanish languages to questions such as What is your name?, What is the name of your home city?, and What language(s) did you use (e.g., in your home, at school) in your country?. Students were also asked to write about their goals, prior schooling, and time in the US. Those who struggled to fill out the grid given their unfamiliarity with asking clarifying questions, noting answers,

decoding words, and following instructions were assessed through an oral visual elicitation task guided by visuals, gestures, and translation.

To address these learners' educational needs, it was vital to explore the relatively scant research on this group and understand their complex educational and migration histories and ways of meaning-making, transnational identities, and linguistic and sociocultural capital. After probing my pedagogical misalignments and underlying assumptions about literacy, I enacted a participatory pedagogical-empirical framework grounded in sensory and linguistic stimuli, storytelling, and other creative practices (Geres, 2016; Zenkov & Harmon, 2009). In this article, I outline this model and conclude with implications for inclusive instruction, research, and advocacy.

Evaluating Teaching and Learning Tensions

While I felt fairly well-prepared to instruct college students, it was challenging to locate appropriate materials for LESLLA learners. I also struggled to teach in a classroom with one projector and whiteboard but no instructional materials or laptops. I observed that while some students conformed to class expectations by taking notes, interacting with partners, and completing activities and advanced their L2 development in a systematic manner, those less accustomed to formal learning practices displayed less predictable development patterns. Although the standardized textbook topics were relevant to the students' lives, they seemed disengaged in these tasks. For instance, to introduce the concept of "food" I asked students' preferred food choices, discussed relevant terminology, and engaged them in questions based on the MyPlate chart. Some ELLs would view the textbook pictures, listen to vocabulary explanations without taking notes, and seemed frustrated to complete Venn diagrams and KWL (What I know, What I want to know, and What I learned) graphic organizers. During vocabulary comprehension checks, those minimally engaged in these tasks had trouble remembering words, while others could partially recount vocabulary. I wondered why these activities resonated with few ELLs and why learning happened at a slower pace in my class at CC. Compared to the international ELLs I instructed at a university, perhaps the LESLLA group's apparent scanty involvement could relate to their unawareness of the formal education practices, social and emotional needs, the difficulty of materials, the discrepancy between their learning preferences and teaching style, or my unfamiliarity with this population (DeCapua, 2016). The students at CC reported that they regarded L2 communication somewhat divorced from their lives due to their ambiguous immigration status, interrupted schooling, extended work and domestic commitments, and insufficient access to affordable childcare, transportation, and social services. The thriving Mexican US diaspora and the Spanish language media that disregarded Indigenous linguistic and cultural capital continued to erode their L2 investment. Despite their discomfort related to practices that undervalued their community and cultural and linguistic capital, they were eager to master their L2 fluency. To better understand their goals, I designed the following questions to guide this inquiry: *In what ways do my students*

perceive the instructional tasks in the ESL classroom? Which activities do they enjoy and why? What might be the source of their (apparent lack of) interest in these activities?

Probing Further Perceptions

Based on my observations, their meaning-making practices appeared to be incompatible with the conventional print literacy-based instructional delivery scaffolded through pre-teaching vocabulary, using academic visual aids, and tapping into existing knowledge. Except for two intermediate-level ELLs who seemed to enjoy notetaking and worksheet-based activities, students mostly associated these tasks with tension, perceived that “Inglés es un idioma muy difícil” [English is a difficult language], and they “no like learn,” due to their evolving L2 proficiency and unfamiliarity with academic norms. I further probed these insights with inquiries related to their home literacies. For many students, knowledge was transmitted through oral traditions and real-world experience: they listened to folk stories and sayings and assisted in cooking, harvesting, planting crops, and other community events (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011). One of them recalled that his parents mastered agricultural practices and basic math skills by observing and working with more knowledgeable community members.

To foreground learning with “a highly functional, personal focus” (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010, p. 14), I wanted to harness learners’ oral storytelling competence and practical knowledge to challenge them to establish social bonds with L2 discourse communities. Instead of US-centric textbook materials, I selected age-appropriate short stories (e. g., Reiff, 2015) and picture books (e.g., Simply Cracking Good Stories: simplystories.org and Grass Roots Press: grassrootsbooks.net about immigrants, designed board games using toolsforeducators.com/boardgames (e.g., Introduction: drive.google.com/file/d/1iu_ZN53Ylkull01uU7viwZ-B98DxP0lk/view), and invited them to share their photographs on a particular topic (Lypka, 2019). Given the spotty internet connection, it was less feasible to stream online content and use online tools such as Rewordify (rewordify.com/helprewordifyingengine.php) to simplify text. Inspired by sociocultural approaches that conceptualize teaching and learning as social endeavors, I adopted learner-initiated discussions and reflections driven by photographs, videos, and objects that students brought to class. Apart from these visuals, I stressed reliance on peer help, gestures, Google Translate (translate.google.com), and other mobile translation applications to increase comprehension through multimodal input and reciprocal learning.

As LESLLA learners enter classrooms, there is a growing need to rethink instruction, research, and advocacy in relation to learners’ sociocultural practices and needs. Numerous scholars (Bigelow & Schwarz, 2010; DeCapua, 2016) argue that alternative worldviews, cultural differences, individual learning differences, and sociomaterial inequalities shape their socialization. If they perceive themselves as invisible in their new social spaces and do not understand the value of instruction, they continue to struggle to negotiate their membership in L2 discourse communities (Norton, 2013). Implementing culturally appropriate strategies, such as the MALP (Marshall & DeCapua, 2013; Marshall, 1998), the Intercultural Communication Framework (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011),

linguistic landscapes (Lypka, 2019), community filmmaking (Lypka, 2018), and Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) in the curriculum, can transcend linguistic, literacy, and cultural barriers and enable learners to (re)configure their identities to gain access to sociocultural capital.

EXAMINING PARTICIPATORY AND RESPONSIVE FRAMEWORKS

Across disciplines, participant-authored photographs, collages, quilts, digital stories, and other multimedia sources have been adopted to supplement interviews, surveys, and other forms of research data to evoke emic narratives and appreciate participants' talents and linguistic, cultural, and ethnic identities. Integrated in interviews, visuals have been used to bridge L2 fluency, jog the participants' memory, and enrich conversations (e.g., Geres, 2016; Lypka, 2019). Particularly, Photovoice, a "process by which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 369), has been adopted with (im)migrant-background participants to bring awareness to problems they wish to disrupt, foster participants' agency and identity, and augment learning (Geres, 2016; Green & Kloos, 2009).

Photovoice

Photovoice is an action-driven collaborative inquiry anchored in feminist theory and critical pedagogy (Harper, 2012) developed by Wang and Burris (1997) to enable minoritized groups to identify and document community concerns through photographs and increase awareness on these issues through public displays. This method entails training (1); action plan (2); data collection (3); group discussion, analysis, and reflection (4); and public presentations (5). Recognizing the potential of Photovoice to disrupt power relations by affirming voices habitually marginalized in education, scaffolding print-literacy and L2 communication skills, and capturing multiple perspectives, this approach has been employed as a teaching, advocacy, and research tool with college students (Cooper, Sorensen, & Yarbrough, 2017), displaced refugee youth (Green & Kloos, 2009), preservice teachers, and LESLLA learners (Lypka, 2018). Cooper et al. (2017) adopted Photovoice to encourage student involvement in public health issues and to collect data. Green and Kloos (2009) fused Photovoice with responsive teaching to elicit refugee youth's perspectives about education inequality in Uganda and augment advocacy through public exhibits and media reports. Despite challenges related to data collection, analysis, and technology, this method can enrich L2 development, inquiry, and advocacy by expanding authorial voice and honoring community assets. Furthermore, Photovoice can mobilize co-researchers to (de)construct the multiplicity of their realities in ways that interviews or surveys many not cover (Harper, 2012). Through this process, informants can identify community-relevant concerns and co-author digital stories, photographs, or other artistic works to galvanize the society around these issues.

MALP

The MALP curricular model (Figure 1) connects learners’ informal worldviews, collaborative learning, and oral knowledge transmission with abstract thinking, individual learning, and written mode to ease academic socialization (Marshall, 1998). Unlike the Western educational standards that tend to ignore students’ L1 literacy skills and typically assume the attainment of grade-level education, academic language, L2 fluency, and print literacy, MALP conceptualizes knowledge as an ongoing process that involves students’ identities, emotional and social needs, and sociocultural practices (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011).

Learning Resources	Alternative Educational Paradigm	Eurocentric Education Paradigm
Honor practices	Immediate practical relevance Relational	Decontextualized Future relevance Independent
Combine processes	Collective responsibility Group identity Oral communication	Personal accountability Individual identity Written communication
Tap into familiar content and language	Real-life examples Reciprocity	Abstract tasks Higher order thinking skills

Figure 1: MALP (Adapted from DeCapua & Marshall, 2010, 2011; Marshall & DeCapua, 2009, 2013)

Although incorporating experiential and inclusive instructional standards and students’ lifeworlds remains relatively underexplored with the LESLLA group, scholars (Cole & Elson, 2015; Marshall & DeCapua, 2013) concur that MALP-infused curriculum reframes meaning-making from an asset-based perspective within authentic learning spaces. MALP-based storytelling, feeling posters, and a mural helped participants in the study by Cole and Elson (2015) to configure themselves as experts. Marshall and DeCapua (2013) describe how the Crossing the Mekong River tapestry project empowered Hmong learners to conduct interviews, research documents, generate maps, and capture collective immigration narratives in textile art. These reports suggest that MALP-based learning can expand meaning-making through multiple media and communication modes, mindsets, and collective experiences.

Grounded in the community’s strengths, informal knowledge, and multiple means of representation, Photovoice can effectively complement the MALP framework. Drawing on asset-based sociocultural perspectives, I implemented sheltered instruction, photo elicitation conversations, and demonstrations to connect classroom practice to the outside world, affirm students’ cultural assets and individual learning differences, and collect data. For instance, I relied on learner-created familiar visuals and gestures to clarify concepts. I then gradually introduced the list of domain-specific vocabulary and annotations and asked for

volunteers to provide definitions and elicit conversations in English and Spanish. Except for a learner who had a mobile phone without a camera lens and one who preferred drawing and writing as opposed to taking pictures, most students relied on their camera phones to gather data. The activities grounded in students' linguistic and visual repertoires and everyday realities energized them to tackle community-relevant issues and engage in meaning-making in ways that print-literacy tasks did not. More importantly, over time, the less confident ELLs became more enthusiastic to express themselves and co-author texts, using peer interaction, gestures, and visuals. Comments such as "happy talk for family" and "I like speak and photos and Spanish" were common. Mostly, these statements indicated a preference toward participation in oral and visual communication, collaborative learning, and real-life encounters.

FORMULATING AN ALTERNATIVE PEDAGOGICAL-EMPIRICAL MODEL

Based on my observations and consultations with the CC staff, it became obvious that LESLLA learners' L2 development is less predictable than print-literate ELLs'. Some adults in my class had not yet internalized schema for decoding skills, logical sequence, and abstract frames of references in graphic organizers and other materials (DeCapua et al., 2007). This realization prompted me to integrate students' multimodal and translanguaging repertoires and lived experiences into the curriculum. Inspired by responsive initiatives that stress the relevance of integrating formal and pragmatic tasks (e.g., Marshall & DeCapua, 2013) and community-based visual methods (e.g., Geres, 2016), I reframed my guiding question: *In what ways would the MALP-infused Photovoice framework enable students to articulate their identities as learners and social actors?*

Methodology

Rather than approaching my practice as something to be "fixed", I employed a participatory exploratory action research, a modified exploratory action research design, to "explore, understand and improve" (Smith & Rebolledo, 2018, p. 20) teaching, learning, and advocacy with co-researcher students and CC staff, following these stages:

1. Identify challenges, perceptions, and sociocultural norms, and reflect on these observations,
2. Scrutinize this puzzle further eliciting co-researchers' perspectives through class discussions and interviews, relevant research, reflecting on these experiences, and generating questions,
3. Reframe questions as needed and develop an action plan,
4. Integrate intervention and data documentation, analyze the data, critically reflect on the outcomes, and revise the intervention as needed,
5. Promote change on individual and/or social level through public displays and reflection,
6. Conduct observations, reflect, revisit the intervention model, and implement modifications.

Upon approval from the Institutional Review Board at my university, I sought to better understand neighborhood issues and establish connection and trust by participating in local events. I recruited volunteer co-researchers from adult learners who have oral proficiency in English and attended more than one course at CC. I also obtained written and verbal consent and assured co-researchers of anonymity, cultural, linguistic, literacy, privacy, and dissemination concerns on an ongoing basis. Data collected involved my journal, fieldnotes, participant-authored visuals, captions, and semi-structured interviews were analyzed using exploratory thematic and descriptive analysis.

I implemented MALP and Photovoice to sustain meaningful communication (1), traverse literacy and linguistic barriers (2), advance a sense of belonging (3), and activate social awareness of the needs of learners (4). To meet these objectives, I formulated procedures centered on participants' strengths, visual and oral practices, and community voice through storytelling. Respondents visually documented their realities through photographs using their cell phones as well as maps, collages, drawings, and paintings and cultivated dialogue through visual elicitations, public displays, roundtables, and media reports. These visual elicitations served as a means of learning, data collection, and public dissemination.

Photovoice Adaptation. In adjusting this model in six classes between July 2014 and December 2016, I adhered to the Photovoice training considerations, activity sequencing, and logistical planning (e.g., Cooper et al., 2017). After an introduction to the basics of Photovoice, Western storytelling, photography, and ethics, I developed supplementary modifications regarding MALP integration and task development and continued to negotiate tensions on an ongoing basis.

To foster interconnectedness through shared goals, local guests were invited to discuss about neighborhood safety, immigration, education, and other community-relevant issues and understand students' perspectives on these concerns. To establish a trusting environment, I asked the CC director, a multilingual speaker, to serve as a cultural liaison. To recognize participants' voices and connect the gap between limited L2 proficiency and print literacy skills, I capitalized on digital technologies and divergent learning practices and invited participants to draw on verbal, semiotic, and mobile means.

Given that participants documented their realities outside the class, the visual documentation and data collection were reconfigured as individual tasks. The team component encompassed brainstorming potential topics, creating an action plan, discussing the visuals, and negotiating the public exhibit format. To encourage critical conversation and reflection, I minimized the relevance of aesthetics and technology in image editing and encouraged deviation from the SHOWeD questions ("What do you SEE here; what is really HAPPENING here; how does this relate to OUR lives; WHY does this situation exist; how can we become EMPOWERED by our new social understanding; what can we DO to address these issues?") (Harper, 2012, p. 202). To provide debriefing opportunities, I integrated oral reflections during class interactions and interviews. The sequencing of visual documentation and elicitation, themes, presentation format, and social engagement shifted based on interest and

attendance. For instance, students in one class pursued community mural and filmmaking and social media communication. Others hosted a painting exhibit, a fundraiser for toys, and a panel about neighborhood safety. In a less attended course, the Photovoice became a one-time assignment, followed by dialogue around coauthored visuals and public displays.

Photovoice Procedures. In each course, I employed a modified Photovoice following these steps (see Figure 2):

1. Orientation: I familiarized co-researchers with procedures and example projects.
2. Topic Exploration: Students generated ideas and themes and decided on the representation medium.
3. Documentation: They created thematically relevant artifacts and selected work samples for weekly discussions and oral reflections.
4. Elicitation: Using guiding questions, participants highlighted similarities, differences, challenges, and stories behind their images.
5. Call for Action: They selected artifacts for elective public displays, wrote captions to accompany these visuals, and interacted with attendees.
6. Interviews: Informants participated in optional interviews.

Infusing the MALP with Photovoice. To align instruction with co-researchers’ unique mindsets, sociocultural practices, resources, and experiences, I combined the MALP (Marshall, 1998) and Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) frameworks, following the strands in Figure 2:

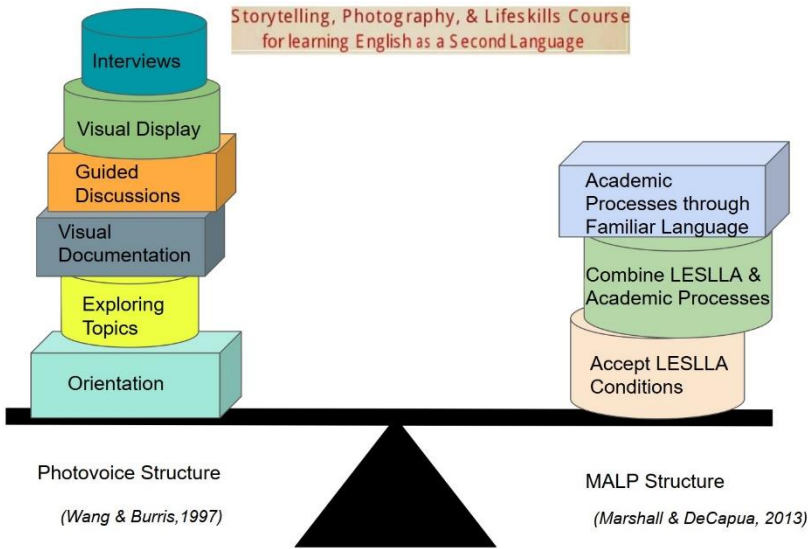


Figure 2: MALP-infused Photovoice

1. To connect curricula to reality, I took into account practical and relational ways of thinking, multimodal and multilingual input, and collaborative learning.

2. I blended elements from both worldviews, such as customary oral modes and cooperative learning with academic written communication and individual learning.
3. To reduce cognitive discord, I emphasized novel academic activities embedded in alternative worldviews and routine content and languages.

Next, I provide in-depth description and examples of the MALP and Photovoice integration.

Implementing the MALP-inspired Photovoice in the Curriculum. I drew on the MALP checklist (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011) (see Appendix A) to incorporate these stages:

1. To prioritize learning conditions for relevance and interconnectedness, students shared relevant objects and personal narratives. To achieve this goal, they reached a consensus on topics, visualized them using preferred modalities, and examined them through various repertoires.
2. To integrate the verbal transmission and joint responsibility with the written communication and individual accountability, learners presented artifacts individually and collaboratively documented their analysis in mindmaps (verbal, visual, and written transmission, collective responsibility).
3. To emphasize decontextualized practices using mundane language, relevant artifacts, and known content, I separated academic skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical tasks from unfamiliar skills and content. Then, I incorporated short mobile learning units to acquaint students with subject-verb-object language frames embedded in familiar themes and processes (i.e., joint narratives, guiding questions, and Photovoice steps) to ease comprehension.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To probe how this MALP-based Photovoice initiative would augment authentic L2 practice and inquiry (1), traverse literacy and linguistic barriers (2), endorse identity negotiation (3), and broaden public mindfulness (4), I designed a learner-focused curriculum. By appreciating the students' sociocultural realities and unique worldviews and fusing (in)formal learning paradigms, this model helped create an equitable space for learners to interact with one another and the world.

Boost L2 Development and Inquiry

One way to support real-life connection is to expose ELLs to meaningful interaction grounded in students' preferred learning modes — oral, visual, gestural, and tactile senses— and culturally relevant artifacts and lifeworlds. Given the repetitive nature of interaction moves, familiar content, and the peer- and web translation scaffolding, everyone had a chance to build content, academic, literacy, critical thinking and problem-solving skills along with data collection and analysis. For instance, students brought tortillas, mortar (*metate*),

and tortilla press (*tortillera*), and photographs to illustrate the tortilla making process. They also shared their visuals and stories in English and Spanish to bring awareness to issues relevant to them. Tasks based on collective practices and reciprocal interests seemed to build confidence and promote communication while enabling them to empathize with one another and participate in storytelling.

Through the longitudinal data collection and previously established trust, they cultivated spur-of-the-moment narratives related to complex, sometimes emotional stories related to parents leaving children in Mexico, crossing the border, feeling isolated, and overcoming barriers through religion, family, and community support. These stories challenged me to reflect, practice self-care, and reframe practice, research, and advocacy with participants.

Despite some reluctance to take on co-researcher roles, students remained invested in English learning through Photovoice and many of them amplified their voices by conveying their realities to representatives from the media and volunteering at neighborhood events. These opportunities honored learners' unique perspectives and transnational literacy practices and stimulated L2 development in ways that appealed to students. Thus, they might have inspired a sense of accomplishment on individual and social levels.

Bridge Literacies and Linguistic Skills

In contrast to teacher-controlled and language-oriented instructional strategies that often presume print literacy abilities and fail to acknowledge ELLs' sociocultural literacies, interests, and access to resources (DeCapua, 2016), the MALP-infused Photovoice model positions learners as knowledge recipients and expands authentic learning through multilingual and multimodal discourse. By blending preferred learning processes, multiple repertoires, and student-led activities, this framework challenged deficit discourses and encouraged sociocultural literacy development and intercultural interactions in a supportive environment. For instance, to bring awareness to question formation, I used high frequency words in English, such as the verb "to be" and "photo" and cognates (e.g., "fotografía" in Spanish and "photograph" in English) to build questions, such as *What is in the photo?* Learners first negotiated the meaning of vocabulary through peer help and Spanish language translations and then dictated these concepts to me in English so that I could write them on a whiteboard. Finally, each copied a term from the whiteboard on a large poster displayed in the class to enable instant reference. Over time, these concepts became accessible through familiar language, translanguaging, and visual representation.

Overall, in line with the MALP, blending immediate experience, relationships, and oral communication assisted with academic, linguistic, and civic socialization. Following the visual elicitation tasks, I noted the relevant vocabulary and sentences uttered by the students on the board (speaking), read them aloud (listening), invited them to read along (reading/collective responsibility), and displayed relevant content on chart paper or scroll for review. They copied the vocabulary in their notebooks (writing/individual responsibility), referred to their notes to write captions for their visuals, and

displayed their texts to raise social awareness. Drawing on this familiar knowledge, students engaged in discussions driven by their visuals with their peers and community members. Although the discussions, visual representations, and linguistic recycling expanded multimodal and multilingual literacy development, investment in print-literacy tasks remained an ongoing struggle for learners with emergent print-literacy skills.

Endorse Identity Expressions



added 5 new photos.

16 hrs ·

Bueno desde que tenia 14 años yegue en este pais y eh aprendido algo a través del tiempo y circunstancias. Y estoy pintando algo con otros compañeros de clase. y creo que ya me esta gustando la pintura. Y estoy pintando mi propia vida y bueno no eh terminado de pintar voy a agregar otros visitas dentro del cuadro. Pero la cosa es nunca te rindas por algo que tu kieras escribe tu libro de la vida. (((((((So this is my life)))))). Y saludita esta noche I feel good. ..

[See Translation](#)



Like Comment Share

Figure 3: Juan's Facebook posting.

The participatory responsive framework can successfully leverage inclusion and strengthen L2 investment by legitimizing learners' agency, authorial voice,

intersecting identities, diverse repertoires, and the transnational discourse in which they engage to navigate L2 discourse communities (Norton, 2013). Students who served as language brokers or buddies (DeCapua, Smathers, & Tang, 2009) could amplify their practice, share their knowledge, and gain recognition for their support. Although peer mentoring should be monitored to prevent the monopolization of interactions by more proficient ELLs, over time, this strategy provided opportunities for students to reproduce prefabricated language chunks and establish themselves as competent speakers. However, increased speaking confidence in the classroom did not necessarily enhance the ability to use English for sociopragmatic reasons (i.e., communicate at the doctor's office, workplace, or school) perhaps because students' multilingual capital was not always acknowledged in those spaces (Lypka, 2019; Norton, 2013). Such strategies illustrate the inextricable learning-identity-agency blending, a central tenet of the MALP and Photovoice, and align with the learning-by-doing models familiar to LESLLA learners.

The deployment of technology, translanguaging, and arts enabled participants to link their life trajectories to the course and curate hybrid identities to establish legitimacy with communities of practice. Juan's (all names are pseudonyms) social media posting (Figure 3) about his immigration journey and the written text "esta noche I feel good" illustrates this idea. In discussing his work, Juan aimed to convey his overcoming challenges by practicing religion. His statement reveals his ability to carefully mesh non-linguistic communication modes such as art and digital visuals, dress, posture, and accessories to affirm literacy practices and particularities of his identities with diverse audiences. Thus, the use of multimodality and translanguaging as inclusive strategies can foster inclusion and the articulation of positions toward communities of practice, yet in other social contexts, these practices might stigmatize and position Juan as a less competent L2 speaker.

Envision Personal and Social Change

Through translingual and multimodal practices, this MALP-infused Photovoice model created new opportunities for participants to configure themselves as role models with transcultural connections. In partnership with artists, preservice teachers, family members, and volunteers, they could express their connection to their home, Spanish-, and L2 communities, negotiate their status in a global space, diversify their experience, and bring awareness on migration and educational inequalities and the educational programs at CC. In turn, residents, CBO leaders, journalists, and law enforcement and consular officials could empathize with them on relevant social issues. The end-of-semester culminating digital story and painting exhibit increased students' sense of accomplishment and confidence as well as the visibility of CC. Domingo stated that presenting his work to the public qualified him to "feel happy about this and proud. This is about me and my life." Similarly, Rosalina echoed that "Talking with pictures better than talking with words. I speak better this way. And my son is proud." The visual elicitations and reflections successfully mobilized them to collaboratively address relevant issues while overcoming the

cultural and linguistic incongruity. The excerpt from a volunteer ESL instructor at CC illustrates that collaborating on this MALP-based Photovoice project enabled her to shift her pedagogy from the “practice for learners” to “practice with learners.” Therefore, this process not only supported community building but empowered co-researchers to take on positive identities and volunteers to honor learners’ strengths.

Nevertheless, the changes captured in participants’ narratives would translate differently to their lives. Except for an ELL who started her own business selling cultural artifacts from Mexico and another two who advanced their careers in construction and landscaping and became CC board members, few reported long-term changes and increased L2-speaking confidence. Even though the co-researchers exhibited increased L2 investment by identifying issues, posing questions and hypotheses, collecting and analyzing data, their engagement has diminished at the end of the course given their work and domestic commitments.

Limitations

These preliminary results should be interpreted in light of my evolving LESLLA instructor and researcher identities and various constraints. Even though the open-enrollment policy, sporadic access to technology, resources, and volunteer support, as well as students’ family, work, and commuting needs impeded participant engagement, through observations and discussions, I have gained insights to co-researchers’ unique perspectives, implemented instructional and research alterations, and reflected on procedural challenges. Although I was not able to collect data from more participants to provide an in-depth discussion on their L2 socialization patterns, the ethnographic nature of this project, extended data collection, and the community’s assistance enriched my understanding of participants’ insights and strengths.

Despite my efforts to establish trust and mutual engagement, some students remained reluctant to express their experiences, perhaps because of their unfamiliarity with the research process and my non-indigenous researcher-practitioner status. Finally, given the limited follow-up opportunities with participants and residents, the interpretation of personal and social transformation and the long-term benefits of this initiative remain speculative. Integrating debriefing and inviting public interaction during data collection would have increased the significance of this report.

CONCLUSION

Adopting community-centered approaches in the curriculum can help instructors problematize Eurocentric educational orientation and tap into students’ practical mindsets, transnational ties, and semiotic resources to transcend geographical, linguistic, and national boundaries. The exploratory findings suggest that blending the MALP processes with visual documentation, elicitation, storytelling, public dialogue, and reflection can expand the meaning-making potential, cultural self-awareness, belonging, and the development of

multiliteracies competence. However, initiation of transformative practices should implicate ongoing identity negotiations among the students, instructor, and community members. Such joint explorations are even more critical in low-resource LESLLA classrooms where instructors may lack competence with the students' linguistic and sociocultural wealths.

In contrast to standardized pedagogical-empirical procedures that tend to marginalize LESLLA students, meshing languages, texts, cultural symbols, and digital, geographical, and imaginary spaces can liberate learners to take risks, reconfigure themselves as resourceful agents, and take on meaningful L2 practices (1), connect (digital) literacy and (non)linguistic skills (2), and articulate transnational identities (3) and social rapport (4). Overall, the MALP-based Photovoice model encouraged the synchronous development of linguistic, content, academic, technology, research, civic, and life skills, which are difficult to attain in courses that might not be appropriate and accessible to LESLLA students. Drawing on their primary oral communication mode and experiential learning through observation, modeling, social relationships, and visual resources they selected germane topics, applied their knowledge, and engendered action-driven conversation. As part of this initiative, they negotiated their identities with artists who organized painting and photography workshops, police officers who offered tips on safety, and COB leaders who discussed leadership and employment opportunities. My extensive engagement with LESLLA learners empowered me to contextualize instruction within digitally enhanced authentic relationships, learner identities, everyday experiences, and needs and continue to jointly mold pedagogy, research, and advocacy within an inclusive community of practice.

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APPENDIX A: MALP TEACHER PLANNING CHECKLIST

Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm – MALP Teacher Planning Checklist
A. Accept Conditions for Learning
A1. I am making this lesson/project immediately relevant to my students' lives. How?
A2. I am helping students develop and maintain interconnectedness with each other and the instructor. How?
B. Combine Processes for Learning
B1. I am incorporating both shared responsibility and individual accountability. How?
B2. I am scaffolding the written word through oral interaction. How?
C. Focus on New Activities for Learning
C1. I am focusing on tasks requiring academic ways of thinking. How?
C2. I am making these tasks accessible with familiar language and content. How?

Source: © DeCapua, A. & Marshall, H.W. (2011). *Breaking new ground: Teaching students with limited or interrupted formal education in U.S. secondary schools*, p. 68.