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A Community Art Exploration of Bicultural Identity and Acculturation with Latino Adolescents

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A Community Art Exploration of Bicultural Identity and Acculturation with Latino Adolescents

by

Stephanie Moreno

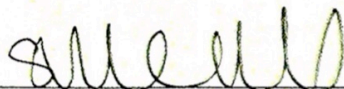
A research paper presented to the

FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
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In partial fulfillment of the
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MASTER OF ARTS
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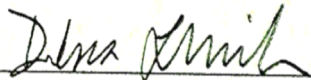
Signature Page

Author's Signature

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie Moreno', is written over a horizontal line. The background of the signature area is a light, textured yellow.

Stephanie Moreno

Research Advisor's Signature:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Debra Linesch', is written over a horizontal line. The background of the signature area is a light, textured yellow.

Debra Linesch, Ph.D., LMFT, ATR-BC

Abstract

This paper is an exploration among low-income Latino adolescents, which seeks to explore the experiences and the stressors from immigration, acculturation, and bicultural identity through art. The participants selected from Dolores Mission Parish in Boyle Heights California, created a personal art piece and a collaborative installation. The art explores and expresses their personal journeys with acculturation and bicultural identity. Multiple sources of data were collected including daily observation, group discussions, individual artwork, collaborative installation, and photographs taken during the workshop; to gain an understanding of what acculturation means to adolescents, how this process effects their lives, their experiences with biculturalism, and the effects of a community arts based workshop. The data-collecting workshop was held on two Saturdays. This study uses qualitative methods; data analysis shows a positive impact in a community setting in the areas of self-confidence, self-expression, self-concept, community building, and processing hardships related to acculturation and bicultural identity. Research also shows the use of art as a creative expression is a positive outlet that allows adolescents to freely express and reflect on their experiences leading to increased self-confidence, and pride.

Disclaimer

Permission has been given to use photographs and art presented in this study. The names of the participants have been changed to protect confidentiality and have been chosen carefully to reflect names of origin.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to adolescents and young adults who struggle with the acculturation process, and those who balance two or more worlds and learn to love their bicultural identity.

I dedicate this to all artists, art therapists, community leaders, teachers, mentors, and social activists who are passionate about working with less fortunate communities. Continue to inspire, motivate, encourage, and create.

Acknowledgements

I give thanks to my mentor Debra Linesch for her support, guidance, and motivation. I admire your wisdom, passion, and strength.

I am thankful for Dolores Mission Parish and the community of Boyle Heights. I thank my amazing cohort, family, and loved ones for their unconditional love and support during this beautifully challenged journey.

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Introduction

The Study Topic

The purpose of this study is to explore art therapy with immigrants and Latino Americans. Specifically I want to explore how the use of art therapy in a community arts workshop can be a positive experience for youths in externalizing their experiences as immigrants or Latino Americans focusing on acculturative stress, bicultural stress, and identity.

Significance of the Study

There is a lack of research in the use of art therapy and community based art workshops with immigrants and Latino Americans, more specifically adolescents. As a Latina myself I struggled as a youth in balancing two cultural identities. I felt confused and ashamed for being “brown”. It was something I didn’t talk about, and continued to struggle with as a young adult. My personal experiences have set a foundation for my passion with this topic and population.

Research on this topic will benefit the field of art therapy and educate art therapists. I anticipate finding that most youths will enjoy the use of the art, and hope that the art will allow the youths to externalize their struggle or immigration story in a less vulnerable way. The group cohesion may provide support for the youth helping confidence to flourish as youths engage in a community cluster and create a collaborative art installation.

Background of the Study Topic

The research on community arts art therapy and immigrant youth seems to agree that creative expression and art intervention enhance self-esteem, confidence, as well as decrease emotional problems. The literature discusses how community experiences execute pride to the youth's community and enthusiasm for future projects (Adejumo, 2010). Community based art workshops in low-income diverse communities focusing on culture can surface issues of loss and allow participants to learn about the hardships of immigration. Participants can be challenged to rethink stereotypes and have new understandings (Madyaningrum & Sonn, 2010). Similarly Wright, John, Alaggia, and Sheel (2006) say that group dynamics help the youth establish positive peer interactions, independence and become more sociable. Linesch, Aceves, Quezada, Trochez and Zuniga (2012) found that families benefited from art therapy through universality, awareness, and acceptance of their suppressed experiences with immigration. Additionally Rosseau and Heusch (2011) reported that the use of art therapy with immigrant and refugee children helped them accept the past, find balance of two cultures, and envision a future.

Literature Review

Introduction

Latinos represent the largest and fastest growing minority group in the United States (Cardona et al., 2012). It is hypothesized that acculturative stress experienced by immigrants and Latinos is linked to family outcomes. Martinez, McClure, Eddy, & Wilson (2011), state that acculturative stress is not only experienced by immigrants but also second and third generation youth. This stress can be overwhelming and confusing for adults and youths who feel disconnected from their host culture.

Latino youths are at risk for negative behavioral and mental health outcomes, including depression, aggression, drug and alcohol abuse, violence, school dropouts and incarceration (Martinez, McClure, Eddy, & Wilson, 2011). According to Rousseau and Heusch (2000), it is hypothesized that a lack of roots and cultural heritage for first or second generation immigrants as well as child refugees may create feelings of confusion, uncertainty, identity issues, low self esteem and they can be vulnerable.

Many Latino families are of low socioeconomic statuses and cannot access mental health services regarding these stresses and negative outcomes. Lack of insurance, transportation, and lack of mental health providers in minority communities are some challenges that families face (Gudino, Lau, & Hough, 2008).

This is why low-income minority communities value art workshops, art therapy groups, and outreach programs. The meaningfulness of community participation has the ability to foster individual and social awareness (Madyaningrun and sonn, 2011). It is found that community-based arts programs for youths and parents in low-income areas have positive outcomes, such as improved social skills, task completion, participation, and art skill. It is also reported that there is

an increase in youths' confidence, self-esteem, conflict resolution and independence.

Furthermore emotional problems decrease such as depression and anxiety (Wright, John, Alaggia, & Sheel, 2006).

This literature review looks at the acculturative stressors of immigrants as well as second and third generation Latinos, and the benefits of community-based art and community art therapy. The literature discusses immigration and community arts in two different areas. First the literature explores the psychology of immigration and community arts. Next the literature discusses art therapy with immigrants and the community.

Psychology Literature

Undocumented individuals, youths and families find themselves in new circumstances; these circumstances can result in huge amounts of stress on identity and family outcomes. The following literature discusses acculturative stress challenges, adaptation, identity issues, school challenges, and mental health issues that immigrants and Latinos encounter.

Immigration

Simpkins, Delgado, Price, Quach, and Starbuck (2012) report Latinos and Latino families are the fastest and largest growing population in the United States. They are also at one of the highest risks for stress. Mexicans are the largest Latino cultural group, accounting for the largest number of immigrants in the U.S., almost 13 million people.

Pew Hispanic Center states that undocumented immigrant's experience higher levels of stress, and make up one fifth of the nations population in the U.S (Arbona et al., 2010). Latino immigrants experience three immigration related challenges; separation from family, traditional

challenges, and language difficulty (Arbona et al., 2010). These challenges create stress and put pressure on Latino families, especially children. Martinez, McClure, and Wilson (2011) state the youth have an increased risk for negative behaviors and mental health outcomes; alcohol, drug use, depression, aggressive behavior, poor school attendance and incarceration etc. In addition to the stressors listed above Ceballos and Bratton (2012) state that first generation Latino children are twice as likely to be poor than second generation and third generation Latinos which can contribute to negative behaviors.

There is a great deal of pressure that parents and youth in two cultures experience. An added stress is differential acculturation between parents and youth. Martinez et al. (2011) says parents most often identify with Latino cultural values, while the youth adapts and relates to the dominant culture. Rousseau and Heusch (2000) say some parents that have migrated want their children to become culturally assimilated quickly, and do not pass on their cultural heritage. Some parents may want to completely separate from their past, and may fear that the past will be a burden to their children, a lack of knowledge from indigenous roots and homeland culture can cause identity issues and feelings of uncertainty.

Yedidia (2005) says that although children and adolescents usually adapt to the new culture compared to their parents, they encounter identity problems that stem from immigration. Immigration usually weakens the family, as well as social supports that are involved in identity formation. Immigrant adolescents usually get less help from their parents when developing their self identity. Parents are not familiar with the culture and lack experiences growing up in a new country, this makes it difficult for adolescents to look up to their parents and view them as role models or sources for support and advice. Parents tend to value their ethnic cultures and not conform to the new ways; this naturally creates a gap between their children. Yedidia (2005) also

states that a lack of social ties and separation from their homeland culture create confusion which affects adulthood and the adult identity. With influence from peers, teachers, and the media, intergenerational conflict can occur within the family system. In addition to the stress factors listed above, Ainslie (2011) says issues related to race, religion, social class as well as other cultural themes that play into the psychodynamics of immigration with individuals and families.

The National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics reported that Latino children are at a higher risk for academic failure, delinquency, and violence in comparison to non Latino youth (Ceballos & Bratton, 2010). Although having access to public education, undocumented youth face legal restrictions and economic barriers to higher education and the workforce, making it hard to get out of poverty and low economic statuses (Abrego & Gonzales, 2010).

Mental health professionals are challenged to respond to an emerging diverse population. The minority youth that suffer from mental health problems are less likely to receive mental health treatment than white children. Families and parents experience barriers in seeking treatment and services. Some families do not have insurance, transportation, and fear language barriers. Mental health services are not accessible in all low socioeconomic areas, where majority of Latinos live. Gudino, Lau, and Hough (2008) state a lack in mental health services in minority communities, extended hours, outreach programs, low fees, and bilingual clinicians impact the accessibility for Latino families and parents.

Community Arts

As stated by Adams and Goldbard, Madyaningrum, and Sonn (2011) “community art is a form of cultural practice in which art is produced and used by local people within their

communities as an instrument for social change” (p. 358). Haedicke and Nellhaus (2001) say that community arts are often linked to ability for people to reignite their local, traditional cultural heritage which had often been lost due to the dominating culture. The following literature closely reviews four different community arts based studies and their outcomes with adults and youth.

Adejumo (2010) reports on The Children of the Future (COTF), an arts program located in a low-income housing project. COTF’s philosophy of facilitating change through art and cultural activities stems from the theoretical orientation of service learning. As cited in Adejumo (2010), Scales et al. (2006) describes the goal of service learning as involving participants in actively providing their community with needed services. The goals of COTF were to expose participants to art activities that would compliment their art experiences in school, provide a safe environment for positive learning and social activities after school and out of school, provide positive interactions with role models in the community, encourage community service, and provide an opportunity to learn vocational skills as a means toward a productive life. These goals were designed to provide adolescents with solutions related to low-income problems such as teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, low self-esteem, etc.

The participants from low income families ranging from ages 5 to 16 are learning while being actively involved, thus the community and participants are both benefiting from the service learning model. The programs activities included studio art production, community service, and participation in local cultural events. The program instructors are sought to facilitate social awareness and activism, self-empowerment. The open dialogue approach and structured reflection enhance thoughtfulness and self-expression among the youth. The method of this study was participant-observation, active participant.

Concluding information was gathered by informal telephone interviews. Adejumo (2010) says the community service experiences enhanced self-esteem, pride in their community, and enthusiasm for future projects. COTF should serve as a motivation for public school art teachers, minority students in public schools whose cultures are barely represented or excluded for the curriculum can benefit from a school art program modeled after COTF.

Madyaningrum and Sonn (2011) explore the meaning of participation in a community arts project from the viewpoint of the participants; specifically the meaning and implications of how people view themselves as well as other participants. By exploring the meaning of participation in this project, Madyaningrum and Sonn (2011) want to investigate how involvement in a community arts project may promote positive psychological and social outcomes since there is a gap in research regarding positive developmental outcomes and community arts experiences (Madyaningrum & Sonn, 2011).

Ten participants, eight women and two men were interviewed about their experiences in The Seeming project. The Seeming project was a historical play about indigenous people and conflict over a gold reef. The play involved 125 performers, most of which who were members of the community, and several artists; local and professional. The participants ranging between 30 and 60 years old were interviewed face-to-face with a semi-structured interview. The interview questions entailed four themes that were conceptualized in The Seeming project; history, identity, culture, and belonging (Madyaningrum & Sonn 2011).

Madyaningrun and Sonn (2011) found that the value and meaning of participating in the project was actually being with other people in the community, and interacting with different social groups. The interviewees expressed that they valued the projects ability to bring together a diverse group of people. This togetherness and cohesion had a strong social message.

Madyaningrun and Sonn (2011) report three themes emerged from the interviews; providing a space and voice for the marginalized, create social connection, and challenging stereotypes.

For some participants The Seeming project brought to surface issues of culture and loss, highlighted culture, history, and social groups which are underrepresented. Participants learned about indigenous people and their hardships. Madyaningrum and Sonn (2011) report that participants were able to make connections with people in their community they had never had contact with before. Social connections were made with individuals and social/ethnic groups who had been isolated from each other. Age groups facilitated participants to explore and listen to different stories about the community from a diverse social group. It created an opportunity for conversation and bridges for individuals who had never communicated before. These bridges and social connections allowed the participants to have new understandings about other cultures and groups. It allowed them to challenge their old thoughts and stereotypes and have new understandings about others. Rethinking prejudices and stereotypes is a big challenge and breaking them down was a benefit to the participants in this community arts program. This challenged them to not only think about the way they viewed others but also how they saw themselves (Madyaningrum & Sonn 2011).

Community arts can stimulate positive experiences and changes that bring confidence and self-esteem, regardless of the art being created or executed. Participants were exposed to different cultures and ethnic groups; this had a ability to foster individual and social awareness about groups living in the same community. Madyaningrum and Sonn (2011) state, “the meaningfulness of community participation for those who are involved in it is related to its ability to foster individual and social awareness about different groups within the broader community” (p. 368).

Wright, John, Alaggia, and Sheel (2006) say little is known about relationship between arts programs and effectiveness in preventing juvenile problems, youth development, factors of youth development, participation and perceptions of the parents and the youth, and behavior and emotional problems. The National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project (NAYDP) was created to determine if community based arts programs can engage youth from low socioeconomic status through a nine month after school program. The NAYDP focused on theater but also visual arts. The art curricula consisted of skill development and social goals. The twice a week 90 minute sessions focused on exploring self expression, having fun, and developing a positive group dynamic utilizing performance skill. The youth worked within a group or a team, a scenario many have not experienced before successfully.

The NAYDP was also assessing the youth's artistic progress and social skill development. It's purpose was to discover if the programs had positive results with emotional problems, and explored perspectives from the youth and parents who participated, 182 youths with different ethnic backgrounds participated in NAYDP, ages 9-15 and came from rural low-income areas.

The NAYDP was a three-year longitude study, quasi-experimental research design. A multi-method evaluation strategy included many factors. Thirty qualitative interviews were executed after the program with 15 youths and 15 parents. Wright et al. (2006) found a similar decrease in conduct problems for both the control group and NAYDP. The NAYDP participants showed a significant decrease in emotional problems than the control group; the youth were happier, less isolated, and more sociable.

The youth reported that the activities in the program increased their confidence and self-esteem, parents noticed this also. Teamwork was also reported by youths and parents. Parents

reported that teamwork resulted in their child's ability to decision make, negotiate and compromise. Group dynamics helped with positive peer interactions, improved interpersonal skills, independence, improved conflict resolution, problem solving skills, and creativity were all reported as benefits to this arts program.

Perrin (2004) a professional practitioner in schools and arts education discusses the importance of art and arts education for the growth of adolescents. Perrin (2004), says "Students who have been given the opportunity for early engagement in activities such as drawing, playing an instrument, singing, and learning to read music often perform better across the board and feel more positively about themselves and school" page 21. Although this is still debated and has not been proved, Perrin (2004) says there is a strong consistent correlation.

When students reach middle school, art activities are no longer involved as much as they used to. By the time kids reach high school some schools only require one "elective" credit, art and arts programs are not a focal point in our school system. Perrin (2004) believes that the arts support a healthy psychological growth for adolescents and should be incorporated into the curriculum.

Perrin (2004) states adolescents tend to push their families away as they begin to attempt to establish independence. It is important for adolescents to have positive relationships with other adults, such as their teachers. Perrin (2004) describes that young artists view their teachers as role models and a person of support. She discusses the young artists view on self-identity.

A young artists identifies as a writer, dancer, painter, etc. not as a teenager. This identity improves confidence and social skills as they connect to other artists. Young artists tend to be more motivated, focused, and work well with others. By engaging with art groups and community art programs you are exposed to different cultures, gender practices, and economic

status. This exposure culturally educates the youth and is a humbling experience. Participating in a community serves a purpose for the youth, they find a place in their community and find meaning in their participation and or contribution (Perrin, 2004). Art brings a strong sense of idealism to adolescents. They believe in their ideas, reflect on their work and feelings, and themselves in a healthy manner.

Perrin (2004) says that the study of the arts provides the youth with a healthy outlet for risk taking. They take risks by getting up on stage, showing their work in an art show, residing their poetry in public, etc. Young artists understand that these risks will help them grow. Finally Perrin (2004), says that art develops imagination and vision, adolescents experiment and create with an open mind and heart; youth in art education develop a rich imagination that is complex and active which leaves them motivated and driven.

Perrin (2004) says “the arts are one powerful way to engage drive in developing young adults. The study of the arts supports in adolescents the notion that work and life should have meaning, should engage others, and should satisfy the deepest desires of the soul and of the culture” (p. 24).

Art Therapy Literature

Being that Latinos are the fastest growing population in the Unites States and usually live in underserved mental health communities, it is important for mental health professionals including art therapists to understand the challenges and experiences of immigrant families. The following literature closely reviews three studies incorporating art therapy with Latino families and immigrant children.

Immigration

Linesch, Aceves, Quezada, Trochez, and Zuniga (2012), explored the experiences of eight Latino families utilizing art therapy in a case study utilizing grounded theory. These families have migrated to Southern California from El Salvador and Mexico, and contained a mother and father. This study wanted to demonstrate three things; how art therapy can meaningfully examine a family's acculturation, contribute to the politics involved with mental health and immigrants, and develop research approaches for the study of imagery and the field of art therapy (Linesch, Aceves, Quezada, Trochez, & Zuniga 2012).

The eight families had to have an immigration experience, at least one adolescent, and committed to a three Saturday meetings. Three focus groups were facilitated with Spanish-speaking art therapists; a men's group, women's group, and an adolescent group. Structured art interviews which included two family drawings (verbal and non-verbal) were held with each family after every Saturday meeting.

Linesch et al. (2012) report themes that emerged for all three groups. Men's themes consisted of stress and emotional difficulty, religion, coping mechanisms and ambivalence. The women's group identified pressure of expectations to strengthen family unity, religion, loyalty, loss, and depression. The adolescent group emerged themes of an integrated bicultural identity, and a strong connection to their culture of origin.

Linesch et al. (2012) found the focus groups provided the individuals and families an opportunity to find universality, awareness and acceptance of their suppressed experiences with immigration. The enthusiasm the participants had while creating and discussing their art suggest that the use of art to assist in expressing feelings is valuable. Linesch et al. (2012) reported that

the conflicting experience of being an immigrant was more intense with the older generation. The youths were able to envision and successfully integrate their dual identities.

A study by Rousseau and Heusch (2000) entitled *The Trip* was designed for a multiethnic classroom using drawing and storytelling to help immigrants and refugee children reconcile their two cultural worlds, express their feelings of loss, and share their coping strategies. The use of storytelling has been associated with developing a meaning as well as identity (Rousseau & Heusch, 2000).

Participants consisted of 25 third graders, both first and second generation immigrants as well as refugees from different origins. A teacher and art therapist met with the children once a week for six weeks. The children were asked to create a character that was going to take a trip to another country. The character would experience four stages; life in the homeland, the journey, arrival in the new land, and the characters future. After drawing each stage the children would write and tell a story. They were encouraged to express verbally and non-verbally; 14 drawings and stories were analyzed using Lowenfeld and Brittain's developmental stages. Use of line, space and color were analyzed. Ability to following instructions, detail of elements and connections to the themes given were also considered.

Rousseau and Heusch (2000) found there was a convergence or divergence in the verbal and non-verbal expression. A convergence or union between the two was more predominate with children who seem to be having a positive experience with immigration. A divergence occurred with the children who possibly may have experienced conflict or trauma through migration process. They also found an association between the past and future; there was a connection between "life in the homeland" and "the future" drawings.

A theme of family, friends, and myths emerged through the artwork. Family representing stability of attachments, friends consist of the host country and myths of the homeland provide a framework for experience and emotion. Rosseau and Heusch (2011) describe the family to be a protecting agent and can also make children more vulnerable to stress and trauma. Friends make it easier for children to assimilate in the new country and a lack of friends creates isolation. Myths from the motherland help children to have meaning to migration, they provide structure since they have been passed down for generations. Throughout the themes of family, friends, and myths; immigrant and refugee children can accept the past, find balance of two cultures, and envision a future. Rosseau and Heusch (2011) encourage school programs to incorporate the elements of family, friends, and myths to help children make sense of their migration process.

The follow up study to the previous study described above consisted of creative expression workshops using myth to tell stories and facilitate drawing activities for immigrant and refugee children. Rousseau, Lacroix, Bagilishya, and Heusch (2003) state that creative expression has been considered a good way to work immigrant children in helping them explore meaning and identity in the past couple of decades. Working with myth can help children distance from the transition and express creatively through metaphor (Rousseau, Lacroix, Bagilishya & Heusch, 2003).

This program was designed for children in “Welcoming Classes” to bridge spaces between home and school, past and present. The children were of low socioeconomic status and migrated from countries where violence was present. A total of 19 participants involved from two elementary schools were ages 6 and 7, and 21 participants were ages 11 and 12. Two activities were introduced; Working with Myths (four sessions), and Memory Patchwork (three sessions). The goal of Working with Myths was to get the children to assimilate past experiences, talk

about adaptation strategies, link past and future, and appreciate minority cultures through drawing and talking. Memory Patchwork created an environment where children and their parents can talk about their past, bridge any gaps between home and school, and appreciate the child's different culture through drawing, storytelling and mural collaboration.

Thirty-six files including art and stories were analyzed similar to how the art was analyzed in *The Trip*. Rousseau et al. (2011) say the results suggest the newly arrived immigrant children and refugees respond well to mythic references from the home country and culture and various cultures in the class to express their experiences. Symbolic and mythic references help children represent the cultural gap between home and school, past and present (Rousseau et al., 2011) Working myths provided a structured metaphor for exploring immigration experiences. The gap that was filled between culture and experiences from two countries allowed the children to change the way they perceived themselves and presented themselves to the group, they were more confident about their cultural identities. This study concluded that these workshops impact immigrant and refugee children's self esteem, academic performance and well-being. These workshops assist in bridging the gap between two different worlds and cultures.

Community Arts

There is a range of art therapy literature involving community arts, from social activism, arts activism, disaster relief, depression, disability and many other mental health issues. In working with the community and the multicultural demographics of the United States today art therapist must be culturally sensitive. All cultural issues must be taken into consideration such as, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, political views, demographics etc. Art therapy can extend beyond the traditional client therapist relationship and into social action by

attending to public issues (Rossetto, 2012). Elmendorf (2010) believes that art therapists have a lot to learn from community artists. The follow literature reviews three art therapy studies in a community setting.

Slayton (2012) discusses art therapy, community, and social change. The goal of social action in art therapy is to give the group a meaningful experience that mirrors community experiences some participants may have lacked. Slayton (2012) sees a direct link between art making among groups who are in need and building health in communities. Art therapy can empower clients to address the conditions that inhibit health in their community. Slayton (2012) states “as an artist and art therapist, I posit that being creative leads to a better quality of life, and enriches the human experience” (p. 184). She sees social action, art, and therapy as a system; everyone’s potential for creativity is the sustaining force of the system.

Slayton’s (2012) study consisted of a group of adolescent boys ranging from ages 13-17. The group consisted of African Americans, Caucasian, Hispanic, and Native American. The boys had suffered from some sort of social trauma, conflict, or abuse; they were from low-income at-risk abusive environments, some of which were from state-monitored guardianship. All members had at least one parent who suffered from substance use that resulted in losing the parent either by incarceration, death, disappearance, or termination of parental rights.

The group would construct a mixed construction media city over nine weeks. Each group member would build an element of the city to be incorporate all together.

Slayton (2012) concluded that the group became a space for respect and healthy interactions. This community was creating a community with the art providing containment. Slayton (2012) observed that he use of construction media assisted in building goals, connections, support, and commitment thought the process of interacting with the media itself.

Rosetto (2012) also discusses the use of art therapy and social action. Rosetto (2012) held a hermeneutic phenomenological study in order to discover how art therapy, community mural making, and art therapy as a social action embody particular worldviews and philosophies of the self in order to locate possible cultural values and worldviews that influence both traditional and community-based practices. This study consisted of eight community adult artists, four females and four males whom were interviewed. All artists ranging from 30 to 60 years old had facilitated a community art mural making project with the youth in urban areas of New York. None of the participants had been involved with the same projects and were contacted through referral.

The semi-structured interview included questions inquiring about their experiences with the project. They were asked to describe the process of the mural, as well as feelings, and interactions with the youth. They were also asked describe the final product and the purpose of the project. These questions would open up to a natural dialogue.

Rosetto (2012) found that the philosophies of the self within the worldviews of mural making and social action art therapy is more interconnected compared to traditional art therapy which is more isolated. Rosetto (2012) describes community mural making to be closer to a social action art therapy practice rather than traditional art therapy practices. The power of art and community allow participants to explore cultural systems and create new cultural values. Rosetto (2012) reports that participants described how making art affected present problems, attitudes and situations, personally and socially.

Rosetto (2012) concludes with, "Engagement in cultural practices such as community mural making and art therapy can help youths, artists, therapists, and other community members

alike to deepen their relationships to society while simultaneously practicing social action” (p. 25).

Block, Harris and Laing (2005) have a different approach to an art therapy program with at risk youth. The Open Studio Project (OSP) a non-profit organization with a model of social action began with the intention to make art and service their clients. “Art and Action” is an outreach program under the OSP program. The program is a year round after school and summer programs that caters to diverse needs of the at-risk youth participating. Art and Action exposes at-risk youth to the artistic process, which is served as a release for feelings and self-expression. The programs would last nine to twelve weeks using the OSP process which includes intention, sense of ownership or action statement, art making, witness-writing and sharing, no commenting and no forced participation.

The art therapists of OSP believe that they need to engage in their own creative process with their clients in order to be fully effective when using art in therapy. The OSP refers to this as artist-in-residence model, which was originated by Deborah Gadiel. Throughout her career in clinical practice, not as an art therapist Gadiel felt that the most useful asset was to offer her own artistic energy to her clients. This model according to Block et al. (2012) benefits the client by gaining the faith they need to try things for themselves. By observing the facilitator, clients can explore, and problem solve using art and writing. The facilitator or art therapist model risk taking and confidence during the creative process.

The OSP art therapists also state that client and therapist working creatively together has important repercussions of the therapist-client relationship. The client is able to view the therapist as a human being with struggles and not an authority figure. Another important element to the OSP model is that neither therapist nor group members may comment or critique others

artwork. Group members share their art at the end of each session but no one ever comments. The OSP model believes that a person's creative process will give them insight at their own pace; comments can interfere with the client's perceptions, insights, and take the client away from being present. Art therapist do not comment as well, it is believed that comment will hurt the therapeutic process for the clients self transformation (Block, Harris & Laing, 2005). No commenting gives clients the responsibility to finding their own meaning of their art. The artist-in-residence model and no comments model are different from most art classes and most importantly art therapy practices.

The OSP method is reported by Block et al. (2005) to be effective with at-risk youth who come from violent environments, trouble connecting and expressing emotions, and youths in transition.

In conclusion the literature shows that there seems to be direct positive outcomes with immigrants, Latinos; families and youth, and the use of art therapy and community arts. Community arts based art therapy, as well as art therapy with immigrants and Latinos create a safe space for families, and youths. Youths are able to learn about others, connect with others and grow as individuals. Parents have reported to see a difference with youths involved with such programs and benefit if they participate as well.

Community arts based art therapy literature involved social action and social change; this seems to be a trend when involving the community. More research needs to be done in art therapy and the community in order for professionals to understand the importance of community involvement and extending beyond the traditional client therapist relationship.

Art therapy with immigrants and Latinos in a school setting or recruited from the community seem to be more structured, interventions focus directly to the process of their struggles or experiences. The data collected is carefully analyzed and discussed.

There are many different avenues involving immigration, community art, and art therapy. As art is healing and art therapy allows for processing, more research is needed. More research involving families and youth, and art therapy, as well as community art-based art therapy is important in order for professionals to understand the use of art and its healing benefits.

Research Approach

For this research paper I use a case study approach. A case study design was chosen because it is the preferred strategy when asking “how” or “why” questions (Yin, 1984). The case study design allows research to be holistic in explaining a wide range of meaningful characteristics of real-life events, including idiosyncratic complexity (Hakim, 1987).

A qualitative research paradigm was chosen because it allows for an exploration of phenomena and their meaning with the natural settings in which they occur (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative format allows participants to respond to one another’s artwork and engage in a nuanced, in depth discussion of what was presented by participants individually and as a group (Asawa, 2009).

Methods

Definition of Terms

Artist-in-residence model

Originated by Deborah Gadiel (1992) during her masters in social work. In this model the client and facilitator work alongside each other as fellow artists from the start (Block, Harris, & Lang, 2005).

Social action

Attends to public issues. Kaplan (2005) states that social action strives to make outer societal change (Rossetto, 2012).

Social action art therapy

Kaplan (2007) says social action art therapy is a way that art therapists respond to the needs of social troubles providing services to perpetrators, victims, or people who work with members of these groups (Slayton, 2012).

The therapist must openly acknowledge how dominant cultural worldviews may be embedded in his or her practices and philosophy in order to practice social action art therapy (Hocoy, 2007; Kapitan et al., 2011).

Service learning

A method of instruction which involves learners to actively provide their community with needed services while simultaneously facilitating their educational development (Adejumo, 2010).

Community art

A cultural practice in which art is produced and used by local people within their communities as an instrument for social change (Madyaningrum, & Sonn, 2011).

Acculturation

Multidimensional construct that describes phenomena resulting from the continuous contact between groups of individuals with different cultural backgrounds and leading to subsequent changes in the cultural patterns of one or both groups (Martinez, McClure, Eddy, & Wilson, 2011).

Acculturative stress

Refers to the psychological and physical reactions of individuals to unique aspects of the acculturation process including challenges associated with culture acquisition as well as with discrimination, and poverty (Martinez, McClure, Eddy, & Wilson, 2011).

Bicultural stress

The perception of stress due to everyday life stressors that result from pressure to adopt the majority culture as well as pressure to adopt minority cultures for youth in multiethnic environments. Examples include discrimination, negative stereotypes, intergenerational acculturation gaps, and pressure to speak multiple languages (Gudino, Lau, & Hough, 2008).

Intention

A personal action “I” statement. Cultivates a sense of ownership and responsibility for action (Block, Harris, & Lang, 2011).

Design of Study

This is a case study exploring community arts art therapy with Latino American adolescent immigrants. Youths engage with the community art group exploring their struggles and lived experiences. They illustrate their story or experience using a record and its jacket. I show samples of work I have created illustrating my struggles as a Mexican American. The metaphor behind the record is discussed engaging the youth. The record has an inside and an outside (jacket); there are two sides to the record, just like there are two sides to being Latino American. They manipulate the record and jacket however they like. Once records have been created an installation is discussed among group members. Group members collaborate and share ideas on how they would like to install the records for a final discussion.

During this research project I consider the following questions: Has this experience increased your self-confidence? Did you enjoy working with other youth from your community? What did you learn from the other group members? What surfaced for you as an immigrant or Latino American during this creative process? What did you learn about yourself? Did you enjoy utilizing records for art? Why?

Sampling

Three youths from Dolores Mission Parish in Boyle Heights meet for two consecutive Saturdays (1/19/2013 & 1/26/2013). The workshop meets for four hours with a one-hour lunch break. Priest of Dolores Mission Parish helped identify and recruit the participating youths.

Gathering of data

Gathering of data consisted of observation, group discussions, daily notes, and photographs of the art process, and art products created by the youth. Group members engaged in informal discussions and self-reflections during the workshop.

Analysis of data

Themes emerged from the art and group discussions. These themes and data collected in a qualitative manner were used to inform the following research questions.

1. In what ways has this experience increased the participants' self-confidence?
2. Did the participants demonstrate positive feelings about working with other youths from their community?
3. What did the participants learn from the other group members?
4. What surfaced for the participants as immigrants or Latino Americans during this creative process?
5. What did the participants learn about themselves?
6. How did the participants respond to the specific art intervention of repurposing vinyl records? Why?

Results

Presentation of Data

Three participants were present on Saturday January 26, 2013 for the workshop at Dolores Mission School and Parish. They consisted of two female's ages 19 and 21, and one male age 13.

Betty is a 21-year-old female born and raised in Los Angeles, California. She grew up in the projects of Boyle Heights. Both of her parents migrated from Guanajuato Mexico. Betty attended public school during her childhood and now attends East LA College. Betty is the youngest of three sisters; she is also the only sibling who was born in the United States. She experiences pressure from her family to succeed, due to the fact that she is "American". Being American has set higher expectations for her to succeed than her sisters. She often feels overwhelmed by her father's expectations. Betty has experienced discrimination in her country of origin from her family as well as locals. She has been discriminated against for her Spanish and English and gets made fun of by her family.

Jessie is a 19-year-old female, also born in Los Angeles and raised in Boyle Heights. Her parents migrated to the United States from Mexico as well. Jessie attended Dolores Mission School and was awarded a scholarship in Vermont where she attended college. This is where she remembers her first discriminating experiences. It was the first time in her life where she did not fit in as a "Latina". Jessie eventually left Vermont and moved back to California because she was having a hard time.

Abel, the only male in the workshop is 13-years old. He is the oldest of three boys that were all born in the states. Abel is Betty's nephew, his mother (Betty's older sister) attended a separate workshop for mothers and women.

Day One

Betty arrived a few minutes early and began talking to my co-facilitator and myself right away. She expressed that she really wants to attend Loyola Marymount University and will be applying in the near future. She was opening up to us about some of her college experiences and her loyalty to her community. She appeared to have a bubbly personality. She smiled a lot and stated she was an “open book”.

Once all attendees were present I introduced myself and my co-facilitator, I explained the purpose of the workshop and provided a description of what we would be doing. I informed the group I was a graduate student and the workshop was directly correlated to my graduate study research project. I spoke a little about my research topic and my passion for working with community and Latino Americans. I then asked them to engage in a warm up. I asked them to create a name tag using any of the art materials provided. The nametag was to be decorated however they would like to describe their personalities, likes, dislikes, etc. This warm up would allow the participants to get familiar with some art materials and explore what media was available. The directive invited them to tell something about themselves and would allow us to all get to know each other a little better.

Betty and Jessie began looking through the art materials. They appeared to be into the directive as they worked quietly, patiently and even asked for more time. Betty chose a white 8 1/2 x 11 piece of paper. She pasted a smaller piece of yellow construction paper on top of the white paper. She used four different Loteria images in her nametag; La Rosa, El Musico, El Nopal, and La Estrella. Betty also used a few different pieces of patterned paper, as well as some found objects; buttons, bottle caps, shells, and ribbon (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Betty's Name Tag

Betty stated that she liked the patterned paper because it reminded her of her Mexican culture and of her “roots”. El Musico represented music, Betty shared that music is a very big part of her and her family’s lives. Musical talent and instrument playing have been passed down for generations in her family. Her family spends hours of quality time listening to music, playing music, and singing. El Nopal reminded Betty of her families home in Mexico, she described it as a dry climate, with lots of cactus plants and flowers. La Rosa represents her love for flowers, she stated she likes how flowers are “always changing”. La Estrella represents her love for the sky. Betty shared she loves looking up at the sky and admires its beauty. She enjoys stargazing, and watching sunsets. Wendy did not complete her name tag, we informed her that she could work on it and finish it while she worked on her other projects.

Jessie used an array of patterned paper on her name tag. Like Betty she also said it reminded her of her Mexican heritage. The patterns she chose were colorful with indigenous prints and patterns. Jessie incorporated shells, feathers, buttons, and sequins into her name tag. She added a pink ribbon to complete her name tag and put her name in the middle using small stickers (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Jessie's Name Tag

As Jessie presented her name tag she described herself as a “happy person”. She once again stated she was an “open book”, and talked a lot about herself and how she enjoyed life. She described the embellishments she chose represented her happy bubbly self. The pink ribbon represented her girly side. Jessie used one other word on her name tag besides her name. The

word “thrive” was pasted on the left hand bottom corner. She said it represented her wanting to thrive in her life, specifically in college.

Abel was the only participant who did not engage in the warm up right away. He sat in his seat quietly reading his book, eventually he began playing with some materials. He started by marking a symbol on a piece of green felt, he then began doodling on the newspaper that was covering the work table. Eventually he began cutting letters from newspaper and pasted them on a piece of butcher paper. He did not cut the butcher paper neatly; he tore a rectangular piece from the large roll of paper. We informed Abel that we had more newspapers, magazines and collage images for him to look through. He slowly walked over and began looking through the collage images. He spent a lot of time looking through the images and cutting individual letters. His name tag illustrated “in the end by Linkin Park”, and “star light by muse”. He pasted on the green piece of felt he began with, and scribbled his first and last name to the top right corner (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Abel's Name Tag

Abel did not say much about his name tag besides that the collaging were songs he likes from two different bands. He said the image drawn on the green felt was from a video game.

I lead the group in a casual discussion about acculturation and bicultural identity after the name tags were processed. I began talking about the balance between cultures and the pressures that may exist when identifying as a Latino American. I shared a couple personal experiences and struggles that I have gone through as Mexican American woman living in Los Angeles. I expressed my struggles with not feeling Mexican enough nor American enough. As I elaborated on the idea of a bicultural identity and feeling caught between two worlds Jessie and Betty nodded their heads and smirked. I then engaged the group and invited them to share how they felt about the topic as well as direct experiences. As we got more into depth of the topic, the

rapport between my co-facilitator, the participants, and myself appeared to be becoming stronger. A safe therapeutic energy was forming.

Jessie voluntarily began stating the first time she had ever felt out of place was when she moved to Vermont. She expressed she felt “out of place” and discriminated against for being Latina. It was her first time leaving her Boyle Heights community. She was surrounded by white Americans, which made her feel out of place. She felt different from everyone, she had never questioned her physical features or appearance, and it was a new feeling for her. Jessie comes from a Latino community and culture, it is all she knew before moving to Vermont. She was now a minority in a dominantly white American environment. Eventually she said she made friends but it was an interesting process for her. At first Jessie said she felt uncomfortable at school because she felt out of place and people weren’t very welcoming. She said most people on campus “just wanted to drink and do drugs” and she wasn’t into that. She started confiding in her professors and other adults on campus. Jessie began socializing more with teachers and began seeing a therapist because she was having a hard time with the transition. Jessie shared that one day a couple Latin girls come over to her and asked her why she was hanging with the white people. Jessie responded she hadn’t felt welcome and was hanging out with whomever was nice to her. After that incidence she started hanging with the Latino crowd and ended up making some good friends.

Betty shared next about not feeling Mexican enough or American enough. Betty told a story about visiting Mexico and trying to exchange money at a local money exchange center. The clerk would not wait on her and she wondered why as she saw other patrons being served. This happened to her a couple times in the same money exchange center. Betty thinks it is either because of her Spanish, or because they know she is American. Either way she felt discriminated

against. Betty feels a bit self-conscious about her Spanish since her cousins make fun of her accent. Her cousins make her feel bad about herself, causing her to feel that she isn't "Mexican enough".

Betty also talked about the pressure that is put on her from her family, especially her father. Being that she is American born there is a very high expectation for her to succeed. She is looked upon to have an advantage above everyone, although she does not feel that way. Betty expressed she feels stressed because she is studying and working very hard. She feels as if her family is never pleased to. Her sisters also put pressure on her to succeed. She is constantly reminded that she has the advantage in the family because she is American.

Abel sat quietly with his head down majority of the time occasionally looking up. He appeared to be bored and possibly not paying attention. He began engaging with art materials on the table from the name tag exercise. I asked him if he was able to relate with any of the shared experiences or the topic of acculturation. He responded he wasn't sure what we were talking about and could not relate. Betty (Abel's aunt) slightly shook her head. The co-facilitator and I tried to engage him in the topic by explaining again what acculturation meant. Abel said he could not relate and had never experienced anything related to the topic.

After the group discussion the next directive was introduced. I introduced the media of vinyl records and its metaphors related to bicultural identity, dual culture, and identifying as Latino American. The vinyl records having two sides, a front and back, some records come in boxed sets, which incorporate many layers and sleeve protectors. The participants confidently identified with the metaphor and its relation to the topic of our discussions.

I informed the group they were to utilize as many records as they wanted. They needed to use at least one record to "tell a story", or "share a story" about their experiences and struggles of

being Latino American, and what their bicultural identity has manifested thus far. The group was encouraged to think about the vinyl record metaphor as they worked. They were allowed to alter the records however they liked and utilize any of the art materials provided. As they began working with the records and engaging with the new project, co-facilitator and I observed, offered support, helped along the way, and engaged in casual conversation relating to the topic.

Jessie began working right away. She asked if she could use a boxed record set and began collecting art materials. Jessie did not look through the record set covers or designs, she chose randomly. Jessie begins by gluing her name tag to the front of the boxed set (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Jessie's Beginning Stages

Betty asked for the directive to be repeated and sat in silence for a while collecting her thoughts and brainstorming ideas. Shortly after she started sifting through the art buffet. She

collected different art materials before she began working with a record. The record remained in its natural state as she worked with other materials (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Betty's Chosen Record

Abel played with collage materials, paint, and glue. He did not ask questions or engage with the other group members.

As the workshop progressed I verbally engaged casually with the group but did not want to distract them from their art making process.

My co-facilitator and I informed the group our lunch break would be approaching shortly. Jessie and Betty asked if we had to take a full hour lunch. We gave them the option of taking a shorter lunch or bringing lunch up to the workroom. We decided collectively that taking a short lunch would work best. During lunch we all sat together in the cafeteria, the girls continued to

share stories about their community and their involvement with Dolores Mission. They both said they feel connected to their community and are passionate about being involved with local projects, events, and workshops. They also shared stories from their past and present experiences in school, as well as family dynamics. Abel sat quietly and ate his lunch, his two younger brothers who were in the day care group ran up to him a few times. Abel told his brothers to stop running around and walked them over to their mom. After everyone ate their lunch the girls asked if we could go back to the workroom.

Betty and Jessie quickly resumed working. Abel began creating a sculpture with found object materials. The sculpture consists of bottle caps, wire, and a wheel (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Abel's Work Area (Cropped Image)

No one really talked to each other during the art making process. One person would ask the other to pass a material, but there were no conversations unless prompted by facilitators. They worked quietly and appeared to be really into their creative projects.

Betty painted her vinyl record blue (Figure 7). She wanted to represent the sky, the co-facilitator assisted Betty in mixing colors to get the color Betty desired.



Figure 7: Betty's Blue Record

Betty worked on consisting of yarn, paper, bottle caps, Loteria cards, and found objects. She worked on many tassels throughout the day. She spent time creating origami pieces from paper and altering pieces of broken jewelry (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Betty's Tassels (Cropped Image)

Jessie continued to work on her boxed set, using paper, Loteria cards, and found objects
 Jessie worked on interior layers.



Figure 9: Jessie's Inner Layer

Jessie began collaging on her first record with cards, natural rocks, beads, bottle caps, and words (Figure 10). Jessie asked for help with the red beads, we provided support without directing her work.

Abel became a distraction toward the end of the day, he discovered the power drill and continued to drill a block of wood over and over. Co-facilitator began supervising Abel for safety reasons. Betty (Abel's aunt) rolled her eyes and seemed to be irritated with him, but continued to work and be present with her artwork. Abel was redirected to work on his art piece and was encouraged to use a vinyl record since he hadn't utilized one yet. Eventually he picked up a record, broke it in half and painted it yellow (Figure 11). Abel described his work as "Pacman".

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Figure 11: Abel's Pacman

The day went by very quickly and soon we were out of time. I had informed the group throughout the day of how much time remained. Before the day ended we processed the day as well as the art making process. The group said they were enjoying the workshop thus far and happy with how their work was progressing. The co-facilitator and myself asked the participants to continue to think about acculturation and bicultural identity theme during the next week, and bring any new experiences to the next session. We also encouraged them to bring in any art materials or pictures that they would like to use in their projects.

Day Two

Only Jessie and Betty returned to the second day of the workshop. Betty arrived on time with a smile on her face, Jessie arrived a couple minutes late and slightly out of breath. Co-facilitator and myself checked in with the girls and asked about their week. We asked if anything came up relating to the topic we have been discussing. Jessie shared she had been thinking of her friends and missing Vermont. She expressed that this workshop had got her thinking about her life in Vermont. Although it was a struggle for her in the beginning she ended up really enjoying her time there. Jessie shared some fun stories with us as she laughed. She expressed that she really missed her friends and her freedom to explore near by cities. Betty said she had a busy week as she had been working on a project for school in which she had to “reflect” and create a “life book”. I prompted Betty to say more and asked if she saw a connection between her school project and her work in the workshop, she said no. After check in the girls continued to work on their individual pieces.

Jessie brought in pictures of her friends from Vermont and incorporated them in a second record. She said this record was going to be about self-discoveries, friends, and traveling (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Jessie's Second Record

Betty continued to work on her mobile. She taped individual tassels on and added a glitter layer to the blue record. Betty created a red flower out of tissue paper and attached it to the middle of the record (Figure 13).



Figure 13: Betty's Mobile

As lunch quickly approached the girls worked hard to wrap up their individual projects in order to begin the installation after lunch. Before lunch I asked the girls to talk about their individual projects.

Jessie made a “book” using a boxed record set. Her name tag was pasted on the front cover, she said this is the “introduction”. She used patterned paper, Loteria cards, words, and stickers to cover the inner right side of the book. She described this as “the next layer people see

when they get to know me”. Words like “sassy”, “laughter”, “sister”, and “silly” were used to describe her personality. She said the Loteria cards she used were things she liked.

Jessie stated the next layer to her book was the first record she created. This dove even deeper into her personality and revealed vulnerabilities. It illustrated her hardships and experiences transitioning away from home and into a new place. Her experiences included discrimination and loneliness. The rocks and broken pieces of pottery illustrated her struggles. Words such as “Journey”, “life”, “tough”, “you”, “be yourself”, “courage”, etc. covered the record.

Jessie shared that this workshop allowed her to reflect on her struggles and really appreciate the good that came from it. She had a deeper appreciation for the good memories and cherished her time with friends and their journeys. Jessie felt that she grew as a person because she overcame her pain and obstacles. She experienced independence, freedom from her family ties, new friendships, and bonds with professors. Her struggle and hardships allowed her to be more appreciative of the happy moments and memories. The next record and layer illustrated the “good that came from the bad”. Photographs of her friends covered the record. Words like “smile”, “happy”, and “good times” were incorporated into the collage (Figures 14, 15, 16, & 17).



Figure 14: Front of Jessie's Book



Figure 15: Second Layer of Jessie's Book



Figure 16: Third Layer of Jessie's Book



Figure 17: Fourth Layer of Jessie's Book

Betty completed her mobile, individual tassels hung from the record base. She described the tassels as different experiences in her life and pieces of herself. The bottom portion of the mobile record was blue with glitter over layer. She described this as the sky filled with sparkling stars. The sky brings her peace and is a soothing element for her. The red rose made of tissue paper placed in the center illustrates growth. Betty said she loves flowers and their beauty; she admires how they constantly grow, change, and eventually die, like people. The top portion of the mobile record illustrated colored lines with pastels and glued bottle caps to it. A pink bow made of tissue was placed in the center. She described the top portion as “movement”. Things are always moving and changing. She describes having struggled with unexpected changes in her life as well as embraced some changes (Figures 18, 19 & 20).



Figure 18: Betty's Mobile (Topside)



Figure 19: Betty's Mobile (Underside)



Figure 20: Betty's Mobile (Sideview)

During lunch the girls began brainstorming ideas for their collaborative installation. The co-facilitator and myself supported their ideas and provided information to where they would be setting up their installation.

After lunch the girls began working on the installation. They decided that they wanted to mobile to hang over Jessie's book, I suggested that they create a mock installation before they set up the final piece. They began arranging pieces together and came up with a set up that they both were happy with (Figure 21).



Figure 21: Brainstorming Installation

Then the girls, co-facilitator and myself assisted with creating a design to suspend the mobile over Jessie's book. First the girls began creating a stand out of wood and construction materials. We all began working together trying figure out how to create a stand that would hold

the weight of the mobile and not cover Jessie's book. We tried altering different structures using wood and a crate base (Figures 22 & 23).

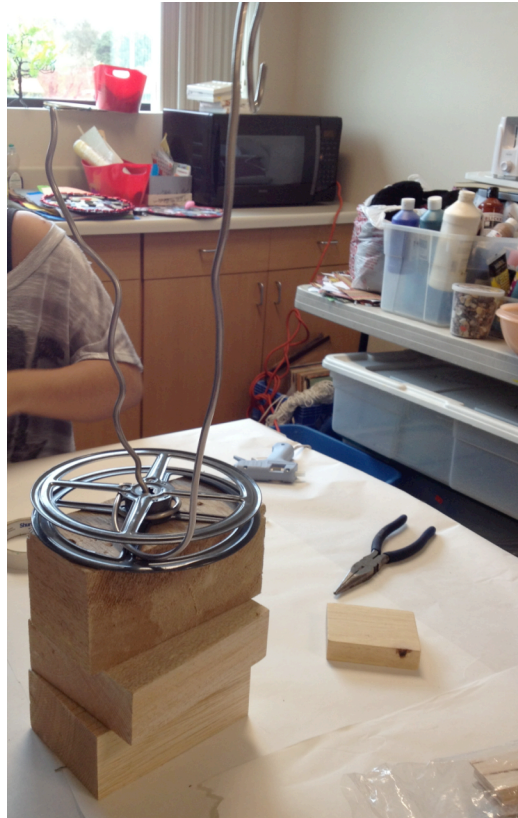


Figure 22: Wood Base with Metal Stand



Figure 23: Crate Base with metal Stand

The stand was not going to work and the girls decided it was not aesthetically appealing. We all brainstormed new ideas and realized we could simply suspend the mobile from the classroom ceiling using a string. As Betty held up her mobile over Jessie's book she realized it did not balance evenly. We worked together trying to even out the weight of the mobile by placing rocks on top of the mobile. It took a few tries before we got it right and the girls were ready to set up the installation on the showroom. The girls asked if they had to talk during the showcase. They appeared to be slightly anxious with the idea of talking in a large group evidenced by their eyes widening open, looking at each other, and giggling. We informed them that it was not mandatory for them to talk but we encouraged them to share their experiences about the workshop.

Myself and my co-facilitator assisted in suspending the mobile from the ceiling in the showroom. Betty and Jessie directed us with how low they wanted the mobile to hang. Jessie and Betty displayed the book underneath the mobile (Figures 24 & 25).



Figure 24: Installation Book Display



Figure 25: Installation with Mobile and Book

As my co-facilitator and I cleaned up the tools to prepare for the showcase, Jessie and Betty created an “ocean” scene under the book. They placed a piece a blue butcher paper to cover the display table and surrounded the book with stones and shells (Figures 26, 27, 28, & 29). When I asked them about their ocean scene they said they both love the ocean and wanted that to be incorporated in to their installation.

The adolescent group, women’s group, child-care group, facilitators, volunteers, and faculty assisting the workshops walked around the showroom admiring the artwork. A casual final discussion was held after the walk through. Many mothers from the women’s group shared their experiences in the workshop as well as their art. Facilitators and faculty thanked the participants and shared their gratitude. Betty and Jessie listened to the conversation respectfully; they did not volunteer to shares their experiences nor their artwork.



Figure 26: Final Installation (Front View)



Figure 27: Final Installation (Front of Book Display)



Figure 28: Final Installation (Back of Book Display)



Figure 29: Final Installation (Birds-eye View)

Analysis of data

The analysis of data includes observation from the two workshops, group process and discussions, personal art works and a collaborative installation to answer the presented research questions. The research questions provide a framework to help organize emergent themes from the data.

1. In what ways has this experience increased the participants' self-confidence?

There is evidence that suggests participants' self-confidence increased throughout the two Saturday workshops. Participants become more expressive about their insecurities and vulnerabilities. Together participants shared personal things in the work studio and during lunch, which demonstrated bravery, pride, confidence and empowerment.

Betty stated the experience boosted her self-confidence as an American born Latina. A theme in her artwork was flowers which she said represented nature, beauty, and growth (Figure 30). She emphasized "growth" as the workshop progressed. The flowers represent overall growth, and her growth through out the workshop.



Figure 30: Betty's Flower Theme

At the end of the workshop during the final reflection, Betty stated “everyone has inner beauty within”. Betty a young woman struggling under the pressure from her family to “succeed” was and is growing and gaining insight, and confidence in her identity. Jessie also agreed this experience helped her self-confidence. In the beginning of the workshop Jessie stated she was an “open book” and was expressive from the beginning of the workshop. She described the first layer being what people “see” and “think” of her, each layer dove deeper into her personal story. The inner layer of her art showed struggle and pain leading to lessons and life experiences (Figures 17, 18, &19). On the final day of the workshop she expressed “I know I say I’m an open book but I’m really not”. Jessie let her guard down and had the confidence to reveal her insecurities.

2. Did the participants demonstrate positive feelings about working with other youth from your community?

Yes, participants were observed engaging with one another in a healthy positive manner, active listening, respecting others personal stories, and offering support. Participants also helped each other during the collaborative installation being mindful and respecting the artwork.

Jessie stated she had a “fun” time and that she likes interacting with people alike who can relate to her. Betty said she feels more comfortable sharing with people who have things in common with her especially in a workshop or community setting. She also stated that she feels more comfortable sharing personal feelings and stories with people her age rather than an older generation. She said it is hard for her to share with her family because they do not always give her constructive or positive feedback and was evidenced during lunch on the second Saturday; Betty was asked if she wanted to participate in an interview regarding the workshop. She agreed. She was then told that her mom and sister were going to be interviewed so she could come at the same time. Betty respectfully expressed that she wanted to be interviewed alone, separate from her mom and sister.

Betty and Jessie both expressed that they really enjoyed the small group and that they prefer groups of five or less. Wendy said she does not usually express herself in large groups because she does not want to embarrass herself. They both feel big groups can be intimidating which affects their willingness to share. They also stated that they don’t mind and like sharing younger generations since it is more of a “mentorship”. They feel empowered and know that they are empowering the youth. During the final gathering and art display of both the youths and womens workshops neither Betty nor Jessie shared or expressed anything. We encouraged them to share something about their artwork and/or experience, but after hearing their reasons for not

feeling comfortable sharing with family or in a large group I was not surprised. When we informed the girls they would be showcasing and sharing their work with the women's group they become slightly uncomfortable, tensed up, giggled, looked at each other, and asked, "do we have to share?" We informed them it was not required but would be lovely if they decided to.

3. What did the participants learn from the other group members?

Jessie and Betty knew each other prior to the workshop. They are acquaintances and members of the same community. Jessie said she enjoyed hearing Betty's stories. Betty agreed, and said the stories added "personal characteristics". They both said they felt like they got to know each other so much more, especially since the stories shared were personal, hurtful, and beautiful. Hearing each other's stories allowed them to not feel alone in the acculturation process and discrimination experiences. They empathized, supported, and were vulnerable with one another. Jessie and Betty respectfully listened to one another. They did not pry or ask inappropriate questions. During the installation they continued to be respectful of each other's art, asking each other questions about the design, being careful not to cover or damage anything and working together to build an installation representing both of their experiences of the acculturation process and as Latinas. The workshop helped them to build social connections and deepened their friendship; this indicates that working together creatively in a small group setting manifests social bonds. Being surrounded by others of the same age group, and culture allowed them to find commonality in their reactions to issues of acculturation.

4. What surfaced for the participants as immigrants or Latino Americans during this creative process?

Betty and Jessie revealed negative interactions such as discrimination as a part of the acculturation process. Although their stories were very different, they are both aware that stereotypes exist and they can and will be treated unfairly in time due to their Latin and American identities. Although these experiences have caused pain, hurt, and hardships, figures 13-17 of Betty and Jessie artworks depict pride, blossoming beauty, and strong positive connections to their cultural background and identity.

Although Betty has struggled and still struggles she is proud of her “rich culture” and Mexican “roots”. Pride also surfaced for Jessie, she was able to reflect on her negative experiences in Vermont and embrace the good that came from them. Pride shined through as both girls organically used more Spanish the second day rather than the first of the workshop.

Jessie shared with us during lunch that she had a physical education teacher who called her a “chola” because she was from Boyle Heights. Co-facilitator and myself asked how she felt about being called that, she said she did not mind, and laughed. “Chola” is a slang term for a female gangster, for some this term could be offensive, stereotypical, playful, or a cultural norm. Jessie takes pride being from Los Angeles and in her community she was not offended by the term and seemed to like it.

When Able was present during the first day of the workshop he was not able to relate to the girls’ stories. This may be due to the fact that he is younger and may have not experienced such acculturation issues yet. It possibly may also be related to cultural differences related to gender roles since boys tend to have much more independence and freedom than girls in Latin families. Parents are concerned for the girls safety and want them to strive for independence.

Able's art depicted American culture; video games, pop music and did not consist of any Mexican culture (figures 3 & 11).

5. What did the participants learn about themselves?

Jessie said that this workshop allowed her to reflect on her past experiences more specifically in Vermont. What she once viewed as negative memories are now positive experiences. Jessie began sharing about her struggles while living in Vermont before the workshop even started. Her first record illustrated her hardships; it contained rocks that represented hurt, pain, and struggle. Her second record illustrated the "good times", several personal pictures of her and her friends collaged the record (figures 16 & 17). On the second day of the workshop Jessie shared more positive memories about her experiences in Vermont.

Betty revealed she has a tendency to "keep things in". Since she is under a lot of pressure from her family she does not talk to them about things that may be bothering her. Jessie nodded and agreed stating that she is the same way. They both expressed that they have been told they are "negative" when they vent or share personal obstacles; which has caused them to "keep things in" even more. This is evident that their parents may not be aware of the complexities in dealing with the acculturation process and bicultural identity as a youth.

The workshop clarified for Betty and Jessie that negative thoughts and experiences lead to positive outcomes. In sharing stories and experiences, thoughts and feeling related to acculturation and bicultural identity they both realized that they are not alone.

6. How did the participants respond to the specific art intervention of repurposing vinyl records? Why?

Betty and Jessie dove into the art right away. There was not any hesitation during the nametag directive. They both engaged with the art materials, Able hesitated and did not engage with the materials. He needed prompting before he began exploring the room and utilizing materials, he eventually found collaging to be his medium of choice. Once the records were introduced Jessie immediately asked if she could use a boxed record set, where she created a story book like piece of her personal layers. Betty seemed hesitant at first and began with other materials. She later decided how she wanted to incorporate a record and made a mobile with the record being the base and support representing the sky and the beauty of nature. Able did not utilize a record as he collaged and became fixated on playing with the drill and wood. Facilitators asked him if he was going to incorporate a record into his artwork and encouraged him to do so.

Betty said since she has a tendency to keep things inside, she sometimes begins to feel overwhelmed and feels as if she is going to explode. Betty and Jessie stated how they enjoy creating and making art. It allows them to express openly and freely through “metaphor”. Betty, Jessie, nor Able took the time to sift through the records, they just grabbed any record. When the record was introduced we expressed the idea that records have two-sides, front and back, layers, etc. relating to a bicultural identity and issues of acculturation. The art served as a tool to share, and discuss thoughts and feelings around acculturation and identity.

Findings

The findings were developed from the two day art workshop observations, dialogue, individual art, collaborative art installation and research questions. The findings reflect back to points discussed in the literature review and are categorized by the study questions.

The study provided evidence that the workshop increased the participants' self-confidence. Participants began sharing more about their personal experiences as the workshop progressed. They expressed that they felt comfortable sharing with others who have gone through similar experiences. The art process allowed participants to process and reflect on their personal acculturation stories. A sense of pride grew as the workshop progressed. The participants felt proud of their accomplishments and were able to view their personal struggles as positive lessons. The young women even began using Spanish by the second day of the workshop. Haedicke and Nellhaus (2001) report community arts are often linked to the ability for people to reignite their local, traditional cultural heritage which had often been lost due to the dominating culture. The use of Loteria cards, patterned paper and Mexican culture was a theme in the artwork for the girls, however the male participant's art consisted of representations of the dominant American culture. It was evident that his cultural heritage had been dominated by the American culture. He could not relate to the other participants struggles or the acculturation process.

It was also evident through group discussions, and the collaborative installation process that participants felt positive feelings about working with other youth, and peers in their community. Participants expressed that they love their community is unified and their culture is celebrated. They take pride in their involvement with the community. Participants demonstrated positive and respectful behaviors toward one another evidenced by active listening, offering

support, and having genuine empathy. Both participants revealed they do not share their personal issues and struggles with their families. When they have opened up to their families they have been told that they are “negative”. Naturally this has created a gap and weakens family relationships. Yedidia, (2005) states that immigration usually weakens the family, as well as other social supports that are involved in identity formation. Youths usually get less help from their parents when developing their self-identity, this was apparent in the group dialogue. Participants feel their parents and the older generations do not understand where they are coming from causing them to internalize their feelings. This was evident in the final art showcase when the girls did not share their experiences with the women’s group who were an older generation.

Participants stated they feel comfortable engaging with their peers, especially those who have gone through similar situations. Aside from sharing with their peers participants stated that they like working, engaging, and sharing with younger generations. Having the role of a mentor allows them to empower the youth, which empowers them.

Researchers found through the group discussion and creative art process the two female participants bonded deeply with one another. They had known each other from the community prior to the workshop and were acquaintances. By the end of the workshop they knew personal stories about each other and had a new respect for one another. Both participants stated that they enjoyed getting to know each other supporting each other. They learned new things about each other relating to the acculturation process and their bicultural identities.

During the group discussions participants expressed their experiences with discrimination. One participant shared she has been discriminated against in America as well as in Mexico. Another participant has experienced discrimination in the United States, and has no experiences of discrimination in Mexico, this may be because she does not travel there often.

Discrimination has caused stress for these young women. It has created confusion and insecurities regarding identity, appearance, and self-confidence.

Adapting to the blend of two or more cultures is the acculturation process and discrimination is likely to be part of that process. Martinez, McClure, Eddy, & Wilson (2011) state that acculturative stress is not only experienced by immigrants but also second and third generation youth. The participants' stressors may be very different from their parents but are still overwhelming. One participant has felt disconnect with her family in Mexico due to the fact that they make fun of her accent and tease her. Participants shared that they do not talk about these issues with their parents or family. Rousseau and Heusch (2000) hypothesize a lack of roots and cultural heritage may create feelings of confusion, uncertainty, low self-esteem and vulnerability. Although participants had a strong sense of pride to their cultural heritage they both felt confusion. They revealed that they had not shared some of the told stories in the workshop before. They felt safe to become vulnerable with one another as they got to know each other. They empowered each other as they reflected on their struggles and hardships. They no longer felt alone and found beauty in their experiences.

It was evident through the individual art process, and collaborative art installation that the participants enjoyed utilizing art materials in their explorations. Two of the participants understood and elaborated on the metaphor of the vinyl record relating to bicultural identity. As a group we engaged in a discussion of the vinyl records having "two sides", and a "front and back". The use of art in general seemed to have positive outcomes for the participants. Sharing personal stories through the art process brought awareness, clarity, pride, and encouragement. Madyaningrun and Sonn (2011) state the meaningfulness of community participation has the ability to foster individual and social awareness, and improve social skills in low-income

communities. The participants became aware of their struggles, as well as each other's, allowing them to bond. They gained confidence in sharing their stories and felt proud for overcoming certain struggles. It was evident that the art process allowed them to explore resolutions and find beauty in their struggles.

Researchers also found evidence that the art workshop created a containing space for respect and healthy interactions. Slayton (2012) observed that the use of construction media assisted in building goals, connections, support, and commitment. During the collaborative installation process the participants interacted in a healthy and respectful manner discussing ideas and supporting each other's suggestions. Through this process they connected more and made decisions together.

Researches found the two female participants were able to share struggles and issues around the acculturation process. As mentioned previously the male participant could not relate to their experiences or the topic. According to Rousseau, Lacroix, Bagilishya, and Heusch (2011) creative expression has been considered a good way to work with immigrant children in helping them explore meaning and identity. It is evident that this is true for an older generation as well. The young adults participated in expressing freely and wholeheartedly. This suggests that the use of art to assist in self-expression is valuable and beneficial.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research and qualitative study was to explore the hardships and experiences of acculturation and their affects among bicultural and immigrant adolescents. The community based art workshop was designed to address acculturation and biculturalism through group discussions and art making. It was evident through the workshop as discussed in the *Findings* that art making is a positive form of self expression that leads to increased self-confidence, community building, and assists in processing one's struggle related to acculturation and biculturalism.

Researching this topic and executing this study has been a challenging and rewarding experience. I am first generation American on my mother's side, and second generation American on my father's side. I find the acculturation process and struggle fascinating and personally feel it is a neglected issue. Many youth including myself at a young age, do not know what acculturation means nor do they understand the challenges that go along with having a bicultural identity. It can be a complicated journey to navigate, especially when parents are dealing with their own acculturation experiences as adults. I struggled with acculturation issues as an adolescent and never spoke about it because I had no idea what I was going through.

I now have the opportunity to reach out to adolescents and young adults and explore acculturation and bicultural identities. During this process I have learned more about my self, my family, the importance of community, the power of art, and the younger generations.

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LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent Form

Loyola Marymount University

Exploring the Experiences of Recently Immigrated Individuals

- 1) I hereby authorize Debra Linesch et. al. to include me in the following research study:
Exploring the Acculturation Experiences of Recently Immigrated Latin American Individuals.
- 2) I have been asked to participate in a two week long research project designed to explore and understand experiences consequent to immigration to the United States.
- 3) It has been explained to me that the reason for my inclusion in this project is that I have recently immigrated from a Latin American country to the USA and am part of a family that includes a mother, father and adolescent child.
- 4) I understand that if I am a participant, I will engage in an art making group with peers and possibly an individual interview.

These procedures have been explained to me in Spanish.

Additionally I understand that all material that is discussed in these processes is confidential and that as a participant I will respect the confidentiality of all other participants.

- 5) I understand that I may be audiotaped in the process of these research procedures. It has been explained to me that these tapes will be used for teaching and/or research purposes only and that my identity will not be disclosed. I have been assured that the tapes will be destroyed after their use in this research project is completed. I understand that I have the right to review the tapes made as part of the study to determine whether they should be edited or erased in whole or in part.

Additionally I understand that the artwork I create will be photographed and copies will possibly be included in reports written about this research. I understand that all identifying features of the art will be changed and extensive efforts to maintain confidentiality will be followed.

- 6) I understand that the study described above may include discussions, art processes and questions that may stimulate uncomfortable feelings, memories and issues.
- 7) I also understand that the possible benefits of the study are increased comfort and resolution from the discussion of the issues that underlie the immigration experience.
- 8) I understand that Dr. Debra Linesch who can be reached at 1-310-338-4562 will answer any questions I may have at any time concerning details of the procedures performed as part of this study.
- 9) If the study design or the use of the information is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent reobtained.

- 10) I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in, or to withdraw from this research at any time.
- 11) I understand that circumstances may arise which might cause the investigator to terminate my participation before the completion of the study.
- 12) I understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent except as specifically required by law.
- 13) I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any question that I may not wish to answer.
- 14) I understand that if I have any further questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may contact David Hardy, Ph.D. Chair, Institutional Review Board, 1 LMU Drive, Suite 3000, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles CA 90045-2659 (310) 258-5465, david.hardy@lmu.edu.
- 15) In signing this consent form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the form, and a copy of the "Subject's Bill of Rights".

Subject's Signature _____ Date _____

Subject is a minor (age____), or is unable to sign because_____.

Mother/Father/Guardian _____ Date _____

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Forma de Consentimiento

Universidad Loyola Marymount

Explorando las Experiencias de las Familias Latino Americanas Recién Inmigradas

- 1) Yo autorizo a Debra Linesch et. al. Para que me incluya en el siguiente estudio de investigación:
- 2) He sido invitado a participar en un proyecto de investigación de cuatro semanas de duración diseñado para explorar y entender las experiencias individuales y familiares a consecuencia de la inmigración a los Estados Unidos de América.
- 3) Me han explicado que la razón por la cual me incluyen en este proyecto es porque yo (y mi familia) hemos inmigrado recientemente de un país Latino Americano a EUA y soy una parte de la familia que incluye una mamá, papá y un adolescente.
- 4) Yo entiendo que si yo soy un participante, estaré en una variedad de experiencias, incluyendo intervenciones familiares, trabajo de grupo con compañeros, entrevistas familiares y encuestas individuales. En todas estas experiencias, hacer arte será una de las modalidades para la comunicación.

Los investigadores facilitarán las experiencias, dirigirán los procesos de arte y conducirán las conversaciones.

Estos procedimientos han sido explicados para mí.

- 5) Yo entiendo que seré audio grabado en el proceso de estos procedimientos de investigación. Me ha sido explicado que estas grabaciones serán usadas únicamente para fines de enseñanza y/o investigación y que mi identidad no será revelada. Me han asegurado que las grabaciones serán destruidas después de que se haya completado este proyecto de investigación. Entiendo que tengo el derecho de revisar las grabaciones hechas como parte del estudio que determinará si tendrán que editar o borrar en su totalidad o en partes.

Adicionalmente, yo entiendo que los trabajos de arte que yo realice serán fotografiados y estas copias posiblemente sean incluidas en los reportes escritos acerca de esta investigación. Entiendo que todos los detalles que pudieran identificarme en mis trabajos de arte serán cambiados o alterados para mantener la confidencialidad.

- 6) Yo entiendo que el estudio descrito anteriormente puede incluir discusiones, procesos de arte y preguntas que puedan estimular sentimientos incómodos, recuerdos y situaciones.
- 7) También entiendo que los posibles beneficios de este estudio son un incremento en el calmar y resolver desde la discusión de las situaciones que se encuentran debajo de las experiencias de inmigración.
- 8) Yo entiendo que la Dra. Debra Linesch puede ser contactada en el 1-310-338-4562 y podrá resolver cualquier pregunta que yo tenga acerca de los detalles de los procedimientos llevados a cabo que serán parte de este estudio.

- 9) Si el diseño del estudio o el uso de información tiene que ser cambiado, Yo seré informado y se volverá a obtener mi consentimiento.
- 10) Yo entiendo que tengo el derecho de negarme a participar o abandonar esta investigación en cualquier momento.
- 11) Yo entiendo que habrá circunstancias que surgirán que tal vez causen que el investigador de por terminada mi participación antes de que finalice el estudio.
- 12) Yo entiendo que no se dará información que me identifique sin mi consentimiento excepto si es requerido específicamente por la ley.
- 13) Yo entiendo que tengo el derecho de negarme a contestar cualquier pregunta que yo no desee contestar.
- 14) Yo entiendo que si tengo alguna otra pregunta, comentario, o preocupación acerca del estudio o el proceso de consentimiento, puedo contactar al Director David Hardy, Ph.D, Institutional Review Board, 1 LMU Drive, Suite 3000, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA 90045-2659 (310) 258-5465, david.hardy@lmu.edu.
- 15) Firmando esta forma de consentimiento, acepto que hay una copia de la forma como recibo, y una copia de "Subject's Bill of Rights".

Subject's Signature_____ Date_____

Subject is a minor (age_____), or is unable to sign because_____

Mother/Father/Guardian_____ Date_____