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Engaging the Lived Realities of Adult Immigrant English Language Learners: A Case Study of Literacy for Consciousness

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Engaging the Lived Realities of Adult Immigrant English Language Learners: A Case Study of Literacy for Consciousness

by

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative study had two goals. The first goal was to understand how a critical, non-formal, adult literacy program addresses the challenges and successes, which the students and volunteers identify at Amanecer Adult School. The second goal was to explore the perception of the student Spanish-speaking immigrants on the extent to which this program contributes to their second language acquisition and critical citizenship. These goals were examined through studying a local nonprofit organization, Amanecer Adult School, (AAS) that espouses critical literacy as its main goal. Using qualitative methodology and an inductive analysis approach to the data, the findings of the study were disheartening. At best, functional language learning was being both taught and learned in class, focusing on basic verbs and vocabulary. There was no critical work being done in the classroom.

The challenges of the program far outweighed the positives found in the data. The students, while respecting their teachers, were rarely assessed; there was no established curriculum nor means to discuss the students' lived realities. Additionally, the lack of resources, including money, time, space and classroom materials, at AAS was almost overwhelming for the

volunteers. The lack of training in, and no understanding of, popular education by the volunteers at AAS stood out as a major issue.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

In the midst of immigrant adult education there are stories to be told. This dissertation will focus on those stories in relation to the research questions, but the following is a story worth telling, one that is not uncommon, but unique at the same time. It is the critical emancipation of one woman who used education to change herself.

Maria is an immigrant. When I meet her, she does not speak or read English. Her father at 14 years old sold her to an unknown person in the United States. A Coyote, or human trafficker, takes her from her rural home in Guatemala across the border of Mexico and into the United States. The trafficker repeatedly rapes Maria, impregnating her. Maria is uneducated, having never had formal schooling. The concepts of pregnancy, and sex – and the entire new and hostile world into which she has been thrust –are unknown and frightening.

Maria births her baby on the floor of a bathroom in an apartment she shares with 10 other strangers. The baby is stillborn and in the style of a traditional Guatemalan Mayan burial, Maria places cotton in the mouth of the baby, and wraps her from head to toe in toilet paper. The police are called. She didn't know she was pregnant until she gave birth.

Maria is arrested, and interrogated in Spanish, a language she does not speak or understand. She is Mayan and speaks a Mayan dialect called Q'anjobalan–Chujean. She is forced to sign a confession, written in Spanish, as well. Her signature is an "X." She is put in jail and awaits trial for the murder of her baby. Her trial lasts two years, with advocates from the Catholic Diocese and local legal community taking up her case.

Eventually, three years after her ordeal began, Maria is let go on a plea deal.

Maria recounted this story to me one day, in an adult education class at a nonprofit where I worked. The curricular unit was on family. The unit was based on critical literacy and the goal was to create, from this very simple theme, a sense of consciousness. Maria, using her lived reality, was able to articulate issues such as law, customs, immigration, violence, sexuality, and hegemony. Maria is now an active member of the Guatemalan community, the head of a community group for women, a property owner, and on her way to community college.

It was at this nonprofit where I worked as a Director of Programs that I discovered the power of critical education in action. My day-to-day job was facilitating the education of women from Guatemala, 90% of whom spoke an indigenous Mayan dialect. My primary job was to support the teachers in their quest to teach these women Spanish, then English from a critical perspective. What I experienced at this program would fundamentally shape my ideas and perceptions of what education should be: critical and transformative.

The longer I worked at with adult immigrant learners, the more I realized Maria's story is the exception, not the rule. The history of immigrant adult education is long and varied, spanning the gamut from adult classes in places of worship to the highly technical training offered by colleges. Contemporary adult education follows that tradition, and seldom explicitly or deliberately attends to the experiences and needs of one of the most underserved populations: the immigrant adult English language learner (ELL).

For this marginalized group, the option of attending adult education classes at public schools is rarely an option. These recipients of adult education toil on the fields of industrial farms, clean the houses and care for the children of the privileged and non-privileged alike, tear

down and rebuild buildings, and sweat in factories making the products used daily by millions of Americans.

The history of adult education and adult literacy has mainly focused on *functional* literacy; that is, how an adult student can learn to function within society at the most basic level. This level of literacy is inadequate to address the lived political realities of adults in the United States, especially those immigrants learning English.

Critical literacy is the key to political emancipation (Darder, 2002; Freire, 1970, 1974; Giroux, 1997; McLaren, 1998, 2003). Cadiero-Kaplan (2004) argued that functional literacy, "while effective in increasing phonemic awareness, decoding, and specific comprehensive skills is mostly decontextualized, requires one specific answer or response, and does not consider the language and/or culture of the students" (p. 6). Functional literacy also reinforces job-related and menial task skills, while praising compliance with classroom rules and procedures. This functional literacy is ineffectual in dealing with the complex issues that surround ELL, especially those who are new to the country and often at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder.

The Immigrant Adult English Language Learner

Statistics on the lives and realities that Spanish speaking adult immigrant families and workers face in the United States are sobering. According to a brief commissioned by the Urban Institute, "immigrants' hourly wages are lower on average than those for natives, and nearly half earn less than 200 percent of the minimum wage—versus one third of native workers" (Capps, Fix, Passel, Ost, & Perez-Lopez, 2003). The commission estimates that only 18% of Spanish speaking immigrant workers have a ninth-grade education or higher, and two thirds of these workers do not speak English proficiently. In addition, according to the commission, an

immigrant's legal status has a profound effect on his or her ability to obtain formal education in the United States:

> Immigrants' legal status helps determine access to job-training and work-support programs. Indeed, eligibility for most government-sponsored programs is restricted to legal immigrants under federal law. Legal status is also associated with limited English language skills and low education levels: undocumented immigrants are more likely to lack English proficiency and a ninth-grade education. (Caps, et al, 2003)

Nevarez-La Torre (1999) estimates there are over five million migrant families that relocate for work or to improve their financial status each year in the United States. She also estimates that over 97% of these workers are Spanish speaking, a majority of whom are Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, followed by migrants from Central and South American countries. Many are not literate in their native language, and often times their native language is not Spanish but an indigenous language, making Spanish their second language.

The current climate of uncertainty for immigrant and highly transient workers makes educational attainment tentative, at best. Meyertholen, Castro, and Salinas (2004) point out that migrants experience unsafe and unhealthy living conditions that undermine their educational opportunities. They live in cramped quarters with many other adults, sometimes without electricity, running water, privacy, air conditioning, or adequate lighting. Access to necessary technology for their education is also a problem, because many adult immigrant learners cannot afford a cell phone, and in recent years telecom companies have reduced public pay phones in number and location. Access to computers and the Internet are often impossible, as most public

computers are housed in libraries and the use of computer labs in public schools is not possible during the summer months.

State of Immigration Law in the United States

In addition to the personal barriers to education adult immigrants face, there are legal barriers, as well. According to the NCSL Immigration Policy Project, in 2011:

> …state legislators introduced 1,607 bills and resolutions relating to immigrants and refugees in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. This is a significant increase compared with 2010, when 46 states considered more than 1,400 bills and resolutions pertaining to immigrants. (NCSL, 2011, p. 45)

The most controversial immigration bill, and the bill that is widely credited for starting this immigration law "land rush" is the "Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act (NCSL Immigration Policy Project, 2011)," or, as it is commonly known, SB 1070, signed by Arizona Governor Jan Brewer on April 30, 2010. This law, at the time of its passage, bested all previous state immigration law. Currently, the courts have enjoined most of the law, but one consequence of its passage is its inspiration for legislators in other states to pass similar legislation.

In the past year, 36 other states have attempted to pass immigration laws similar to that of Arizona. Of the thirty-six states, thirty-one have rejected or refused to advance their bills. However, five states—Utah, Indiana, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama—have passed laws that equal or are more stringent than the Arizona law. Lawmakers in more states will likely trying to enact similar anti-immigrant legislation in 2012.

Immigration Law and Effects on Education

New legal provisions have had deleterious effects on adult immigrants in these states. Examples of these negative effects can be extrapolated based on the language of the provisions, themselves. For instance, legalizing law enforcement agencies to check immigration status during routine legal stops or arrests could have the effect of creating a fearful group of people who may not leave their homes for fear of being asked to produce legal documentation. The same type of situation could occur by making it illegal to have business interactions with undocumented people. The most pertinent provision directly effecting education is tracking and documentation of children who are undocumented or the children of undocumented parents.

Because tracking adult immigrants is not easy, the best way to see the impact on them is through the actions of their children. According to Politico, the Alabama Department of Education reported the number of school absences after the passage of its immigration law was 1,540. This is about 800 more than what was considered a normal absentee count among Hispanic youth before parts of the state's immigration law were approved (Lee, 2011). The Alabama Department of Education spokesperson, Malissa Valdes said, "Administrators expressed that [some] Hispanic students left giving the reason that their parents have decided to move. You could assume that would have some impact on the permanent loss of any students

(Alabama Hispanic Students Not Coming Back, p. 1)." Conservative lawmakers who passed the bill seem unfazed by the number of children missing school or leaving the state. State Representative Mo Brooks said: "Illegal aliens are continuing to leave Alabama—not as fast as we would want, not as many as we would want—but still they're leaving and it makes us happy."

The law in Georgia has had similar effects on students. According to the Atlantic Journal Constitution, teachers have reported impact at DeKalb's Path Academy, 70 percent of students are Latino and 88 percent have or are eligible for free or reduced meal plans. "Some children of immigrants have been distracted by the law and have been difficult to motivate, staffers say. Others students have been pumping their teachers for information about the new law and ferrying it back to their parents. Some refused to attend a field trip to Washington, D.C., this year out of fear their parents would be deported while they were gone" (Redmon, 2011).

The current state of these newly passed laws is in flux. Many provisions of the current immigration laws have been enjoined my lower courts. In December 2011, the Supreme Court agreed to hear a challenge to SB 1070, the decision of which will give states a clearer idea of a way forward for future legislation. This hostile and uncertain climate is backdrop for current adult immigrant education. Though this is a bleak time for adult immigrant education, one must understand the historical background of this type of education to fully appreciate the difficulties and barriers these adult immigrant students have faced.

Historical Background of Adult Immigrant Education

What constitutes the field and practice of adult education is strongly contested. A definition given by Merriam and Heuer (1996) shows how broadly the field can be conceived

and how difficult it is to be more precise in defining it: "activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults" (p. 8). Brookfield (2005) posits that adult education has traditionally viewed learning as a deliberate attempt by adults to develop their skill, extend their knowledge, or cultivate certain dispositions in a particular direction (p. 24).

The history of adult education, especially for the context of this study, illuminates the challenges adult immigrant learners have had and continue to have even today. The colonial period in the United States did not have a formal system for educating adults, and education was typically a luxury of the clergy. Instead, education and the social life were integrated, as the agrarian economy to a large degree dictated education, with apprenticeship, being the most obvious example. Town meetings held at churches and schools also functioned to provide information to adults (Birkenholz, 1999). Agricultural fairs, first established by Benjamin Franklin, were another source of adult education. These agricultural fairs were essential in educating people about farming, but served an important social function, as well.

A shift in educational priorities occurred in the period between the Revolutionary and the Civil War for children and adults, based on the idea that a free society required “enlightened citizenry” (Hiemstra, 1995; Knowles, 1962). During this time, lyceums, organized by Josiah Holbrook at Millbury, were formed and were the first type of formal adult education (Hiemstra, 1995). Lyceums were lecture style forums, which only the wealthy or privileged could access. These lyceums played an active role in the liberal education of adults and later provided basic literacy instruction for non-English speaking adults, as well.

By the 1890s, networks of communication expanded and new forms of transportation created national markets in the United States. Industrialization created new work cultures and urbanization created new patterns of community life (Muetz & Frush, 2007, p. 37). By the end of the nineteenth century, hundreds of thousands of English and non-English speaking immigrants were coming to the United States. A majority of these immigrants were poor, uneducated, unemployed, and were trying to adjust to another culture while learning a foreign language.

To accommodate the education of these adult immigrants, settlement houses dedicated to teach English language and literacy sprung up around the country, inspired by the work of Jane Addams and Hull-House (Muetz & Frush, 2007, p. 45). These settlement houses focused on functional literacy for recent immigrants, such as remedial reading and writing to learn English, with the aim of better preparing immigrants for survival in the low-wage, menial workforce they were to face.

According to Knowles (1962) some of the institutions that arose in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to offer adult education for immigrants were businesses, industries, foundations, independent and residential centers, labor unions, proprietary schools, and voluntary associations. The goal of these organizations was to prepare the immigrant populations for unskilled employment available to this group of people.

In 1917, the Smith-Hughes Act officially institutionalized vocational education in public schools for adults and youth above age fourteen (Knowles, 1962). This act was followed in 1918 by the appointment in New York and South Carolina of supervisors of adult education at the state level. Even with this structure in place, adult immigrant learners were not part of the

equation. Their place was subordinate, relegated to menial jobs and low-skill labor. Formal adult education was not a part of their everyday lives.

The involvement of the United States in World War I gave rise to anti-immigrant sentiments and perceptions of immigrant's lack of patriotism were rampant. By the 1920's Americanization laws were sweeping the nation in thirty states and hundreds of municipalities (Ullman, 2010). Americanization programs encompassed teaching English, civic education, and ways of "being American." The definition of being American for this program included learning how to cook, child rearing, English-language acquisition, and even teeth brushing.

As Oakes (1985) argues, the economic foundation of Americanization still has long reaching effects in today's society. Social Darwinism, the ideology that claims some groups are inferior in moral and social development, and espouses the notion that social and economic power is supposed to be held by "great men," became a common belief at this time. Thus, this ideology gave the business community the power and influence to shape adult education and they used that power to their advantage.

By the turn of the century, industrial efficiency and vocationalism became the raison d'être. A standardized, controlled process of production drove the economy, and this required a certain type of education to produce the proper workforce. Frederick Winslow Taylor influenced this idea more than any other thinker of the time by developing the concept of "Taylorism" or scientific management:

> Known as the Taylor System, scientific management recommended time-and-motion studies to help determine standards of performance; the separation of planning from performance; the determination of the best methods of work through scientific study and

> the training and supervision of workers in these methods; the use of managers trained in scientific management and control techniques; and the structuring of the organization so that it would best aid in the coordination of activities among various specialists. (Oakes, 1985, p. 28)

Some of the strongest proponents of the Americanization program were local Chambers of Commerce, as business leaders feared that differing views of economic structures brought over by immigrants would threaten the American way of doing business. Business people also believed that violence was a real and feasible action for these immigrants, as possible backlash for the dangerous working conditions and poor wages they were receiving. The view of these business people was that scrubbing immigrants of their ethnic identities and making them more "American" would produce a more docile and pliant workforce.

In 1915, the Chamber of Commerce in Detroit embarked on an ambitious program of Americanization among workers, where fully 75% of employees were foreign-born (Oakes, 1985). Notices in paystubs, posters and pressure from employers were utilized to encourage workers to attend night classes. Attendance at these night classes soared and discontent among the worker force was lessened, productivity increased, and the project was considered a success, paving the way for nationwide programming.

Lindeman (as cited in Briton, 1996) argues that immigrant adult education was strongly influenced and shaped by "the age of specialization" that began after World War II (p. 22). Assimilation, technicization, and depoliticization became the norm. As a consequence, only educational practices that were considered scientific were given the title of adult education and all other practices that, "were not quantifiable, objective, or universalizable were deemed

illegitimate and banished to the margins of the field," including critical or reflective educational practices (p. 22).

Statement of the Problem

Vocational programming has been in place since the early twentieth century, and the rationale that business and schools offer in support of vocational programs, that they would increase economic opportunity for students, have been discounted by research (Oakes, 1985). In reality, the introduction of vocational schools was a fearful response to the influx of working-class, non-English speaking immigrant people, which allegedly threatened the American way of life.

Adult immigrant education has been traditionally seen as building remedial and vocational skills, and this has disconnected learning from any particular moral, social, or political purpose. Instead, it has been reduced to mechanics, such as methodology, resources, or evaluation, thus alienating adult immigrant learners from their lived reality and facilitating their assimilation into the broader dominant society (Brookfield, 2010).

Briton (1996) argues that this is a problem as "adult educators tend to concern themselves with 'skills,' 'means,' and 'details,' rather than 'principles,'' 'ends,' and 'the whole picture,'" and are generally unaware of the moral and political consequences of their practice" (p. 30). Briton's assessment is that the current adult education structure has not benefited adult immigrant learners because of the myth that education must be "neutral" and "objective." This "cult of efficiency" in modern adult education in the United States breaks down the "practical, moral, and political projects" of everyday life and reduces adult education to a regurgitation of facts, alienating the

adult immigrant learner from any form of critical thought or exploration of critical consciousness (Collins, 1991, p. 2).

Welton (1991) argues that one must reject the notion that adult education needs only be represented in appropriate, value-neutral scientific language (p. 25). His view is that adult education can only be effective if it includes ideas, texts, theories, and use of language. Welton believes that current adult education practice is specifically structured to exclude "subversive" ideas and to reinforce societal norms. Social justice has been subjugated and relegated to the margins of adult education. "The idea of adult education as a vehicle for social justice has become numbed, if not lost, in the inexorable advent of lifelong learning across Western countries" (Findsen, 1999, p. 545). In the zeal for a competitive workforce, lifelong learning has been co-opted by big business and a neo-liberal agenda of globalization. There is a need for a change of conversation away from the dominant ideology of individualism and vocationalism (Findsen, 2007).

As the literature revealed, most adult immigrant education programs are created for purpose of assimilation, the reduction of violence, and to support the economic structure of the United States. There is no consistent history of transformative educational spaces for adult immigrants in this country, but there are instances of programs that have been used for transformational citizenship.

The best known and arguably the most effective non-formal, popular education-based adult education program in the United States was the Highlander School. Myles Horton created the Highlander School in 1932 for the purpose of educating "rural and industrial leaders for a new social order." Their original work was to create a more progressive labor movement in the

South. This included a racially integrated school with the goal of moving beyond remedial and vocational skills that were available in mainstream adult education to a more transformative education. During the Civil Rights Era, the Highlander School played a prominent role in voter's rights, Rosa Parks being one of the more famous students. Today, 75 years later, the Highlander School is still operating. It has embraced the growing number of immigrants from Central and South America and has created a loose educational-support network that function in Spanish (Highlandercenter.org). This is unfortunately one of the only bright spots in long history of ineffectual adult education.

Modern adult immigrant education programs, including those based on the principles of popular education, are being used for assimilation without attending to the possibility of transformational citizenship. The adult immigrant learner is continually socialized to the conditions of capitalist production and vocationalism. Adult immigrant education programs focus primarily on the individual, specifically as an economic unit (Findsen, 2007). A critical pedagogical emphasis is missing, which this study will address. In doing so, it will add the missing social democratic and human liberation components that are absent in today's narrative surrounding adult education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how a critical, non-formal adult literacy program addressed the challenges and successes the students, and volunteers identified as well as the perception of the Spanish-speaking immigrant on the extent that this program contributed to their second language acquisition and critical citizenship. This case study was conducted at a local nonprofit organization, "Amanecer Adult School," that espoused

critical literacy as its main goal. This study examined how Amanecer Adult School addressed the dialectical role of helping adult immigrants assimilate to the new culture and fitting in with mainstream society while learning English for critical citizenship.

Amanecer Adult School uses popular education to teach English as a second language to Spanish-speaking adult immigrants. Many of these students fled their countries of origin due to civil war and poverty, thus, formal education has been sporadic and often nonexistent. Themes such as politics, violence, immigration, and fear have emerged in personal discussions, which makes research around critical literacy a necessity. Using a qualitative case study to engage the program staff and students at this adult school that seeks to teach critical literacy exposed the strengths and weaknesses in the program, its processes, curriculum, and practice. The ultimate goal of this study was to provide feedback to make the program successful, culturally relevant, and meaningful.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this qualitative study lies in the effort to record the experiences of students and volunteers at Amanecer Adult School. As the only nonprofit in the Southern California region that deliberately seeks to use critical literacy and popular education to teach English to Spanish-speaking immigrants, it has the potential to enlighten the field of adult education and strengthen practices in adult educational settings.

This study was also vital for teachers and educators of adult immigrant students from a pedagogical perspective. Several tenets of critical adult education were examined in this research, particularly, the traditional banking approach to education (Freire, 1970) that has pervaded the field of adult education and the rigid student-teacher relationship (Findsen, 2007).

This study also contributed to the field of adult immigrant education by revealing the potential successes that are available to a population that has been traditionally marginalized in our society. The immigrants in this program will one day become citizens, and critical skills are necessary for participation in a democratic society.

This research also provided insight in to the difficulties programs such as this have in working with a marginalized population. Recent backlash against immigrant populations has made working with undocumented people difficult. This difficulty has manifested itself in high turnover rates among students and the lack of funding available for immigrant adult education programs.

Research Questions

This study was structured around the following research questions:

1. What challenges and successes do students and volunteers identify in the critical literacy program at Amanecer Adult School?
2. What is the perception of the Spanish-speaking immigrant on the extent that this program contributes to their second language acquisition and critical citizenship?

Methodology

For this qualitative research study, I conducted a case study to explore my research questions. The research questions for this study dictated that a case study was the most appropriate methodology for this research (Yin, 2009). Hatch (2002) suggests using a qualitative study when "social contexts can be systematically examined as a whole, without breaking them down into isolated, incomplete, and disconnected variables" and when the voice of the

participants are included in a detailed narrative (p. 9). This was important for this study, as the complete experiences and perceptions of the participants was key in understanding the research.

This research was conducted at a local nonprofit organization that teaches adult immigrant learners literacy classes. The participants of this study were the students of the program, as well as the teachers and community volunteers. The program was originally a part of a larger more established nonprofit in the area that was in existence for 27 years. Politics, infighting and a lack of financial backing caused a rift between the original founders. All the employees, students, and volunteers of the former program left to join the program under study.

The program is housed in a Quaker house, which allows the program to run for free. The population is 100% Spanish speaking, including the staff and volunteers. The students range in age from 18-69, there are both male and female students and all are Latino in origin, emigrating from Mexico, Central and South America.

Data was gathered through qualitative methods over a four month period. Classroom observations were conducted to collect data on classroom interactions, use of curriculum, student participation, and language teaching instructional practices. After the participants were chosen, a series of semi-structured interviews with staff, students, and volunteers were undertaken to obtain data. One focus group was assembled consisting of six students at the school. Finally, document analysis of the curriculum, administrative documents, and reports was conducted to analyze content and grant requirements.

Conceptual Framework

As the literature has shown, adult immigrant students have been marginalized and pushed toward limited functional literacy for over a hundred years. Vocational education and the menial

employment opportunities this type of education afford have kept in place hegemonic power structures in the United States. Adult immigrant education programs have historically been places where assimilation to the dominant social norms has been paramount, and these programs have rarely, if ever, attended to the opportunity for students to achieve critical citizenship. This research, with the aim of elucidating these issues, will be framed using the theories of critical pedagogy, popular education, critical literacy, and second language acquisition. It is important for all research to be grounded in a solid and clear conceptual framework to facilitate an understanding of the theoretical perspectives that illuminate this case study.

Critical Pedagogy

This study examined Amanecer Adult School through the lens of critical pedagogy. Current practice and theory around critical pedagogy has been shaped by many philosophical ideas from Marx to the Frankfurt School, and continues to expand through the efforts and research of contemporary educators. As the field has been actualized and transformed over time, scholars have come up with a variety of descriptions of critical pedagogy. To Giroux (2001), critical pedagogy signals how questions of audience, voice, power, and evaluation actively work to construct particular relations between teachers and students, institutions and society, and classrooms and communities. According to Darder, Baltodano, and Torres (2003), "critical pedagogy is fundamentally committed to the development and evolvement of a culture of schooling that supports the empowerment of culturally marginalized and economically disenfranchised students" (p. 11).

The ultimate realization of critical pedagogy is what Freire (1970) termed conscientização. It is the on-the-ground political transformation that occurs when critical

pedagogy is realized by the learner and becomes mobilized. Freire (1970) postulates that it is the nexus of perceiving social, political, and economic contradictions and taking action against the oppressive nature of reality. Darder, Baltodano, and Torres (2003) define conscientization as:

> [...] the process by which students, as empowered subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities that shape their lives and discover their own capacities to re-create them. This constitutes a recurrent, regenerating process of human interaction that is utilized for constant clarification of the hidden dimensions of reflections and actions, as students and teachers move freely through the world of their experiences and enter into dialogue once more. (p. 15-16)

Reflecting upon conscientization, Freire (1998) reinforced the idea that it is a necessary condition for humanity. As he saw it, conscientization is a requirement for human condition.

> It is one of the roads we have to follow if we are to deepen our awareness of our world, of facts, of events, of the demands of human consciousness to develop our capacity for epistemological curiosity" (p. 102). For him conscientization was the final piece of "unfinished" humanity that is aware of its unfinishedness.

Using this framework, this study analyzed the attitudes and beliefs of students, volunteers, and staff of Amanecer Adult School through a critical lens, as the hegemony of the dominant class is often reinforced in adult education classrooms. A critical pedagogical lens lent itself to an examination of the relationships between teachers and students and Amanecer Adult School and the local community.

Popular Education

The basis for the program at Amanecer Adult School is rooted in the philosophical foundation of popular education to teach English to adult immigrant students. Popular education has been influenced by critical theory, and is established on the principle that critical learning for social and political change happens in all arenas in society, not just in formal schools or colleges. Popular education is also a "grassroots" movement that arises from a community or group and encourages people to generate their own knowledge about aspects of their culture and lived realities. As dialogue, political intention, and critical thinking are keys to successful popular education programs, this framework was fundamental in exploring the entire theoretical underpinning of the program at Amanecer Adult School. In popular education, change is the ultimate goal, and for this change to take place, action must be undertaken to create a more equitable and critically conscious world. This lens provided a solid framework for examining if and how change is manifesting itself within Amanecer Adult School.

Critical Literacy

Relatedly, the third branch of this conceptual framework is critical literacy. Critical literacy addresses the relationship between the literacy experiences of individuals and communities and the power relations that govern them (Freire & Macedo, 1987). McLaren (2003) describes this approach as embracing the goals of empowerment and emancipation by helping learners develop a critical consciousness that allows them to analyze and challenge the oppressive nature of society and facilitate its transformation to a more just, equitable and democratic one. Sharing the orientation towards the critical, the development of critical literacy, particularly intense during the 1980s and 1990s, also benefits in its American form from the

legacies of Dewey and Freire (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, p. 3-5). It also encompasses the important influence of Russian cognitivist Lev Vygotsky's work on language and thought (Shor, 1999).

Freire's model of emancipatory literacy acts as the fulcrum to his approach to education. Giroux (1997) describes Freire's model as the "dialectical relationship between human beings and the world, on the one hand, and language and transformative agency, on the other" (p. 7). Giroux (1997), using this stance, sees literacy as more than the process of gaining a specialized skill permitting a person to read, in actuality, he believes it serves as a necessary foundation for cultural action towards freedom. According to Macedo (1994), Freire's emancipatory model of literacy represents two dimensions to literacy. First, it entails students becoming literate about their histories, experiences, and the culture of their immediate environments. Second, students must also "appropriate those codes and cultures of the dominant spheres so they can transcend their own environments" (p. 47).

Second Language Acquisition

The final aspect of this conceptual framework centers on second language acquisition (SLA). The ultimate goal of second language acquisition, especially for adult immigrant learners, is to move beyond rules, patterns, and definitions to a place where students can communicate "genuinely, spontaneously, and meaningfully in the second language" (Brown, 2000, p. 14). Additionally, a critical approach to SLA is necessary in promoting change through education, and engaging theory and practice on a deeper level. It is not simply a recipe for action or an add-on to curriculum, but a transformative process of inquiry and action. From this point of view, critical SLA would empower the student, help them draw upon their own cultures and

lived experiences and, hopefully, create a transformative vision that would transform society itself.

The lenses of critical literacy and second language acquisition were beneficial in examining what kind of adult, critical literacy program Amanecer Adult School is implementing. As previously mentioned Freire's (1985) notion of the dialectical relationship between human beings and the world and language and transformative agency is vitally important to this study, especially for critical second language acquisition. An examination of the dialectical relationship between reading and writing English to function within the broader society and reading and writing English for conscientization could only be explored at Amanecer Adult School through use of these frameworks.

Limitations

This study focused on the findings of a small nonprofit organization. As such, the findings should be limited to the participants of the study. The sample size is small, consisting of nine participants chosen under very specific parameters. They are mostly Spanish speaking, Latino immigrants; this includes not only the students of the organization but most of the administrators and volunteers. The age of the participants could also be considered a limitation, as the range will be from 22-65. Thus, representation and data from younger students will not be possible.

Delimitations

This research was conducted within the following parameters:

1. The participants are limited to students, volunteers, and staff of the organization. While it would be interesting and valuable to conduct research including participant's family, employers, and so forth, it is beyond the scope of this research.

2. The organization has recently broken ties with their former nonprofit, thus the organization has changed location. This may have changed the dynamic of the last several years.

Definition of Terms

Nonprofit Organization is a term concerning itself with 501(c)(3) exemptions which apply to corporations, and any community chest, fund, cooperating association or foundation, organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, or scientific testing for public safety, literacy, or educational purposes, to foster national or international amateur sports competition, to promote the arts, or for the prevention of cruelty to children or animals (www.irs.gov)

English Language Learner (ELL) is a term given to describe students who are learning English as their second language.

Popular Education is a term given to describe and educational "grassroots" movement. In that, action arises from a community or group of people, but not necessarily limited to their use, exclusively. It is education that encourages people to generate their own knowledge about aspects of their current culture and lived realities rather than an outsider raising awareness or educating the group.

Second Language Acquisition is a term given to describe the process in which a person learns and uses a second language.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand how a critical, non-formal adult literacy program addresses the challenges and successes the students and volunteers identify as well as the perception of the Spanish-speaking immigrant on the extent that this program contributed to their second language acquisition and critical citizenship, and therefore, documented these findings in the hopes of understanding how this program operated within these parameters.

Chapter One introduces the study, offers background information, a statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study, research questions, and an overview of the methodology. Chapter Two examines the literature relevant to the topic, which will provide a rationale for the study. Included in the review of the literature will be a summary and exploration of critical pedagogy and critical literacy, examples of critical literacy in the field, an exploration of popular education, and a section on second language acquisition. Chapter Three offers the research design for the study's qualitative approach, including the research questions, the design of the study, and the means of data analysis. Chapter Four presents the data and finding of the study. The study will conclude with Chapter Five, which discusses the implications of the study's findings and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Background

Maya Ministry sits at the corner of Lucerne and Lake Avenues, directly across from the local high school and at the center of the largest population of Guatemalan people outside of Guatemala. It is housed in a small Lutheran church, has just one office and a classroom, but serves 30,000 people. As a branch of the Diocese of Palm Beach, its main goal is ministering to the people of the community, but as the Executive Director, a Dominican Nun, learned working the trash heaps of Guatemala City, ministry may inspire hope and give comfort, but education can affect change.

Participation in the Maya Ministry Family Literacy Program is composed entirely of women from Guatemala, every one speaking one of 26 native Mayan languages. All are from rural areas of Guatemala and few received more than a first grade education, most received no formal education before this program. They are all mothers and their children are enrolled in the program, as well. Issues of race, class, gender, and ethnicity directly affected their lives in ways that most people have never experienced (Schoorman & Zainuddin, 2008). These experiences while often painful and oppressive became the entry point and rallying cry for transformational experiences through their education.

It is a widespread assumption that immigrants are attracted to the U.S. in part because of an array of freedoms and perceived opportunity for success, which are emblems of a democratic system. Within this particular context, the educational system is seen as a structure that upholds

equality and justice, ensuring that no one is treated unfairly, and that everyone is offered a "fair chance" at success. As Noguera (2008) illustrates, not all Latinos (in this case, indigenous peoples) come to the United States voluntarily in search of equality and justice. As he so eloquently states:

> There are those who come as political refugees to escape war, persecution, and torture. They come even though they must overcome tremendous obstacles to do so--barb wired fences, coast guard vessels, or armed militias. Despite these barriers, they still come because for many, immigration is the only choice that offers the possibility of hope. (p. 53)

This is a defining quote especially in the educational context of Maya Ministry. Many, if not most of the participants of the Family Literacy Program and HIV/AIDS Outreach Program fled Guatemala in the midst of a bloody and protracted civil war that lasted from 1960-1996. Their trek, often at the mercy of "coyotes," or smugglers, was long and dangerous. It was not uncommon to hear stories of rape, murder, and death by exposure, all experienced by these young women (Schoorman, 2005).

It was in this setting in 2004, that I discovered critical learning in action. I saw the poor, the undocumented, and the fearful learning critical citizenship. I saw a transformation of lives that extended from the individual to the family to the wider community. It was here that I knew I wanted to pursue research around this topic. When I moved west three years later, I sought out a program that had the potential to do the same work as Maya Ministry. Amanecer Adult School was a result of this search, and is the focus of this study.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Pedagogy and Critical Literacy

The framework through which this study was written and evaluated used the theories of critical pedagogy and critical literacy. McLaren (1998, p. 45) stated that, "critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationships among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society and nation state." Critical Pedagogy is a large field pioneered by Paulo Freire in his landmark book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, published in 1970. Freire, created this pedagogy as a result of teaching economically disadvantaged Brazilian adults to read and it was solidified and strengthened in its praxis through the literacy campaigns of Brazil, Chile, Nicaragua and later, Guinea Bissau.

Critical Pedagogy was a reaction to what Freire called the "banking concept" where teachers "deposit" knowledge into the learning accounts of their students. The first use of the term critical pedagogy, however, is attributed to Henry Giroux in 1983, the field being developed subsequently by Giroux and other theorists such as Stanley Aronowitz, Michael Apple, Maxine Greene, bell hooks, Martin Luther King, Jr, Peter McLaren, Donaldo Macedo, and Antonia Darder (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2003, p. 2; McLaren, 2003, p. 185).

Freire firmly believed pedagogy could not be liberating if it was distant from the oppressed or by treating the oppressed as "unfortunates" who must emulate the oppressors (1970, p. 54). The struggle for redemption by the oppressed could only be accomplished by using themselves and their lived realities as primary examples. He argued that no one is better prepared to understand the "terrible significance of oppressive society" more than the oppressed,

because they suffer the effects of that oppression every moment of their lives (p. 45). Apple (1990) expanding upon the benefits of critical pedagogy notes that critical learning aids people in knowing what holds them back and "encourages them to envision the social order which supports their full humanity" (p. 48).

Freire also understood that "...in order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (1970, p. 49). This quote illuminates Freire's idea that the ultimate goal for a transformative pedagogy was action, that if a person should be free and yet do nothing to make this a reality would be akin to a "farce" (p. 50). According to McLaren (2003), critical theorists aim to transform the lives of the powerless and to change "existing social inequities and injustices" (p. 186).

Critical educational theorists argue that teachers must understand the role that schooling plays in joining knowledge and power to the value form of labor in capitalist society in order to use that role for the development of critical and active citizens with the courage to struggle for a new society outside the division of labor found within capitals social universe.

In his work, Freire put forward several tenets that form the theoretical underpinning of critical pedagogy: Banking Concept of Education, Problem-Posing Education, Neutral Education, Subject/Object Relationships, Dialogic Communication and Praxis, and Conscientization.

Banking concept of education v. problem-posing education. One of the most fundamental facets of critical pedagogy is the banking concept of education. The banking concept of education is the notion that knowledge is a gift "bestowed" by the knowledgeable to those whom they consider to know nothing (Freire, 1970, p. 73). Implicit in this view is that the information that the "knowledgeable" possess is the definitive and legitimate information to be learned. It also assumes a dichotomy between people and the world. As Freire elucidates, people are "in the world, not with the world or with others; the individual is spectator, not re-creator" (p. 75). The more passively people receive the knowledge and the more they internalize the deposits of information, the less they develop critical consciousness. According to Freire, they "simply adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited to them" (p. 73). The passive people continuously produce and reproduce their oppression as the deposits become more accepted and acceptable. This is an optimal situation for the oppressors as the domination they hold over the oppressed is strengthened by a docile, malleable, and manipulated people.

The antithesis of the banking concept of education is what Freire calls problem-posing education. According to Apple (1990), "If skills are not learned in a problematic context drawn from experience, then the teaching will serve to domesticate the students to the methods of the discipline" (p. 105). Problem-posing education facilitates the ability of a person to develop the power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves (Freire, 1970, p. 83). It allows people to fight their domination and work toward their emancipation by employing people's historicity as their starting point.

Problem-posing education also leads, through dialogue (see below), to a destruction of the traditional confines of the teacher/student relationship. Once dialogue and trust are implemented, the "teacher-of-the-student" and "students-of-the-teacher" cease to exist, instead being replaced by "teacher-students' and "student-teachers" (p. 80). Within this new paradigm, the teacher is no longer just the person who teaches the student, but the one who learns, and conversely, the students become the ones who teach. Thus, through dialogue everyone becomes responsible for education. Henry Giroux (1997) believes one can use and expand upon this concept to:

- create new forms of knowledge through its emphasis on breaking down disciplines and creating interdisciplinary knowledge;
- raise questions about the relationships between the margins and centers of power in schools and concerns itself with how to provide a way of reading history as part of a larger project of reclaiming power and identity, particularly as these are shaped around categories of race, gender, class, and ethnicity;
- reject the distinction between high and popular culture so as to make curriculum knowledge responsive to the everyday that constitutes peoples' lived histories differently;
- illuminate the primacy of the ethical in defining the language that teachers and others use to produce particular cultural practices (p. 58).

Education as neutral. In conjunction with the banking concept of education is the misconception that education is a neutral, apolitical process. In an interview with Donaldo Macedo (1994) in *Literacies of Power: What Americans are Not Allowed to Know*, Freire states the following about the neutrality of education:

> First, education is a political act, whether at the university, high school, primary school, or adult literacy classroom. Why? Because the very nature of education has the inherent qualities to be political, as indeed politics has educational aspects. In other words, an educational act as a political nature and a political act as an educational nature. (p. 98)

McLaren (2003) states that knowledge is socially constructed, thus it is rooted in a nexus of power relations. In a separate interview with Macedo (Freire & Macedo,1987) in *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*, Freire expands upon this idea. He perceived the impossibility of a neutral education to the extent that one understands education– on the one hand, reproducing the dominant ideology, but, on the other hand, independent of the intentions of one who has power, offering the negation of that ideology (or of its unveiling) (p. 39). For Freire, education accomplishes this through the real and concrete confrontation between it and reality, the reality of those who are educated and by educators. Freire was adamant that the more one denies the political nature of education the more potential there is to blame the victims.

Macedo (1987) also reminds us that political clarity is necessary for engagement in political praxis. A person who has political clarity has the ability to move beyond the biological process and arrive at a "perception of life as biographical, historical, and collective process" (p. 130).

Subject/Object relationships. One of the foundational aspects of critical pedagogy is the subject/object relationship. As Marx (as cited in Freire, 1970) first expounded upon, in the context of history, "subject" means the agent of history, the people who are the conscious architects of events and the "object" the unconscious tool. In Freire's (1970) view there is a narrative character in the student-teacher relationship. The relationship consists of a teacher as the narrating Subject and the student and the listening Object. As Apple (1990) states, a teacher who moves towards liberation accepts responsibility for a process that converts students from manipulated objects into active, critical subjects. This separation, according to Freire (1970) allows students to move away from being manipulated objects, gaining critical consciousness and leaving their classes as subjects "mentally armed against domination" (p. 99).

Dialogic communication and praxis. One of the most powerful and transformative concepts of critical pedagogy is the dialogical method. As Macedo (1990) reflects in the preface to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, many pseudo critical educators often sloganize Freire and his revolutionary politics by turning his dialogical method into a cliché (p. 17). As Freire (1970) stated:

> I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as in indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing. (p. 21)

Dialogue, according to Freire, exists to name the world. It cannot occur between people who want to name the world and those who do not, in other words, those who would deny others the right to speak and those who have been denied their speech (p. 88). Freire believed that

dialogue could not exist without love, humility, and faith and these elements inevitably created mutual trust enabling all to name the world. In Freire's view dialogue and critical thinking are intrinsically linked, enabling a destruction of the dichotomy between the word and the people. Finally, he believed that without dialogue there could be no communication, thus no education.

For Freire, dialogue, reflection and education cannot exist without praxis. According to Macedo (1987) the dialogical method is a form of social praxis in that sharing of experiences is always informed by reflection and political action. Dialogue as social praxis "entails that recovering the voice of the oppressed is the fundamental condition for human emancipation" (p. 96). McLaren (2003) expands upon this point in explaining that theory and practice must combine if transformation from existing social relations and emancipation from the rule of capital are to be achieved. This is best illustrated by Freire himself with this equation from Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970):

> Action + Reflection = word = work = praxis
>
> Action without Reflection = activism (acting without thinking)
>
> Reflection with Action = verbalism = "blah" (p. 68)
>
> Action and reflection reveal the word leading us to the work, which is praxis.

Conscientization. No exploration of critical pedagogy would be complete without analyzing what is arguably Freire's (1970) most influential idea: Conscientization or conscientização. This concept is the ultimate realization of the above tenets. It is the on-the-ground reality that occurs when critical pedagogy becomes realized and mobilized. Freire (1970) postulates that it is the nexus of perceiving social, political, and economic contradictions and taking action against the oppressive nature of reality. Darder, Baltodano, and Torres (2003) define conscientization as:

> ...the process by which students, as empowered subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities that shape their lives and discover their own capacities to re-create them. This constitutes a recurrent, regenerating process of human interaction that is utilized for constant clarification of the hidden dimensions of reflections and actions, as students and teachers move freely through the world of their experiences and enter into dialogue once more.

Darder (2002) gives several requirements for the fulfillment of conscientization. It requires the ability to reflect upon and think critically about one's thoughts. It involves ongoing dialogue. It requires an awareness of the self in a historical, political, and social context. Finally, it requires action to transform aspects of one's life that are oppressed.

Reflecting upon conscientization, Freire (1998) reinforced the idea that it is a necessary condition for humanity:

> In truth, conscientization is a requirement for our human condition. It is one of the roads we have to follow if we are to deepen our awareness of our world, of facts, of events, of the demands of human consciousness to develop our capacity for epistemological

curiosity. Far from being alien to our human condition, conscientization is natural to "unfinished" humanity that is aware of its unfinishedness. (p. 48)

Critical Literacy

How have we been shaped by what we have read? How has what we have said shaped us into the people we become? What has society said we are to become? As Shor (1999) elucidated, though language is fateful in teaching us what kind of people to become and what kind of society to make, discourse is not destiny (p. 1). Working and living in an ever-changing world necessitates that one think about literacy for adult immigrant learners in a different way. Aronowitz & Giroux (1993) see schools as the place where students come to understand how and why knowledge and power are constructed. For Shor (1999), this is where critical literacy begins, by questioning power relations, discourses and identities in a fluctuating and malleable world.

According to Coffey (2000) the term "critical literacy" was created "by social critical theorists concerned with dismantling social injustice and inequalities." Shor (1999) believes critical literacy challenges the status quo and seeks to find alternative paths for self and social development. For Wolk (2003) critical literacy is about how one sees and interacts with the world, and engages in an evaluative process. It is about critiquing issues of power, who has it, who wants it, and how it is used. Ciardello (2004) suggests that critical literacy is a "set of practices and civic competencies that help the learner develop a critical awareness and that texts represent particular points of view while often silencing others" (p. 138). Freire & Macedo (1987) saw critical literacy as a way to analyze hegemonic ideology, to become empowered, and to take action against personal and societal oppression. Freire & Macedo (1987) state, "the act of

learning to read and write...is a creative act involving a critical comprehension of reality. The knowledge of earlier knowledge, gained by the learners as a result of analyzing praxis in its social context, opens to them the possibility of new knowledge" (p. 157).

Shor (1999) expands upon the idea of analyzing praxis; to him critical literacy is language that questions social construction. This analysis can help one make sense of the world in which one lives and act toward a change. Envisioning and realizing a praxis for change was the goal of Freire's literacy team in Brazil:

> From the beginning, we rejected...a purely mechanistic literacy program and considered the problem of teaching adults how to read in relation to the awakening of their consciousness...We wanted a literacy program which would be an introduction to the democratization of culture, a program with human beings as its subjects rather than as patient recipients, a program which itself would be an act of creation, capable of releasing other creative acts, one in which students would develop the impatience and vivacity which characterize search and invention. (Freire, 1974, p. 43)

As Shor (1999) elucidated, merging the study of formal techniques with social critique is not simple, and has real "political" implications. The position taken by proponents of critical literacy advocates is that no pedagogy is neutral, no learning process is value-free, and no curriculum avoids power relations and ideology. The purpose, then, of critical literacy is not to tell students what to do or think, but empower them with multiple perspectives and encourage them to take action based on their consciousness through inquiry, dialogue, and activism (Wolk, 2003).

Janks (2000) in writing about how to make active Freire's (1970) theory and practice of critical literacy in the classroom states there are four orientations based on varying views of the relationship between power and language: domination, access, diversity, design. The domination perspective concerns itself with the examination of how social and political domination are maintained through the use of language and signs. From an access perspective, educators provide access to the language and language structures of the dominant group while maintaining the integrity of non-dominant language. The diversity perspective deals with how language constructs identity. Finally, the design perspective tackles how language reproduces social life and representations of reality. Janks notes that these perspectives must work in tandem if the goals of critical literacy and social justice are to be achieved.

Methodologically, because critical literacy focuses on the relationship between language, power, social practice, and access to cultural capital, there are ways to engage students to create critical consciousness. Because every classroom is different, with diverse populations, critical literacy will look different, as well. There are no formulas for critical literacy, but there are common practices that appear in the literature. Behrman (2006) in a review of literature about critical literacy practices show that the most commonly used practices include: reading supplementary texts; reading multiple texts; reading from a resistant perspective; producing counter-texts; having students conduct research about topics of personal interest; and challenging students to take action.

Critical Literacy in Action in Adult Education Settings

The goal of critical literacy is to empower and emancipate learners by helping them develop a critical consciousness that allows them to analyze and challenge the oppressive nature

of society and facilitate its transformation to a more just, equitable, and democratic one (McLaren, 1991). Current research proving this theory in adult immigrant learners is sparse, but what research that is available shows significant gains in empowerment and transformation among adult immigrant learners.

Terry (2006) conducted a qualitative study to examine the impact of critical adult education on the lives of participants. The study drew upon several data sources including interviews and program documentation. Terry documented six major areas of improvement for adult literacy learners:

1. a more positive general attitude toward life,
2. more interpersonal awareness and an increased sense of responsibility toward others,
3. increased self-esteem that led to more risk-taking in learning and goal setting,
4. academic confidence that promoted taking on more challenging learning,
5. learning goals that exceeded previous levels, and
6. short-term steps as part of a longer-term plan to attain better employment.

These studies also showed that students became stewards of their own learning. Kilgos and Valentine (2006) surveyed 112 welfare-to-work students. One of the questions asked of the students was how important it was to include specific workplace topics in the curriculum. The group strongly supported including these topics. They concluded that the findings support, "moving away from a purely academic curriculum and toward the notion that students should receive instruction in much more than basic skills" (p. 34). Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, and Soler (2002) found similar results. The study was an examination of 83 adult literacy classes in 22 states. The results suggest that the literacy practices of adults can change, in nature or in

frequency, in response to adult literacy instruction that is reflective of real-life literacy practices. The degree of authenticity in the activities and materials used in adult literacy instruction was statistically significantly related to the likelihood that adult literacy students in those classes reported change in frequency or type of out-of-school literacy practices.

Larrotta and Ramirez (2009) studied the literacy benefits for Latina/o parents engaged in a Spanish Literacy Project. The Project gave much of the decision-making process to the parents, such as attendance, how they would prepare and present their presentations, what information to volunteer in the discussions and the reflective journals, the language of interaction, and the use of technology, making it a much more meaningful and transformative experience.

Larrotta and Ramirez (2009) also found that the social and cultural nature of the program also played a key role in the success of the project. Reading and writing were not isolated tasks- they happened through group work and interactive activities. This interaction led to some important transformative action. As one parent explained:

> My husband and I have been discussing about buying a new house and saving. The information provided in the reading for how to fill an empty pocket made us talk and come up with a plan.

Ozanne, Adkins, and Sandlin (2005) studied the efficacy of literacy programs in relation to the shopping habits of adult immigrant learners. The aim of the program was to move the participants from a place of functional literacy to critical literacy. One of the participants explained his frame of mind before entering the program:

> I went to work, back to my room, back to work, back to my room for 30 years, back and forth. So I didn't leave my safety zone. I built so many walls around me...I only bought, at the time, if necessary, like food and clothing...And, anything else, I didn't but that, because you had to read...I went shopping for myself. I bought peanut butter, jelly, Spam, a lot of sandwich meat that you make sandwiches with. But, believe me, you tired of that. (p. 42)

Going through the program transformed him:

> But now, when I stop and ask people for their help, I come out right now, and say, 'I have a hard time reading, and I'm in the program, the reading program. Do you mind helping me?' (p. 123)

Longwell-Grice and McIntyre (2006) created and facilitated a program called FAB:ulous!, an adult literacy program with a component for children. The program was held at a school with the support of the principal, several teachers, and university professors. The goal of the program was to engage parents in literacy efforts to help their children excel in school and to transform their own lives, as well.

The assembled team of professors was devout in their utilization of critical literacy as espoused by Freire, but encountered massive resistance from the staff of teachers and parents, alike. Two weeks into the program many of the teachers had taken the stance that the adults were not good parents, demonstrated by comments such as, "They just come for the dinner;" "They just come for the free books;" "They just see the program as a babysitter." The parents, on the other hand, taking the program seriously felt that the material made no connection with their lives or the lives of their children. After the adult students staged an intervention, the professors

and teachers modified the curriculum. In this case, the mere fact that the adults were part of the program gave them a sense of empowerment over the direction of their learning (Longwell-Grice and McIntyre, 2006).

Critical Citizenship

In the last twenty years, citizenship education has undergone significant changes, moving from curriculum to instill patriotism and loyalty to education that is more critical (Johnson & Morris, 2010). There are many reasons for this shift in focus, including multiculturalism, globalization, demographic changes and a shift in national identities toward democracy and human rights. For the context of this study and immigrant adult education, a focus on critical citizenship rests on the frameworks of critical pedagogy and critical literacy, and the tenets of ideology and praxis. In this vein, the International Association of the Evaluation of Educational Achievement posits that critical citizenship should be:

> …cross-disciplinary, participative, interactive, related to life, conducted in non-authoritarian environment, cognizant of the challenges of social diversity and co-constructed by the participants and the community. (Amado et al., 1999, p. 30)

Apple and Beane (1995), in speaking of critical citizenship argue that democratic curriculum should "allow students to, 'shed the passive role of knowledge consumers and assume the active role of "meaning makers"' (p. 16). Similarly, Giroux (1983, p. 168) talks about the distinction between training students and education that forms 'sound' character, and advocates an 'emancipatory rationality' or citizenship education. He also talks about dialectically connecting, "how the notions of consciousness, ideology, and power enter into the way human beings constitute their day-to-day realities" (Giroux, 1980, p. 348).

Johnson and Morris (2010) provide a useful summary of how praxis plays a vital role in critical citizenship. They examine the idea that participants must explore the relationships between individual behavior in society and structures of social injustice and combine that with participating in changing those structures. In doing so, the participants must gain knowledge of how to effect system change by learning how to act collectively to build political structures that change the status quo. As Giroux (1993) so eloquently states:

> The quality of democratic life must be seen as part of a broader reconstruction of democratic public life. In this instance, schooling for citizenship means organizing schools and other cultural sites in ways that enable students to make judgments about how society is historically and socially constructed, to understand how existing social relations are organized around racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression, and to struggle for critical public cultures that both challenge and transform those configurations of power that characterize the existing system of education and larger social structure.

Popular Education

In recent years, the term "popular education" has gained national and international sway among organizers and educators who have been influenced by the writings and theory of Paulo Freire (1970) and the work he carried out in Latin America and elsewhere in the world (Walters & Manicom, 1996). While this new wave of popular education is relatively recent, popular education has been used around the world for hundreds of years. Historically, institutional barriers such as race, class, and gender have been used to maintain a dominant hegemonic control over our social, political, and educational lives (McLaren, 1997). Popular education, as such, has been used in conjunction with, and strengthened by social movements, as education for

social change that can and does eliminate long-term structural oppression. Elimination of this oppression, conceivably will lead to a more equitable and just society.

Popular Education has its heritage in both Europe and Latin America (Choules, 2007; Ferrer, 2011). Its modern emergence in Latin America was in the 1960s-1970s, Paulo Freire being its most well-known proponent. However, its roots can be traced back to the French Revolution, workers' education in the United States in the early twentieth century, and in movements such as the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee. While these traditions differ in history, they share similar theoretical bases and a proclivity toward the education of adults.

According to Ferrer (2011), as early as 1964, Benigno Caceres published his book "Histoire de l'education poulaire" with the first sentence laying the groundwork for the length of the popular education movement: "The history of popular education is inscribed between the Condorcet report to the Convention in 1792[1] and the current notion of permanent education" (p. 80). Rooted in French history, this movement included evening and Sunday classes for adults, vocational training in non-formal courses, initiatives from bourgeois associations (wealthy members of the Third Estate including the nobility in France) for instructing working men, popular libraries, inter-class activities promoted by popular universities, educational initiatives developed by Catholic organizations, and leisure activities for the masses.

Antoine Léon also writing about French popular education identified three directions adopted for popular education:

(a) completing or replacing a non-existent or inappropriate elementary instruction,

[1] Condorcet was a French philosopher and the most prominent member of the education committee created in 1792 by the French Government. His report espoused the belief that popular education could create a better society through French government-sponsored education of poor adults.

(b) offering professional training for non-qualified workers, (c) developing human values and capacities with a view to building a more rational society. (Ferrer, 2011, p. 18)

Conversely, Latin America has its origins in popular education dating back more than 200 years by local and community organizations created by people on the ground and informed by their needs. It has also been informed by the works of educators and organizers such as Paulo Freire (Wiggins, Johnson, Avila, Farquhar, Michael, Rios, & Lopez, 2009). This form of popular education seeks to facilitate just economic, social, and political conditions. This is accomplished through creating settings were people identify common problems, reflect on causes, and together seek solutions. The popular or common people of a community are the focus of popular education in Latin America. Popular in the Latin American context specifically refers to people who have been alienated from some aspect of their culture (Freire, 1970).

In the United States, long before Barack Obama made "Si se puede!" his campaign theme, César Estrada Chávez was using the saying to unite farm workers to fight for better wages, working conditions and education in the 1960's. Holst (2007) points to other popular education movements in the United States such as non-union worker organizations, action rank-and-file of union members outside of the official union structure, and welfare rights and poor people's movements. Myles Horton, founder of the Highlander Folk Schools, used popular education to teach rural adults in Tennessee through non-formal education.

Popular education is also a diverse practice that may be utilized by those who do not call it popular education (Haas, 1996). These practitioners may not call themselves educators or

what they do education, but they have created social movements with all the hallmarks of popular education.

Definition. Popular education is a "grassroots" movement, in that action arises from a community or group of people, but not necessarily limited to their use, exclusively. It is education that encourages people to generate their own knowledge about aspects of their current culture and lived realities rather than an outsider raising awareness or educating the group. Dialogue and critical thinking is key to popular education being successful. There is a strong emphasis on political intention in popular education with the ultimate goal of creating change. For this change to take place, popular education focuses on action to create a more equitable and critically conscious world. Popular education is informal and used in community groups or social movements: informal because it comes from the "bottom-up" and the lived experiences of the participants.

Given the length of time popular education has been in existence and given that it spans the globe, there are several ways it has been defined. Walters and Manicom (1996) provide this explanation:

> It is participatory, democratic, non-hierarchical pedagogy that encourages creative thinking that breaks through embedded formats of learning. It valorizes local knowledge, working collectively towards producing knowledge, the principle of starting from where people are situated, and working to develop a broader understanding of structures and how these can be transformed. (p. 23)

Fink (1992) refers to two dimensions of popular education: pedagogic and political. Gore (1993) talks about the social vision and instructional aspect of popular education, citing the fact

that the pedagogical cannot be separated from the political. Ferrer (2011) posits that popular education is a set of processes aimed at educating the popular class, dominated, subordinate, and instrumental social groups. That is, young people without formal schooling and adults who are illiterate or looking to complement their education.

Wiggins et al. (2009) point to the ways in which popular education differs from other forms of educational approaches to give it a definition. It begins with an assessment of knowledge and based on that knowledge content and methodology are created to meet the learners' needs. It has a heavy emphasis on action-reflection-action cycles. The initial action stage sees the facilitators examine and draw out what the participants may know about a problem or solution. It is believed that this will create a belief in the participants that they have the ability to affect change. Next, "facilitators create settings where participants expand their knowledge by connecting their personal experience of the issue to its larger economic, political, and social context" (p. 89). Finally, participants work together to apply their new knowledge creating a plan, and then implementing that plan to resolve the identified problem.

The Popular Education Network (cited in Choules, 2007), describes popular education as being, "rooted in the real interests and struggle of ordinary people" (p. 162). They also feel that popular education is explicitly political and critical of the status quo. Finally, they believe that it is committed to progressive social and political change and is interested in bringing about a more fair and egalitarian society.

Choules (2007) expands upon this definition and provides several characteristics that encompass popular education. First, its curriculum comes from the lived realities and material interests of social movements and communities of resistance and struggle. Second, the pedagogy

is group oriented, not focused on individual learning, and is collective and democratic. Finally, its goal is to create a link between education and social change.

Hegemony and neo-liberalism in popular education. As explained above, many of the historical aspects of popular education focused on working class or poor adults. The modern era of popular education has been strongly influenced by, and became a direct reaction to, hegemonic neo-liberal policies. As Laurie, Andolina, and Radcliffe (2005) point out, many countries have adopted these oppressive policies. These measures include fiscal austerity, privatization, promotion of nontraditional exports, and encouragement of foreign investment, tariff reductions, and changes to labor protections (p. 471). Mayo (1999) believes that these neoliberal policies underlie much of the discourse around adult education, popular education and social movements today. Many of these movements are based in some of the most marginalized sectors of society and the demands are rather basic: water, jobs, plots of land, education, yet these demands strike at the very heart of capitalism.

> For the changes at the level of economics that civil societarians have aptly recognized are of a qualitative nature, and are creating a growing and widely recognized polarization between the capitalist class and a growing sector of the world's population increasingly on the fringes of the basic capitalist relation of working for a wage in order to buy what you need. (Holst, 2007, p. 13)

Neoliberalism is a known and insidious form of hegemony that regularizes knowledge and enhances the market and individualism (Garland, 2000). Hegemony plays a large part in the theory behind popular education and the impetus for social movements. Ferrer (2007) stated that

discourse in Latin American popular education, for example, is directly connected to counter-hegemonic social movements developed by the popular classes themselves.

Martin (2000) elucidated that under neoliberalism "community (school, family, work, leisure) has been reduced to a pedagogical tool that reduces us to the status of alienated and atomized individuals, who compete with other equally alienated and atomized individuals for the means of subsistence" (p. 6). Relatedly, McLaren (2003) talks about the dominant culture of a society having the ability to exert its domination over a subordinate class or group as being hegemonic. It is this maintenance of domination through, "consensual practices, social forms, and social structures produced in specific sites such as the church, the state, the school, the mass media, the political system, and the family" often taking the form of neoliberalism and capitalist structures (p. 202).

Martin (2000) also states that grassroots political movements need to encourage critical analysis, genuine dialogue, and problem solving based on their knowledge of capitalism and to break the bonds of hegemonic control. The idea behind this is to enable participants of these movements to gain knowledge and imagine alternative spaces "beyond the dead-end horizon of capitalism" (p. 10). Choules (2007) explains that the main form of oppression that popular education seeks to combat is economic oppression. There is an extreme political and social exclusion that results from poverty requiring social action to remedy, and popular education has the power to achieve this change.

Social movements and popular education. There is no doubt that one individual program based on popular education can be successful, inventive, and meaningful for the adult immigrant learners involved in that program. The question becomes, how do these programs reach a tipping point, the point in which learning not only engenders critical consciousness and action, but where that action begins to effect larger social systems? Social movements are critical to this end. Mayo (1999) speaking about radical adult education specifically states that individual programs cannot stand on their own to effect change. In fact, they must operate in relation to, "a social movement, itself often conceived of as a site of social revolutionary learning, or an alliance of such movements" (p. 133). He also believes that this alliance of social movements must address the multiple forms of oppression that exist and a radically democratic society must encompass class, gender, race, and ethnic equitability.

Gramsci (1971) was a founding member of the Italian Communist Party, an important and prolific theorist. His principles provided inspiration to critical theorists in the Frankfurt School, and also social movements, and he was a force behind the movement to establish factory and worker councils in Italy. He believed counter-hegemonic movements must be preceded by a transformation of people's consciousness. The process starts with a person's acceptance of oppression, that he terms "common sense." Next, comes a display of unease, which is grounded in "negative consciousness." In the final stage, after reflecting upon their experiences created by social action, a catharsis comes about, generating class-consciousness (Gramsci, 1971).

> **Social movements realized.** Whether we do popular education in the countryside, or in the city; whether we do it with school, college, or university students or with peasants, workers, community leaders, illiterate people; with poor people or with people who are not poor, *it will still be popular education if its essence or orientation is social transformation*. (Mendoza & Nunez, 2002, p. 20)

Mayo (1999) believes that radical adult education and adult educators need to be sustained by a social movement or movements. These movements can be from within a system or power structure or outside those systems or structures. Freire (1998) himself advocated for the notion of having "one foot inside and another outside the system" (p. 43). Ledwith (2001) argues that neoliberalism and the New Right have appropriated the language of liberation, such as empowerment and active citizenship. This, as well as massive cuts to the social sectors has enabled government to offload social responsibilities to the family and the individual. In this way neoliberal actions make education and social programs more difficult to access from inside the system.

Holst (2007) elucidated that social movements and popular education see much of the most dynamic "radical motion" outside of the established institutions. These movements can encompass all types of groups from indigenous peoples to rural educators, to disenfranchised citizens in a large urban city. Irrespective of citizenship, culture, language, or ethnicity, these people have one thing in common: they all strive for social justice and action utilizing popular education as their tool.

Nadeau (1996) speaking about Latin American feminist popular educators shows that many of the popular education social movements that originated in Latin America were led by

women. In fact, women, youth, the urban poor, and indigenous people played a central role in building popular resistance movements and alternatives to the politics and systems in their countries. These movements addressed issues such as violence, sexuality, health, self-esteem and "machismo," as well as issues that were often seen as political like housing, clean water, electricity, and transport (p. 43).

Complementing Nadeau's work, Laurie, Andolina, and Radcliffe (2005), studying indigenous movements in Ecuador, focus on one popular education program that uses Freirian teaching methods in its work. This program replaced the NGO-led grassroots popular education from the 1970's that were notable in their lack of an indigenous knowledge base. The workshop seminar's goal was to bring indigenous women closer to a knowledge and understanding of politics. This program stimulated the debate amongst people of differing positions and political tendencies. The module used life histories or historical leaders and aboriginal peoples to reignite oral traditions and the role played by women in indigenous uprisings.

Moving from rural Ecuador to the streets of Los Angeles, Martin's (2005) experience on the inequitable bus system in that city, gave him the impetus to look into the Bus Riders Union (BRU). This program used popular education and in conjunction created a social movement to equalize bus ridership in Los Angeles. BRU believes that the public bus system is a "factory on wheels" dividing the community and maintaining the liberal capitalist state (p. 13). This movement works outside of the official bus unions and political structures to create what it called a new "Civil Rights and Women's Liberation" movement (p. 16). This movement is one in which working class women and people of color, through the use of popular education, confront

issues of racism, sexism, ableism, and homophobia by confronting the issues surrounding bus ridership and the inequalities that arise around it.

Some of the most basic needs of health have also used popular education in their movements. These health care movements in the United States raise consciousness of issues such as HIV/AIDS, advocating for personal health, community solidarity around health care disparities, and increase minority leadership in health care reform. Wiggins et al. (2009) quoting one of the participants in their study summarizes this movement well:

> It's kind of made me want to do...more things for the community, especially [the] African American community. We don't speak up a lot but we don't like the things that happen to us. But when we don't get involved nothing happens. I'm not trying to be a political person but who knows down the line what may come out of this. (p. 17)

Programs that focus on educating the whole person also use popular education. Myles Horton (1990), probably the most well-known popular educator in the United States, explained how he viewed his school: "Highlander always tried to remind people that they were part of the world and they had opportunities and responsibilities to do things outside their own communities (1990, p. 67). The Highlander School was not just a place to learn to read and write. The original class was organized into a community organization focused on voting rights called the Citizenship School. Within four years they had trained 400 teachers, taught over three thousand students and voting in local elections went up 300 percent (p. 74). They had created a social movement that spread through the South, eventually partnering with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Second Language Acquisition

As this study will not only deal with popular education among immigrants, but also the fact that the participants speak Spanish, it is also necessary to explore second language acquisition. Second language acquisition is a rich and varied field consisting of several theories across the board. For adult immigrant learners, especially those learning English for the first time, there are several barriers, cultural, ethnic, and others that may impede the acquisition and use of a second language. Methodology in the classroom is also a vital piece to the acquisition of a second language, often becoming a determining factor in whether an adult student is able to acquire the language they are studying.

Many factors contribute to the acquisition of a second language from commitment, to physical, mental, and emotional involvement, to social and cultural contexts (Hudelson, 1994; Perdue, 1984). Indeed, many challenges exist in the process of learning a second language, as well as the process of teaching a second language and several approaches have been created with theoretical frameworks to support them. The ultimate goal of second language acquisition, especially for adult immigrant learners, is to move beyond rules, patterns, and definitions to a place where students can communicate "genuinely, spontaneously, and meaningfully in the second language" (Brown, 2000, p. 14). Hudelson (1994) articulates the challenge this way:

> So much is at stake that courses in foreign languages are often inadequate training grounds, in and of themselves, for the successful learning of a second language. Few if any people achieve fluency in a foreign language solely within the confines of the classroom. (p. 1)

Second Language Theories and Schools of Thought

Language theories and schools of thought fall into broad categories (see Table 1) and over the decades have followed trends and fashions in the study of second language acquisition (Brown, 2000; Canale & Swain, 1980; Lavadenz, 2010; Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). The categories include structural, cognitive, constructive, functional, and interactional. These theoretical categories also encompass approaches to second language acquisition as well.

Table 1
Language Theories

Language Theory	Definition
Structural	Positivist approach to the study of human language using scientific principles and observations
Cognitive	Language is largely determined by genetic and biologic factors
Constructive	Language is constructed through group social practices
Functional	Language is used to accomplish specific tasks
Interactional	Language is used to create and maintain human relationships

Structuralism and behaviorism. The Structural school of linguistics arose in the 1940s and 1950s, and states that the "rigorous application of the scientific principle of observation" of human languages could identify structural characteristics of those languages (Brown, 2000, p. 18). Structural language theory also views language as composed of syntactical, phonological, and lexical components (Lavadenz, 2010). Structuralists were only interested in examining overtly observable data; this scientific approach let linguists break language into small units that could be described, analyzed, and reassembled.

Behaviorism and linguistics followed the same lines as structuralism. It focused on observable responses that could be objectively perceived, recorded, and measured (Brown, 2000). Consciousness and intuition in regard to language were considered illegitimate. As

Brown elucidates, this made impossible the ability to measure how language and consciousness, thinking, concept formation, and the acquisition of knowledge were formed.

Cognitivism and universal grammar. Lavadenz (2010) speaks to the rise of cognitive approaches to language as a reaction to structuralism and its notion that language learning "requires knowledge of the surface level of forms" (p. 20). Cognitivism, influenced by Noam Chomsky, revolves around the view that language cannot and should not be scrutinized by scientific methods and accumulation of data alone (Brown, 2000; Lavadenz; 2010, Peregoy & Boyle, 1997). Cognitivists were interested in how human behavior directly effected motivations using a rational approach. They believed that meaning, understanding, and knowing were significant data sources and focused on psychological principles of organization and functioning (Brown, 2000). While behaviorists were interested in description and the "what" using objective measurement, cognitivists, while still being interested in the "what" became more focused on the "why." They believed the "why" would reveal underlying reasons, genetic and environmental factors, and circumstances caused by a particular event (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Chomsky is also credited with the theory of Universal Grammar (UG) (Lavadenz, 2010; Silalhi, 2000). UG is the ability of a person to innately learn and use a language and that certain properties are integrated in the mind. The properties of this theory include what Chomsky termed "language acquisition device" (LAD). According to Lavadenz, LAD consists of four linguistic properties:

1. The ability to distinguish speech sounds from other sounds in the environment;
2. The ability to organize linguistic events into various categories that can be refined;

3. The ability to recognize that only certain types of linguistic structures are possible and others are not; and
4. The ability to evaluate language production to determine accuracy of production. (p. 21).

Stephen Krashen (as cited in Lavadenz, 2010; Peregoy & Boyle, 1997; Silalhi, 2000) used Chomsky's theory to build his own theory and hypotheses in regard to second language acquisition. Krashen sets forth five hypotheses which include:

1. the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis;
2. the Monitor Hypothesis;
3. the Natural-Order Hypothesis;
4. the Input Hypothesis, and;
5. the Affective-Filter Hypothesis.

Acquisition-learning hypothesis. This hypothesis claims that adults have two distinct ways of developing second language competence, through acquisition and learning. Acquisition, is a natural process of language development that does not focus on form, but rather natural meaningful interactions through daily use. Conversely, learning is a formal process, typically in a classroom setting that focuses on form, grammar, structure, and so forth (Silalhi, 2000). Peregoy & Boyle (1997) explain that Krashen makes a controversial distinction about acquisition and learning:

> That learning cannot "turn into" acquisition and, that it is only acquired language that is available for natural, fluent communication. (p. 43)

The monitor hypothesis. Monitor Hypothesis claims that acquisition and learning have important roles in the production of sentences or utterances (Silalhi, 2000). An internal grammar editor or monitor is developed through the formal study of a language. Three conditions need to be met for the monitor to be used: sufficient time, focus on form, and explicit knowledge of the rules (Peregoy & Boyle, 2000). From this, Krashen recommends that language teaching should focus on communication as opposed to rote memorization and recitation.

The natural order hypothesis. According to the Natural Order Hypothesis, learners acquire the grammatical structure of the second language in a predictable way. Certain grammatical features are acquired early and others later. To a certain extent, the order of acquisition of structural items might be influenced by the quality and the types of input entailed by the learning environment and not every learner will acquire the same grammatical structures at the same time.

The input hypothesis. According to Krashen learners acquire second language in only one way. If the input they are receiving, communication or otherwise, is a bit ahead of their current level of acquired competence, they acquire the second language. Learner's progress along the natural order by understanding input containing i+1, where i is their current level of competence and i+1 is the level immediately following the i (Silalhi, 2000). In other words, speech emerges, it is not taught (Peregoy & Boyle, 1997).

The affective filter hypothesis. This hypothesis is focused on social-emotional factors related to second language acquisition. For second language acquisition to occur, comprehensible input plus a low affective filter are necessary. For Krashen, low affective filters include low-anxiety learning environments, student motivation and high self-esteem.

Constructivism. Constructivism argues that multiple and different contrasting ways of knowing are equally legitimate and that all human beings construct their own version of reality (Brown, 2000). Spivey (as cited in Brown) describes constructivism as:

> an emphasis on active processes of construction [of meaning], attention to texts as a means of gaining insights into those processes, and an interest in the nature of knowledge and its variations, including the nature of knowledge associated with membership in a particular group. (p. 21)

Functional. According to Germain (1982) functional learning theory is based on the idea of allowing the learner to function effectively based on their needs, not necessarily on linguistic analysis of content. Lavadenz (2010) stated that communication, not just grammar and structure of a language, is the essential characteristic of language (p. 21).

Interactional. According to Lavadenz (2010) the main characteristic of interactional theory is that it views language as a way to achieve internal and innate features, or relationships and performances, between people (p. 22). Peregoy and Boyle (1997) expand upon this and explain that communicative give and take of natural conversations between native and non-native speakers are crucial to the acquisition of a second language. Interactionists are also interested in how non-native speakers get their ideas across using their knowledge, often through the use of trial-and-error and negotiation of meaning.

Cummins (1981) argued for what he called a Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP). This model as described by Baker (2006) as having a central operating system from which each language, the primary and secondary are connected. Baker (2006) summarized the CUP in six parts:

1. When someone has two or more languages, thoughts that derive from using those languages come from one "central engine."
2. An individual can function in two or more languages because one has the capacity to store more than one language.
3. One can learn both mono-lingually or bilingually. Attainment of academics can be achieved in one or two languages because the information is stored and accessed in one central location.
4. The language being used in the classroom needs to be developed well in order for a child to be successful academically.
5. First or second language listening, speaking, reading or writing aids in the development of the cognitive system.
6. Cognitive functions will be hindered if a child's first and/or second language are not functioning fully.

This theory has a supposition that developing the first language of a student will lead to and contribute to the acquisition of the second language.

Potential Barriers to Acquisition

Perdue's seminal work on adult immigrant second language acquisition found that there are several mitigating factors and challenges that an adult second language learner confronts even before theory, practice, or classroom interactions take place (Perdue, 1984). The social and cultural context of second language acquisition is of paramount importance. Initial encounters while speaking a second language, especially when the acquisition of the language is new, is a formative experience. Frequently, the person speaking to the adult immigrant language learner

holds the power, pace, and intention of the conversation, creating a situation where conversation becomes curtailed. Also, the attitudes and beliefs of the speaker contribute to "the kind of input from which he is expected to extract meaning" (Perdue, 1984, p. 70).

In addition, ethnic identity, or one's thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is due to their ethnic group membership, is imperative for adult immigrant learners language acquisition. The degree to which there is a rigid acceptance of one's own ethnicity and a rigid rejection of other cultures may hinder second language acquisition. The degree to which language is used to maintain self-identity, "whether voluntary or involuntary" is important (p. 81). A learner whose unwillingness or inability to leave their ethnic enclave because they want to maintain their identity and resist assimilation, has a profound effect on learning. These positions may manifest in negative behaviors toward language learning and expression of language, such as attitude, dialect, and the skill or willingness to code-switch when necessary.

Perdue's research also found that gate keeping, a native language speaker's power over cultural and social spaces, is key to an adult immigrant language learner, as well. Typically, the immigrant first uses, or tries to use, the second language in situations out of necessity. They are trying to acquire a job, rent an apartment, buy food, and so forth. There may be no other motivation for the second language learner to speak in these situations. The gatekeepers are accustomed to this type of interaction as a strictly functional imperative for the speaker and have no incentive to speak beyond the basics. On the basis of these experiences, the learner appears to the native speaker as being "motivated by exclusively materialistic ends" (p. 71).

Cultural differences also influence the gatekeeper during an interaction, in that difficulty communicating is seen as a hindrance to them. The more time the gatekeeper must spend with

the language learner, the more frustrated the gatekeeper becomes, making mutual understanding difficult. The gatekeeper can perceive the low level of ability displayed by the language learner as a direct reflection of their intelligence; they are seen as either ignorant or stupid. Finally, cultural differences, modes, and norms may be misinterpreted.

Methods and Methodology

According to Goldenberg (2008) the best way to teach second language acquisition is a hotly contested topic. The two widely argued points are whether a second language can be taught directly, as opposed to being acquired through meaningful interaction with native speakers. Several studies cited by Goldenberg show that in actuality a combination of teaching the language directly helps learners, but only if it is in conjunction with the learner being put in situations where they can use their knowledge to have genuine communication. Goldenberg also summarizes the findings of these articles in a helpful and succinct way:

1. Teaching students to read in their first language promotes higher levels of reading achievement in English;
2. What we know about good instruction and curriculum in general holds true for English learners, as well;
3. When instructing English learners in English, teachers must modify instruction to take into account students' language limitations (p. 14).

Padron, Waxman, Brown, and Powers (2000) found that successful English learners used their native language at home and with friends more frequently than unsuccessful students. Freeman, Freeman and Mercuri (2002) have pinpointed four keys for school success for older English learners:

1. Engage students in challenging, theme-based curriculum to develop academic concepts.
2. Draw on students' background-their experiences, cultures, and languages.
3. Organize collaborative activities and scaffold instruction to build students' academic English proficiency.
4. Create confident students who value school and value themselves as learners (p. 16).

Building first language skills for second language acquisition. Building upon Goldenberg's (2008) point about increasing reading achievement in English through reading in their first language, Hudelson (1994) found that Mexican-American children's construction of literacy over a twelve-week period of sustained interaction with books in both languages showed value. They did find disconnect in the type of methodology used. If the reading was focused semantically and syntactically it was fluent, but if it was graphophonic it was not fluent. Hudelson believed this occurred because the children figured out that they could sound out the words; they could use the sound-letter correspondences they were acquiring both to examine closely words that were already familiar to them and to figure out new words.

Goldenberg (2008) explores how learning through reading in a first language can help second language acquisition. One possible explanation is what educational psychologists call "transfer." This is the idea that if you learn something in one language, you either already know it in another language or can more easily learn it in another language (p. 15). Research conducted by the National Literacy Panel (NLP) including analyzing meta-data from 17 research studies found that teaching language learners to read in their first language and then in their second boosted their reading achievement in the second language. This finding holds true if one

teaches reading in both languages simultaneously in both languages (at different times of the day), as well.

Instruction and modification for second language acquisition. As Met (1994) states, "All good teachers must be good planners" (p. 161). They think about long term and short term goals. They think of the lesson from the point of view of their students. They try to anticipate how their lesson will unfold over a period of time. Finally, they know what their students will be doing at any given part of the lesson. This type of teaching is not only beneficial for mainstream native language learners, but for second language learners, as well, although it does require special modifications and accommodations to be effective.

According to Goldenberg (2000) second language learners benefit from a few specific items. One, clear goals and learning objectives are necessary. Meaningful, challenging, and motivating contexts in the curriculum including rich content are necessary. Well-designed, clearly structured, and appropriately paced instruction is essential. Active engagement and participation opportunities to practice are needed to apply, and transfer new knowledge. Finally, opportunities to interact with other students in motivating and appropriately structured contexts are deeply meaningful to second language learners (p. 17).

Johnson (1994) studied grouping strategies for second language learners. He found that pair work is highly effective when fluent bilingual students are paired with second language learners, or when pairing two students of different proficiency levels can be effective. Cooperative learning groups and small group work also contribute to second language acquisition. Met (1994) expands upon this finding by explaining that continued growth in language proficiency depends upon extended opportunities for linguistic interaction. Teachers

must provide for collaborative interaction and learning activities to strengthen this acquisition. In this strategy, teachers also need to monitor students to ensure that the second language learner does not take a subordinate role in the interaction.

Adding time to a second language learner's work leads to better results, as well. Goldenberg (2000) stated that research shows second language learners have more to learn, not only the regular curriculum, but also English. Thus it makes sense to find ways to build in extra time for better achievement. Negotiating meaning through patience and giving the learner time to express themselves is crucial. It is a collaborative process of give and take in which each participant works to send and receive comprehensible messages (Met, 1994). Three perspectives, from the role of the teacher are imperative:

1. Making language understandable to students;
2. Helping students make their messages understood;
3. Stretching, expanding, and refining students' language repertoire (p. 169).

Finally, monitoring and assessments for second language learners are imperative for successful second language acquisition. As Met (1994) stated, assessment for second language acquisition posses unique problems, such as difficulty determining exactly where students are underperforming. Met suggests allowing students to perform or act out their knowledge if their language skills are not up to par, yet. Portfolios including items such as writing samples, art, audio and video components, posters, and so forth are ways to gauge the cumulative learning of a language learner over time. Once a student's language proficiency has increased, writing tests can be used. Goldenberg (2000) suggests that simplifying test items, but keeping the content the same is an effective accommodation (p. 21).

Critical Second Language Acquisition

No discussion of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) can be complete without exploring the critical dimensions of the field, as well. Often, classrooms are the places where the dominant classes of society impose their ideological roles. These roles often lead to a reproduction of social inequalities through hegemonic control of the subordinate classes social and economic interests. This hegemony and reproduction is no different in the process of SLA in the classroom. In the U.S, Latinos, regardless of the diversity of the group, tend to be stigmatized by stereotypical images. These images bleed into the classroom, and utilizing a critical SLA approach aims to develop a linguistic competence, cultural awareness, and transformative action (Moreno-Lopez, 2005).

As a counterpoint to the hegemony of the dominant classes, critical work in the field of SLA focuses on issues of class, race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, among other topics, and the ideological frameworks that support inequity. The ultimate goal of critical SLA is to teach language within a broader, critical view of social, political, cultural and historical relations. From this point of view, critical SLA would empower the student, help them draw upon their own cultures and lived experiences and, hopefully, create a transformative vision that would transform society itself. As Gee (1994) states, "English teachers stand at the very heart of the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time" (p. 190).

Historically, a critical approach to SLA traces its roots back to Paolo Freire in Brazil, who saw literacy not as a technical skill but a means for learners to decode and demythologize their own cultural traditions and the inequitable structures of their society, and for whom literacy was inherently political (Pennycock, 1990). Methodologically, Freire's approach was composed

of three methods: naming, reflection, and action. Naming asked what the problem was; reflection explored the "why" of the problem, and finally, action strove toward a change to the situation. Though Freire dismissed the idea of a "Freirian Method," this set of ideas has become important for critical educators in the field of SLA (Crookes, 2005).

Pennycock (1999) amusingly states that a critical approach to SLA requires more than "arranging the chairs in a circle and discussing social issues" (p. 338). Critical approaches to language teaching and learning are different from other approaches because they take a particular political perspective on society, and espouse an activist perspective. Gore (as cited in Crookes, 2005) looking at critical SLA posits that there are not different methods to teaching critical SLA, but that teachers with radical perspectives draw selectively from pre-existing pedagogical options (p. 9). Conversely, Crookes examining critical feminist pedagogy and SLA found that adult critical language classrooms are distinguished by their real-world tasks that students need to engage with these tasks.

Bartolome (1994) posits that critical SLA needs to be situated in the students' cultural experiences. If not, students will have difficulty in mastering a content area that is not only alien to their reality, but also often antagonistic toward their culture and lived experiences (p. 191). Building on the notion that students should use their lived experiences in SLA classrooms, Moreno-Lopez (2005), suggests that students develop mini-ethnographies. These projects promote critical thinking skills, by giving students the freedom to explore their own interests related to their own culture. Because these types of projects are long-term endeavors the students can explore topics and become meaning makers, not simply consumers (p. 4).

Because critical SLA is education with the aim to empower students, it must move beyond the functional language skills taught in most classrooms across America. Critical SLA must include validating and investigating students' knowledge and cultural resources and developing language skills within a framework of transformative critique. Pennycock (1999) poses some important questions that all teachers and researchers of critical SLA should consider:

- Under what conditions can induction into a new language and culture be empowering?
- What kinds of curricula will allow students to explore critically both the second language and the second culture?
- How can one validate and explore students' own cultures and experiences through the second language?
- How can students pose their own problems through the second language?
- How can one validate student voice when the means of expression of that voice may be very limited?
- How can one work with limited language yet avoid trivializing content and learners?
- How does one balance the need to explore critically the forms and implications of standard languages and the need to empower students by teaching that standard language?
- What are the interests served by functional proficiency-based language programs (p. 311)?

A critical approach to SLA matters in the most fundamental way. It offers key insights into research, the possibility of promoting change through education, and engaging theory and practice on a deeper level. It is not simply a recipe for action or an add-on to curriculum, but a

transformative process of inquiry and action. Given the global and local context in which English is bound, educational, cultural, cultural, and political issues must come to the fore and replace the limiting context in which SLA now lives.

Summary

A review of the literature has revealed the following themes and patterns of the subjects of popular education and second language acquisition: the little research that exists around popular education and immigrant adult education points to increases in critical citizenship by students. Additionally, while there is limited research on using critical literacy in teaching second language acquisition, no research exists around using popular education to teach second language acquisition.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter explores the methodology of the qualitative case study being conducted. The researcher will provide a description of the process and rationale behind the methodology for this study, and the methods that were used to collect data. Next, the researcher will describe the rationale and process behind choosing the nonprofit that was the focus of this study. Finally, the researcher will provide a discussion of the validity and reliability of the research methods and data collection, and the reflexivity and positionality of the researcher, as well.

Research Questions

The goal of this qualitative case study was to better understand the nonprofit under study by asking the following:

1. What challenges and successes do students and volunteers identify in the critical literacy program at Amanecer Adult School?
2. What is the perception of the Spanish-speaking immigrant on the extent that this program contributes to their second language acquisition and critical citizenship?

A qualitative case study was appropriate for this study because the research questions dictate its use. Hatch (2002) suggests using a qualitative study when "social contexts can by systematically examined as a whole, without breaking them down into isolated, incomplete, and disconnected variables" and when the voice of the participants are included in a detailed

narrative (p. 9). This is important to this study, as the complete experiences and perceptions of the participants at Amanecer Adult School will be key in understanding the research.

My research questions, which were informed by a review of the literature from Chapter Two, focused on critical literacy, assimilation, second language acquisition, and immigrant populations. To answer these questions, I conducted observations of classroom interactions, as well as semi-structured interviews. I also convened one focus group and conducted document analysis to ascertain a holistic understanding of the program.

Methodology

Qualitative research was appropriate for this study, because the research questions dictate its use, as my questions studied the "how" and "why," rather than quantitative measures and statistics. Hatch (2002) lists several characteristics of a qualitative study, including natural settings, participant perspectives, and centrality of meaning. These characteristics were a key part of my study of Amanecer Adult School and its participants.

This study was conducted at Amanecer Adult School, a nonprofit that teaches adult immigrant students how to read and write English. As I went to the site to observe and speak to the participants in the classrooms, their natural setting, and qualitative research was the best method. Hatch (2002) makes clear that any setting that is controlled or contrived will tell a researcher little more than how a participant acts within that controlled environment. This was not the goal of this research. As part of the characteristics listed by Hatch, I captured participant voices and experiences as they worked together at a nonprofit organization, making qualitative research the most appropriate methodology.

Breaking from the positivist paradigm of "facts and figures," this type of research sought to understand the meanings participants use to understand their world. Blumer (as cited in Hatch, 2002) lists three key points about centrality of meaning:

1. human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning that the things have for them;
2. social interaction shapes those meanings;
3. an interpretive process is used to handle these meanings.

This research was used to understand the meaning that the participants constructed at Amanecer Adult School in their social lives.

A case study was be used for this research to better understand Amanecer Adult School. According to Yin (2009) a case study is an empirical inquiry that is situated in a real-life context for the purpose of investigating a contemporary phenomenon. Additionally, there were no clear boundaries between the phenomenon and the context of the study. Yin expands the definition to include data collection techniques, as well. Because distinctions between phenomenon and context are not always evident in real-life situations, there will be many more variables of interest than data points (p. 18).

Because Amanecer Adult School is a unique program in regard to methodology, theory and geography, a case study was the optimal method to use in this study. As Yin (2009) describes it, "the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" and this study focused on precisely that, the real-life experiences of adults learning (p. 4). Finally, because of the particular focus on nonprofit organizations especially as it pertains to adult immigrant education, this case study was

considered intrinsic in nature because: “The purpose is not to come to understand some abstract construct or generic phenomenon...” (Merriam, 1996, p. 48).

Methods of Data Collection

This study used qualitative research methods to collect data, more specifically: observations, semi-structured interviews, one focus group, and document analyses. For this study, data that was collected was limited to students, and volunteers of Amanecer Adult School.

Observations. As this was not a historical case study, the opportunity for observation was available. More specifically, I conducted participant-observation. This type of observation is a special mode of observation where the researcher is not a passive observer, but may participate in the events being studied (Yin, 2009). This type of observation was essential to this study, as I have been a volunteer at Amanecer Adult School for over a year and have participated in teaching, festivities, group work and social gatherings.

This type of observation was beneficial because it provided the viewpoint of the participants from the “inside,” rather than my passively observing from a distance. Hatch (2002) lists several benefits to observation that will strengthen this study. First, observations help a researcher understand the context of a setting, and given that Amanecer Adult School is a very specific type of nonprofit, teaching a very specific subgroup of adults, this is important. Observation also allows the researcher to see things that the participants may take for granted and not expand upon in interviews or focus groups. Observation allowed me to add my experiences in the setting to strengthen the research. Finally, observation was a key component to the triangulation of my data (see below).

The observations were unstructured, as I wanted to observe all aspects of the classroom, including interactions, conversations, décor, and so forth. The observations took place over a one month period of time and I observed four classroom sessions.

Semi-structured interviews. As Hatch (2002) elucidated, qualitative interviews are used to uncover how a participant has formed and interpreted his or her world. Because much of what a participant knows and feels is unobservable, interviews are essential in building trust and facilitating data collection that can uncover a participant's perception on reality. Guba (as cited in Hatch, 2002) identifies five outcomes of an interview process: here and now constructions, or how a participant explains the world; reconstructions, an explanation of past events or actions; projections, how a participant anticipates future events or actions; triangulation, verification of information from other sources; and member checking, or verification of information developed by the researcher. All five of these outcomes were vital in understanding and evaluating data collected at Amanecer Adult School. Yin (2009) stated that in the end, the researcher has two jobs in relation to interviewing:

1. To follow one's own line of inquiry, as reflected by one's case study protocol, and;
2. To ask questions in an unbiased manner that serves the needs of the line of inquiry (p. 106).

As my research questions dictated that certain topics should be explored in questioning, semi-structured questions were appropriate. Semi-structured interviews were also appropriate given that I expected certain amount flexibility during the questioning process, as my participants spoke a different language and cultural norms were taken into account during the interviews.

As outlined by Hatch (2002) interviews use four types of questions: descriptive, structural, contrast, and essential. All these questions were used in this study to gain understanding and paint a full and rich picture of the data. Descriptive questions allowed the participants to fully describe their experience at Amanecer Adult School. Structural questions helped me categorize the participants' knowledge and explore social or cultural experiences. Contrast questions were valuable in helping me attempt to highlight the meaning behind the actions of the participants at Amanecer Adult School. Finally, essential questions allowed me to target the questioning in the hopes of gaining essential knowledge for my study.

Focus group. A focus group is a set of individuals with similar characteristics or experiences that come together to discuss a particular topic with a researcher (Hatch, 2002). A focus group is led by the researcher and is meant to be more informal than the semi-structured interviews described above. The data collected tends to supplement other data collected over the course of research, but can be the basic data collection strategy of a study.

There were many advantages to using a focus group in studying Amanecer Adult School. As Morgan (as cited in Hatch, 2002) explains, focus groups produce concentrated data on precisely the topic of interest. This was beneficial to my study of Amanecer Adult School, because my research questions addressed very specific topics. Next, focus groups have the ability to explore the dynamics of group interaction that may not be possible with observations or interviews. Finally, the security the participants may feel in a group had the potential for more full and rich data.

Document analysis. For this research it would have been difficult to answer my research questions without analyzing Amanecer Adult School documents. Hatch (2002) describes document analysis as "unobtrusive data" (p. 116). Unobtrusive data can provide insight into a social phenomenon without interfering with said phenomenon. This was especially important for this study, as Amanecer Adult School is an educational nonprofit, though not an official 501(c)3 nonprofit. Additionally, I analyzed curriculum, pamphlets, and Amanecer Adult School's website.

There were several advantages to collecting and analyzing documents. First, according to Hatch (2002), documents are "nonreactive" (p. 119). Thus, they can tell their own story without the interference or interpretation of the participant. Document analysis may be helpful with the interview and focus group interactions, as I will have background knowledge to base questions, and will be able to interpret answers based on this knowledge. Finally, the documents have the ability to create a context for the site and participants that would otherwise be lacking.

Gaining Entry to and Description of the Site

As I do not work in the field of education, this research could not be conducted at my place of employment. Thus, gaining entrance to the Institute of Immigrant Literacy (IIL) (the former parent organization of what is now called Amanecer Adult School), a small nonprofit with headquarters in large urban city on the west coast of the United States was not only imperative, but as it turned out, challenging as well. After an exhaustive search, I then had to navigate their decentralized and often fragmented organization to find the right people who could connect me to the programs that would fit my and their needs.

I began my search with a simple Google inquiry. Typing "critical literacy," "adult education," and "City Name," into the search box resulted in exactly zero hits, as did other variations on the same theme. As I understood it was highly unlikely that I would have any luck in the public education system, I immediately moved to the nonprofit sector. Using www.guidestar.org, a website specifically geared toward searching for nonprofits, I began anew. After several hours of searching I narrowed the field to one: IIL.

The mission of IIL, as articulated on its website is, "To create a more humane and democratic society by responding to the needs and problems of disenfranchised people through leadership development and educational programs based on Popular Education methodology. Specifically our goal is to organize and educate immigrants concerned with solving problems in their own communities."

Fortunately, the website was well organized and contained the necessary information I needed to make initial contact. Having worked in nonprofit organizations for many years, I knew that the best way to approach IIL would be from the top, so I immediately composed an email and sent it to the Executive Director. As I was not only interested in conducting research, but also in participating in transformative change, I used the email as an opportunity to present my bona fides as a former adult educator who has worked with immigrant populations, my current educational status along with my interest in critical pedagogy, and my willingness to volunteer at any level, doing any type of job that might be needed.

After two weeks elapsed and not receiving a return email, I realized I would have to change tactics yet again. I checked the website and made two phone calls, one to each of the coordinators for Adult School (now known as Amanecer Adult School). I also copied the email I

sent to the Executive Director and used it to contact the president of IIL's board of directors, as well. While I never received a call from either coordinator, I did receive a response from the board member and within two days an employee from IIL called me.

I arrived at IIL headquarters one week later to meet with a coordinator for the family literacy program. She gave me a brief orientation to the organization, an overview of their programs and asked me about my interests. She also explained that I never received a follow-up call from the coordinators of Adult School because neither spoke or wrote English very well and that I would be contacted by a longtime volunteer of the program to talk about any opportunities they might have for me.

I received a call from the volunteer two days later and after an extensive conversation, it was agreed that I would be able to volunteer as an English teacher and conduct any research that I might have. I volunteered at Adult School for a year. Due to funding constraints, ILL and Adult School parted ways. The staff, students, and volunteers, not willing to let this program close, started their own nonprofit called Amanecer Adult School. I continued my volunteer work from Adult School to Amanecer Adult School.

Site. As of early 2011, Adult School and ILL parted ways, with Adult School setting up their own nonprofit called Amanecer Adult School, but continuing with the same curriculum and students. Amanecer Adult School is housed in a Quaker House in the center of a predominantly Latino neighborhood. As they are a new and small nonprofit, they have no central office, but instead work out of the Quaker House and the personal home of the one full time staff member. In light of their being a new nonprofit, they have crafted a new mission and new objectives, as well:

> Mission:
>
> To create social, cultural, and educational change in the Latino community, particularly among immigrants, utilizing programs rooted in social justice that believe in an equitable multi- ethnic and multi-lingual society. Our goal is to develop a critical consciousness that can translate into action to defend human and civil rights. To accomplish this we base our work in the pedagogical premises of popular education (PE) that support the construction of a socially just and democratic society.
>
> Objectives:

- Offer theoretical, methodological, and technical training that facilitates a better understanding of the reality in which we live and works toward transforming it democratically.
- Defend public education as a necessary democratic process while at the same time develop alternative educational and cultural processes and models that cultivate socially critical thinkers.

- Develop a critical and constructive curriculum that supports participatory, democratic, and inclusive processes.
- Promote a wide-scale project of cultural action from the perspective of the Latino community, particularly immigrants, that fosters social change with justice and dignity.
- Develop a social network of Latinos, particularly immigrants, that works to construct new communication structures that best express our culture and identity.

The students of Amanecer Adult School are all Latino adult immigrants. They range in age from 22-65 and are, of course, 100% Spanish speaking. Many of the students are undocumented, though the school does not require documentation, or ask about legal status.

Description of the Participants and Sampling Criteria

All participants in this study were students or volunteers of Amanecer Adult School. For this research study, nine participants were selected. The following is a list of the participants:

1. Six students at Amanecer Adult School. Three were female and three were male. Each will range in age from 30-65.
2. Three volunteers at Amanecer Adult School. Two were female and one a male. Each will range in age from 22-55.

The participants were selected using a convenient and purposive sampling criterion. Maxwell (2005), in speaking about convenience sampling states that, "persons, settings, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can't be gotten as well from other choices" (p. 88). The participants were chosen based on the criteria that they are currently active as volunteers or students at Amanecer Adult School. The choice of volunteers was based on length of time they have volunteered for Amanecer Adult School. The volunteer

must have at least one year of volunteer experience teaching English at Amanecer Adult School. For the student participants, they must have been currently attending classes at Amanecer Adult School, and have been enrolled for at least two years. They must also have taken a Level 2 English course (there are three levels at Amanecer) for at least one of those years.

An additional process of purposeful sampling that was used entailed what is called "snowballing," also known as chain referral sampling. In this method, participants or informants who have been contacted use their knowledge of the research site to refer the researcher to potential participants who may contribute to the study. Snowball sampling is often used to find and recruit "hidden populations," that is, groups not easily accessible to researchers through other sampling strategies (Nyamongo, 2001).

In regard to purposeful sampling, Creswell (2002) states that there are four goals:

1. Achieve representativeness of the context, which includes the setting, the individuals, and the activities

2. "...adequately capture the heterogeneity in the population" (p. 89).

3. "...deliberately examine cases that are critical for the theories that you began the study with, or that you have subsequently developed" (p. 90).

"...establish particular comparisons to illuminate the reasons for differences between settings or individuals" (p. 90).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the six students and three volunteers. The students were all Latino, three women and three men. All the students have lived in the United States for 15 years or less; their legal status is unknown. They have all been with Amanecer Adult School for three or more years.

Of the volunteers, three were women and Latina, and one was male and Latino. One woman has been with Amanecer Adult School for five years. She is the volunteer coordinator for Amanecer Adult School. The other two volunteers are sisters, have been with Amanecer Adult School, off and on, for a year and a half and are undergraduate students. Their mother attended classes at Amanecer Adult School. The male volunteer earned an Ed.D and has been teaching at Amanecer Adult School one day a week. All the participants are in a position of either teaching, administering or learning at Amanecer Adult School.

Data Collection Procedures

Submission to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was completed in May of 2012 following the successful defense of my dissertation proposal. Once approval was granted, I contacted the administration at Amanecer Adult School and scheduled a meeting to discuss the logistics and permissions needed for this study. Upon completion of the meeting with the administration, I contacted the first student participant of the study, and the three volunteer participants at Amanecer Adult School that have been pre-selected by the researcher. Written consent were received using a Consent Form, the purpose of which was to outline the purpose of the study, describe any foreseeable risk or discomforts to the participants, and give an overview of any benefits to the subjects or to others which may reasonably be expected from the research. Additionally, I gave my contact information to the participants for questions regarding the study, and explain that participating in this study is voluntary and that they may refuse to participate in the entire study or in any part of the study.

After collecting the proper paperwork, I began the initial interviews. All interviews took place over a three month period. One focus group was conducted during the three-month process.

Classroom observations were also conducted over this period. Amanecer Adult School holds classes twice a week, thus ample opportunity existed to collect data through this method.

Data Collection Analysis

Maxwell (2005) stated that, "the discussion of data analysis is often the weakest part of a qualitative proposal; in extreme cases, it consists entirely of generalities and 'boilerplate' language taken from methods texts, and gives little sense of how the analysis will actually be done (p. 95). In the hopes of avoiding this, I began my analysis by searching for errors in translation, transcription and note taking. This ensured that I had a proper base from which to analyze my data.

To analyze my data, I used inductive analysis. Practically, I hand coded data and grouped information into categories for writing purposes. Hatch (2002) describes this method as starting with specific elements and finding connections among them, or to start with pieces of data and pull them together in to a whole. The goal is to look for patterns across the data and then argue for those patterns as having general explanatory statements. Hatch has provided a road map to inductive analysis that will be used in this study:

1. Read the data and identify frames of analysis
2. Create domains based on semantic relationships discovered within frames of analysis
3. Identify salient domains, assign them a code, and then put other points aside
4. Reread data, constantly refining salient domains, while keeping a record of where relationships are found in the data
5. Decide if domains are either supported or not supported y the data and search the data for examples that either do not fit with or run counter to the relationships in your domains

6. Complete an analysis within domains
7. Search for themes across domains
8. Create a master outline expressing relationships within and among domains
9. Select data experts to support the elements of your outline

Inductive analysis was well suited for my type of study because there was a focus on discovery of cultural meanings from data sets that included observable data (Hatch, 2002). The strength of this analysis was to gain meaning from complex data with a broad focus in mind, such as this study.

Validity and Reliability

Patton (2001) states that validity and reliability are two factors that any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analyzing results and judging the quality of the study. Yin (2002) defines three points that are essential for validity and reliability for a case study using what he calls construct validity,

1. using multiple sources of evidence,
2. establishing a free-flowing chain of evidence, and
3. having informants review drafts of the study or report to verify that what is being reported is true.

For this study, I used a focus group, semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis for the multiple and free-flowing sources of evidence. As many of my participants speak very little to no English, a certified translator was necessary to fulfill some of the interviews and focus groups. This translator was certified by the state of California and possesses a NIH Certification as a research assistant.

Triangulation of data was key in ensuring the validity and reliability of my data. Mathison (1988) believes that triangulation has become important "in naturalistic and qualitative approaches to evaluation [in order to] control bias and establishing valid propositions because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with this alternate epistemology" (p. 13). Patton (2001) advocates the use of triangulation by stating "triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches" (p. 247). For this study, I used what Denzin (2006) referred to as methodological triangulation. This type of triangulation involves using more than one method to gather data.

Trustworthiness was also a key factor in the success of this research study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) posit that trustworthiness of a research study is important to evaluating its worth. They list several methods ways to establish trustworthiness:

1. Credibility, or confidence in the what you believe to be the truth of the findings
2. Transferability or showing that the findings can be applicable in other contexts
3. Dependability or showing that consistency and repeatability of the findings
4. Confirmability or a degree of neutrality or lack of researcher bias, motivation, or interest.

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, I analyzed data as soon as it was collected. Notes, translations and analysis were recorded when the data was fresh and did not languish. Additionally, I kept a journal of internal reflections and assumptions of the study and actively tried to find data that contradicted my assumptions. Finally, member checking was vital to ensure trustworthiness. In this case, member checking required me to go back to participants I

worked with to ascertain if my initial and final findings comported with their understanding of the site and the data.

Reflexivity and Positionality

I am originally from Florida and while attending graduate school I was introduced to a family literacy program that used critical literacy to teach their students from a predominately Guatemalan neighborhood. I volunteered and worked at the nonprofit for four years and was able to see the transformative value of critical literacy. As such, I have a bias toward the efficacy of critical literacy when used in adult immigrant education. While conducting this research I was extra vigilant about my biases and preconceptions to ensure that my research valid and reliable.

When I sought out Amanecer Adult School and began to volunteer on a weekly basis, I started to see the strengths and weaknesses of the program. They have asked me to help with the curriculum and training of volunteers. Thus, I was a researcher with intimate, detailed knowledge of the organization, and its methods. This was a benefit, as I was able to explain the program and how it functions in a way that an outsider could not.

I approached Amanecer Adult School with a certain set of assumptions given my experience working with adult immigrant education and critical pedagogy. First, as I have seen the positive results of critical pedagogy in action, I had the assumption that this program *should* be effective. As the story from Chapter Two illustrated, critical education can change even the most downtrodden and marginalized people into critical citizens. Another assumption that had, given the jovial nature of Amanecer Adult School, is that everyone I was to speak with would have a positive view of the work/learning they experience. It was my job as a researcher to use

all my methods of data collection to glean a true picture of the work at Amanecer Adult School: for good or not.

Another challenge I faced in this process is that I am a 30-something, English speaking white male. To my participants, I may have represented the dominant and oppressive power of the United States. This in turn, I believe may have lead the participants to not be entirely truthful or open during the research process for fear or perceived intimidation. Additionally, as previously mentioned, some of my participants only speak Spanish, and a translator was necessary for my research. Being a true linguistic outsider posed challenges, as well. Clearly, as a volunteer and researcher I had a complex role in this study.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the rationale behind the methodology of this study, described its design, procedures and explored the validity, reliability and positionality of the author. I used observations, semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and document analysis to answer my research questions.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study had two goals. The first goal was to understand how a critical, non-formal, adult literacy program addressed the challenges and successes, which the students and volunteers identified at Amanecer Adult School. The second goal was to explore the perception of the student Spanish-speaking immigrants on the extent to which this program contributed to their second language acquisition and critical citizenship. These goals were examined through studying a local nonprofit organization, Amanecer Adult School (AAS), that espouses critical literacy as its main goal. Ultimately this study was interested in how the school addressed the dialectical role of helping adult immigrants assimilate to the new culture and fitting in with mainstream society while learning English for critical citizenship.

Research Questions

The following are the two research questions this study used to reach the goals as mentioned above:

1. What challenges and successes do students and volunteers identify in the critical literacy program at Amanecer Adult School?
2. What is the perception of the Spanish-speaking immigrant about the program's contributions to their second language acquisition and critical citizenship?

The Context for this Study

Setting

Amanecer Adult School was a small community-based school in the center of a predominantly Latino community. It was part of a larger community-based organization called El Corazón de la Educación. Amanecer Adult School is run out of a Quaker House, built in the late 1800s. As such, the house had late 19th century issues, including a lack of air conditioning or heating, faulty electrical systems, and an aging frame. It remained blazing hot in the summer and bitterly cold in the winter. Students were drawn from the surrounding five-block radius in the middle of a bustling and large trendy urban area with mostly young artistic tenants, making the juxtaposition of immigrant and hipster-chic, jarring.

Neither Amanecer Adult School nor El Corazón de la Educación were a nonprofit organizations, but rather, community-based organizations. They did not hold the requisite 501(c)3 designation from the Federal government. The school was originally created by a passionate group of people dedicated to the ideals of popular education and critical literacy about 20 years ago under a different name and was part of a federally recognized nonprofit, Villa School (fictitious name). The school was led by Mexican community organizer, Javier Cruz (fictitious name). Two years ago, Cruz parted ways with Villa School and started El Corazón de la Educación, an umbrella organization under which, several programs, including Amanecer Adult School are located. The other programs included: Immigrant Women, Popular Educators,; Parents for Change; 3. iTeens. The AAS website indicated:

Immigrant Women, Popular Educators

Immigrant Women, Popular Educators is a capacity-building project whose purpose is to build a team of immigrant women as popular educators that can play a decisive role in the construction of alternative forms of education.

Parents for Change

Parents for Change is a project that aims to develop parent leaders in public schools within the local school districts. Our purpose is to increase and improve the capacity of parents to advocate for their children and participate in educational decisions that most affect them and other children in their communities.

iTeens (Involved Teens)

iTeens is a youth leadership building project in the city that provides academic support and prepares young people to take a more active role in their community. Although iTeens is open to all youth, the project focuses on the unique needs of undocumented teens.

In 2010, after parting ways with Villa school, Javier Cruz set up Amanecer Adult School at the Quaker House and began to make plans for a new curriculum, policies, and procedures, and to start the process of becoming a 501(c)3 organization. The location of the new school was quite different from the old site. The old site had dedicated classrooms with white boards, desks, chairs and materials such as dictionaries. The new site was devoid of all that and the volunteers and students had to fill the gaps the best they could. Participants of this study indicated that the group held regular community meetings, trainings, and planning groups.

One year in to this project, Cruz was re-diagnosed with cancer, and subsequently passed away. The void left by Cruz's death was felt throughout the school. The group was without a leader and vision to keep the work going in a focused direction. As a result, Cruz's wife became the *de facto* leader, but lacked the qualities that made Javier such an effective leader, such as experience, strategic planning, and organization.

Funding for Amanecer Adult School is nonexistent. The volunteers and community members have tried several small methods for raising money such as, bake sales, solicitations, and even giving their own money on occasion. This has not lead to a replicable and stable line of funding. The majority of Amanecer's physical material is not bought, but donated, there is no paid staff, and the volunteers do not receive stipends. It is with this backdrop that I began my research.

Participants

Table 2

Participants in the Study

Pseudonym	Role at Amanecer Adult School	Participation
Maria	Volunteer	Interview
Margaret	Volunteer	Interview
Frank	Volunteer	Interview
Jose	Student	Interview/Focus Group
Jason	Student	Interview/Focus Group
Jane	Student	Interview/Focus Group
John	Student	Interview/Focus Group
Michelle	Student	Interview
Fred	Student	Interview

Summary of Key Findings

As evidenced in the data, there were many challenges and few successes at Amanecer Adult School. The lack of resources, ranging from limited physical space to limited time and money, diminished the ability of the staff and volunteers to produce a coherent program. Additionally, a lack of curriculum or formal training in both general education and popular education inhibited the school from fulfilling its mission and vision. The staff, volunteers, and students all expressed frustration working with these challenges and a desire to see the program change.

The data revealed that students experienced literacy instruction mainly centered on functional learning, with a skills-based focus on low frequency decoding. Students followed the structure and direction of the program with devotion but without space for critical inquiry about their learning.

There was a conspicuous absence of critical theory or methodology in teaching English, which in turn led to limited second language acquisition. There was no intentionality in the curriculum for culturally responsive pedagogy, conversation or critical citizenship. Instead, a focus on "making it in America" lessons took place, which relied heavily on teaching the students the basics of self-preservation and survival, such as the basics of using the library and post office.

The Research Process

Access. My position as a volunteer at Amanecer Adult School allowed me to access the site much easier than if I held an etic status to the school. As a volunteer I have built trust among the other volunteers, as well as the students, and this enabled me to not only interview and observe to gather data, but to go beyond the anticipated number of interviews and ask for additional participants when I needed more data. Though I gained access by becoming a volunteer and had successful interactions with the founder, other volunteers and students, my position of authority may have inhibited the students from fully expressing their thoughts on the program.

Participant selection, interviews and focus group. Interviews with students and volunteers were conducted after classroom hours and during scheduled breaks in the program from July to September. The participants were selected based on the criteria that they were currently active as volunteers or students at Amanecer Adult School. The choice of volunteers was based on length of time they have volunteered for Amanecer Adult School. The volunteer should have had at least one year of volunteer experience teaching English at Amanecer Adult School. Student participants should have been currently attending classes at Amanecer Adult School, and should have been enrolled for at least two years. They should also have taken a Level-2 English course (there are three levels at Amanecer) during at least one of those years. All of the interviews were conducted at the Quaker House, since it was a convenient location for both students and volunteers. I began my initial inductive analysis with the observations, my field notes, and interviews. These initial analyses led me to follow-up with additional interviews and

observations, including expanding my interview pool of student participants by two. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and analyzed by hand by the researcher.

After my interviews were completed, I conducted one focus group with students in August. Six students volunteered to participate and the focus group was conducted at Amanecer Adult School in order for ease of access for the students, as well as for the researcher. The focus group was recorded and transcribed.

Observations and documents. The qualitative research process began with observations at Amanecer Adult School from July through September. These observations primarily consisted of classroom interactions, though other community meetings were also observed. These observations helped me understand Amanecer Adult School's pedagogical practices, the way a classroom is run, the adult English language learners, the overall program operations, and to gauge community support. Generally, the classroom observations lasted two hours from 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

During those months, I also conducted document analysis, which included the website, and volunteer curriculum, in order to triangulate with the themes that emerged in the interviews and focus groups. I began by reviewing Amanecer Adult School's website. I also looked at the curriculum the volunteers had pieced together, as well as researching the websites from which the curriculum came.

Research challenges. One challenge I faced as a researcher was that during my time volunteering at the school, the founder, Javier broke ties with Villa School and created El Corazón de la Educación. There was a great amount of turmoil and confusion during the process. The location was changed from one site to another, students were not followed up with because records were not kept, and volunteers became frustrated with the process. This resulted in a transition period that was not complete. As the new space was being sorted out, it was difficult to maintain contact with any of the decision-makers about my research.

Another challenge I faced was questioning my participants using my initial research question. Research Question One did not originally refer to "successes," but rather asked about the opportunities at Amanecer Adult School. My interpreter and I modified questions throughout the process to try and capture from the participants their views on the opportunities available to Amanecer Adult School. I began by directly asking students and volunteers about the opportunities at the school. I was met with blank stares and shrugs from the students. I changed tactics and moved toward asking about what the school could do better. While this was more effective with the volunteers, the students did not have any answers. In the end, I began asking about the successes the volunteers and students experienced at the school. Combining observations and interviews, I was able to identify and speak to successes in the program. I believe my inexperience as a research contributed to the challenge in interviewing the participants.

An additional challenge I faced as a researcher was the silence I experienced from the students during the interview process. I had known many of these students for almost two years because I volunteered at Amanecer Adult School teaching English. I had attended social

functions for the school and had tried to engage in trust building when possible. When I sat down with these same students and asked questions, I was frequently met with one-word answers, and too often met with an "I don't know." The focus group was especially difficult; no student was willing to be the first to answer a question, and very few students were willing to build upon the comments of other students. It did not help that I had known a student for two years, or that I had a translator asking the question in the students' native language.

Part of this challenge may have been the legal status of the students. While one criterion of this study was to not ask about legal status, from years of volunteering and teaching at Amanecer, I know that many if not all of the students were undocumented. As such, there was an inherent sense of self-protection that the students exhibited, including remaining silent.

Many of the challenges I faced may have been due to a lack of prolonged engagement and my position as a White male teacher/researcher. According to Padgett (2008) prolonged engagement helps ameliorate reactivity and respondent bias and the researcher becomes "accepted (or at least tolerated)" when they spend long periods of time at a research site as a researcher (p. 187). I do not believe I spent enough time outside of my position as a volunteer teacher for the students to acclimate to my role as a researcher. Additionally, questioning Latino students who may have been undocumented, or who may never have had experience with research may have been uncomfortable for them. Because I was a White male in a position of power at Amanecer, the students might have viewed my position of authority as intimidating. I was the only non-Latino that volunteered at Amanecer, and often the only White person the students encountered outside of their employment.

Minimization of bias. Great care was taken to minimize researcher bias in this study. First, utilizing criteria to select participants was important. I did not want to cherry-pick participants to tell my story, but to choose participants based on a set criteria to give the most even distribution of participant experience. I also used the data collection process to reduce the element of bias. There were participant observation, interviews with students and volunteers, document analysis, and memos I wrote in the field. The memos were helpful in reflecting on the challenges and experiences that I encountered during the research process. The memos were captured through a variety of ways from a word processor to Post-It notes. The memos helped me reflect on the process of data collection.

As I was not merely a researcher, but a volunteer at the program, my bias toward what thought was the "right" way to teach or interact with students was forefront in my mind. I remained cognizant of the influence this might have had on my data collection and data analysis processes. I reflected on an ongoing basis on how to avoid omitting vital data during collection and analysis. Writing my own thoughts in my field notes helped minimize this bias. I had to remind myself that it wasn't my job to "judge" anyone at the program, but to find out the why and how of the process in the most objective manner possible.

Trustworthiness. For trustworthiness, I used methodological triangulation; I used more than one method for gathering data. In this study I used interviews, observations and document analysis. I also analyzed data as soon as it was collected. Notes, translations and analysis were recorded when the data was fresh and the analysis did not languish. Additionally, I kept a journal of internal reflections and assumptions of the study and actively tried to find data that contradicted my assumptions. Finally, member checking was vital to ensure trustworthiness. In

this case, member checking required me to go back to participants I worked with to ascertain if my initial and final findings comported with their understanding of the site and the data.

Themes Emerging in the Data

Through an inductive analysis (Hatch, 2002), four themes emerged to illuminate how the volunteers and students at Amanecer Adult School taught and learned in an environment that professed an adherence to popular education and critical citizenship. They were:

1. Culture of the institution, characterized by the domains of (a) lack of resources; (b) lack of pedagogical training for staff and volunteers; (b) enrollment, retention, and tardiness; and (c) critical citizenship.
2. Volunteer trial by fire, characterized by the domains of (a) volunteer commitment; (b) sense of despair; and (c) no understanding of popular education; (d) community and civic support, (e) reflexive Action/conscientization, and (f) researcher experience as a volunteer.
3. Students: Unready, Willing and Underserved, characterized by the domains of (a) student affirmation and respect for teachers; (b) classes provide confidence; (c) lack of time for adult students; (d) command of the second language; and (e) reflective action for students.
4. Curriculum characterized by the domains of (a) No curriculum, (b) mimicking, (c) functional language learning; (c) verbs; (c) vocabulary, (d) self-protection, (e) silent period in second language acquisition, (f) no assessment, and (g) no lived realities or critical engagement of society.

Amanecer Adult School, a Program in Transition

Amanecer Adult School is a program in transition. The school is moving from a program, according to interviews, that was critical and effective to one, that after the founder, Javier Cruz's death, is struggling. The school professed that their main goal was still English language acquisition. It was the reason people signed up and came to class, despite all of the challenges they faces. As Maria, the AAS volunteer coordinator, put it:

> We [Amanecer Adult School] always believe that it's very important, particularly in this area where there is the most Latino population and when we were on the other side, in the meetings we always had there are always people that would come and tell us that they couldn't communicate with the teachers, their children's teachers, because the language. Either that or they had to make a doctor's appointment and they can't do it, so um to us it's very important to help them acquire a second language to understand in their own words to understand rather than to have someone translate it, because the translation might not be accurate or some situations may be omitted and later they found out.

The transition that Amanecer is facing was evident in the research and expressed in the themes below.

Theme 1: Culture of the Institution

As I analyzed the data, it became clear that the culture of the institution played a major role in the education of the students and in the teaching of the volunteers. A lack or resources, including physical materials such as white boards, writing utensils, and dictionaries, a lack of training for the volunteers, and the inability to retain students directly affected the instruction and morale of volunteers at AAS.

Lack of Resources

Space and materials. A lack of physical resources such as tables and chairs, space, and materials was clearly evident from observing the class and through conducting interviews. During my first observation, I noticed that the class was held in the large room in the Quaker House. Large meeting rooms, where public forums were facilitated as well as religious services, distinguished a Quaker house from other houses of worship, and certainly from most schools. The room was sparse, save for long, hard benches that were arranged in a diamond shape that moved inward toward the center of the room. The benches were used for Quaker religious services and were not designed for classroom instruction. There were no chairs, tables, white boards, or other equipment that could be used to teach a class. Finally, the lighting in the room was minimal, only four light bulbs at the center of high ceilings.

As the students entered the class, they moved to other rooms in the house collecting other items to use in the classroom. One student brought out folding tables, the other a white board and easel, and yet another, fans, as it was extremely hot in the house. I watched as the teacher reached into his briefcase and brought out dry erase markers and handouts for the day. There were no books of any kind, not even dictionaries.

Maria, AAS volunteer coordinator, reflected on this challenge in our interview. When asked what some of her challenges around the program have been, she laughed:

> A lot! First of all it was the space. I found out it was a challenge, because when we first moved here last year we had about 20 students, and we couldn't fit, we had 3 levels, and we only have 4 spaces and we also provide childcare. Childcare we had over there

(pointing to a smaller room in the back). Plus the Spanish Literacy, so actually the Spanish Literacy were here (the room we were in) and the children were outside.

So in October, November, December, when it was cold and rainy and all that stuff, the kids they were coming in, so either they stayed in here with us or over there and it was crowded. So space, mainly space.

Then we found that we don't have the equipment. That was the second part. So little by little, we began getting little things, the boards, paper, notebooks, and just the basic material that we need.

A conversation with the volunteers of the program revealed a lack of resources was an issue, but not an insurmountable problem. In response, the volunteers brought their own markers, pens, and paper to class, and were prepared to buy what is necessary to facilitate the class. They viewed it as part of the job, though they expressed shock and outrage at the idea. "When I first started I was stunned, stunned really at the lack of any material," summed up one of the volunteers.

The students of the program did not report any issues with the lack of resources. They did not perceive this to be a problem or, at the very least, did not express that it was a problem. Each of the students in class owned a personal copy of a dictionary and provided personal materials for class.

However, many of the students also commented on the space issues. All of the student participants had been attending classes for at least two years, so they had been a part of previous classes at Villa School. These classes were held in a spacious community center two blocks south of the Quaker House. One student described it as:

> At [the old facility] we had desks and chairs. There was a chalkboard and we used to be able to write sentences on the board for class. Here it is hot and noisy, sometimes I can't focus. At [the old facility] we had a separate classroom for all of the classes, so the levels were separated. It was better.

Many of the students reported having issues with the temperature of the Quaker House. This was corroborated, physically, by the amount of sweat that poured off each participant and the researcher during the interviews. The temperature in the Quaker House during the interviews, at 8 p.m., was no less than 95 degrees.

The students expressed concerns to the volunteers, and the frustration the volunteers experienced was evident:

> There have been a few complaints about the kids and the space, so we just told them that this is what we have and this is what we provide. But, you know, there's always someone who doesn't like whatever.

Lack of Pedagogical Training for Staff and Volunteers

The staff of Amanecer Adult School was volunteer driven. Since the school was not funded as a nonprofit, but was a community organization, there were no funds to hire a paid staff person to administer the daily operations of the school. Maria, the volunteer coordinator, was the only person directly affiliated with Amanecer Adult School that was in charge of any of the operational aspects of the program, and she volunteered her time. Her job was to find volunteers to teach the classes. In explaining her functions at Amanecer, Maria said:

> Well, I'm the only volunteer that they told me that I supposed to get volunteers, like I'm in charge of finding volunteers, assigning what the volunteers are going to do…this is

just part time that I do because I don't have the time. I have to work my regular job. So when I come here I do all this stuff and when I go home I do some other stuff. It's a little difficult to do everything and I don't really do everything like, I am supposed to or like I wish I could. It's just too much. I'm learning. This is the first time I'm doing this, like this position that I get volunteers. It's my first year and I've been finding lot of troubles.

Maria's position as an unpaid volunteer coordinator made it difficult for her to find and retain volunteers to teach the classes. There was no concerted effort to recruit volunteers; rather they came to the school from various locations and for various reasons. Many of the volunteers were undergraduate students from local universities. A majority of these volunteers had never taught classes of any kind. They had either heard about the program through one of their classes, or knew someone who had volunteered in the past. Some of the volunteers were children of former students of the program. As Margaret, a volunteer expressed, her dedication was driven by personal feelings toward the program.

There was no current formal training program for the volunteers. In some of the interviews, there was an indication that daylong trainings on popular education were provided in the past, but they no longer were offered. Maria expressed this frustration in an interview, "…[F]or the past two semesters there have been no training…and we are supposed to have trainings!" Maria indicated that she believed that only one person was teaching in accordance to the philosophy of Amanecer Adult School and it was because she took classes in college, not because she received any trainings internally.

Enrollment, retention, and tardiness. Student retention was a key challenge for Amanecer Adult School. Every semester the school and its volunteers worked diligently to recruit in the community by posting flyers, speaking at community events, and going to local businesses to spread the word. These efforts paid off in profound ways; every semester dozens of students enrolled in the program. According to Maria during the current semester, "We got close to 50 new students, but they left." Asked where they went, Maria responded:

We don't know. They just left and since I'm the only one volunteer who's supposed to follow through. I've never quite followed through with a stop by or, because way back five, six, seven years someone was telling me they used to stop by the house of the students. It's not possible. I cannot do that. And once in a while, I used to call, but then phones get disconnected so I lose that information, so I just let it go. And whoever comes I ask them for the new information. And those are the ones that just keep coming. But the others, I have no idea where they go or why.

Amanecer Adult School seemed to go through this "boom and bust" scenario every semester. As one volunteer described it, at the beginning of the semester, everyone, including the volunteers was excited to get started, they had sign-up periods for the students and then an orientation, where the volunteers explained to the students what they were going to learn, and how the classes were structured. By the sixth or seventh week, people showed up late, and others stopped coming. By the tenth and twelfth week, they were typically down to 50% of the original number of students. In the final weeks of the semester, they were left with a group of ten to twelve students who consistently attended classes, though these students were often tardy to class.

In observing classroom instruction and in interviews, it was clear that time was a major challenge for almost every student at Amanecer Adult School. On the first day of my observations it was 103 degrees outside. Since there was no air conditioning in the Quaker House, and little ventilation, the thermometer on the wall read 100 degrees. It was hot, stuffy and uncomfortable. As the class started there was one student present and ready.

Frank (Level Three instructor): Where are all the students?

Student: No know. They always late

Frank: I know; we need to fix that.

Frank wrote his name on the board and began the lesson. Twenty minutes later, another student arrived.

Frank: You are almost 30 minutes late, Martha.

Martha: I know teacher.

Frank: If you aren't on time, you have a hard time catching up.

Martha: Yes, teacher.

Another ten minutes elapsed, and two more students walked in together. After they took their seats:

Frank: OK, class we need to talk about time. What time does class start?

Class (sporadically): Six.

Frank: Good. When you are late, you miss parts of the class and cannot keep up. I need you to be on time from now on.

This theme showed itself regularly during other observations. On another day, it was apparent that Margaret, a different teacher at Amanecer Adult School, had addressed this issue before with no success.

The class had started thirty minutes prior with only two students present. Margaret was well into a lesson about grammar and conjugating the verb "to be." At roughly 6:30 p.m., one student walked in late.

Margaret: Jose, you are late.

Jose: Yes teacher.

Margaret: OK, get your journal out; we are conjugating "to be."

Jose: OK.

Margaret: "If you are late, you have to keep up."

Jose: "Yes, teacher."

At no point did the teacher address with the students the nature of their tardiness, but rather took it as a given that some, if not most, of the students, did not show up on time. During interviews the issue of tardiness came up.

Todd: I noticed in the last couple of classes that there are a few students that are late.

Frank: Yes, usually half the class comes late.

Todd: Have you addressed this?

Frank: I have addressed this in class, you heard, I tell the class that they need to be on time or they won't be able to keep up.

Todd: Do you know why they are late?

Frank: No, I assume work or family issues.

Critical citizenship. The notion of creating a critical community stands at the heart of the operation of El Corazón. In crafting its mission statement, El Corazón reiterates and emphasizes that the goal is to create critical consciousness through their educational programming.

> To create social, cultural, and educational change in the Latino community, particularly among immigrants, utilizing programs rooted in social justice that believe in an equitable multi- ethnic and multi-lingual society. Our goal is to develop a critical consciousness that can translate into action to defend human and civil rights. To accomplish this we base our work in the pedagogical premises of popular education (PE) that support the construction of a socially just and democratic society.

But, as Maria, the volunteer coordinator, explained, Javier Cruz, the founder of the program, expressed his view of English language learning, critical citizenship, and the nature of Amanecer Adult School's critical teaching as follows. From Maria:

> So, mainly they can communicate to defend themselves or to, you know, to get what they need as far as the job or with their family or with their children or school. Javier used to tell us that they must learn how to defend themselves.

As Maria later explained, "defense" should be a result of critical transformation, a rise in conscientization and the formation of critical citizenship. It would be an outward expression of internal change.

Theme 2: Volunteer Trial by Fire

Volunteer commitment. The volunteers came to the program through a few avenues. There has been in the past a concerted effort to recruit undergraduate volunteers from local universities. These volunteers have come from education, sociology, or ethnic studies programs. At the time of the study, there was one volunteer that met these criteria at Amanecer Adult School. She expressed her commitment to the program:

> I learned about Amanecer Adult School when I attended a popular education training. I was taking a class, and our professor offered extra credit for us to be there. Once I learned what they were doing, I wanted to, you know, be a part of it. I think this is very important work.

Other volunteers came to the program through community presentations. As previously mentioned, Amanecer Adult School was one of four programs administered through El Corazón de la Educación. As such, they often found volunteers through mentioning Amanecer Adult School while presenting about their other programs to the local community, such as at the school district, community colleges. One of the volunteers heard about the school through such a presentation and offered to volunteer. He expressed his enjoyment of the work, its benefit to the students, and his willingness to continue in spite of no curriculum. This volunteer described his entrance into the program this way:

> I met Maria at a presentation. I heard them speak about the program and what they do here in the community. I used to be a teacher, not of adults, but middle school Social Studies. I have been looking to get back into teaching since I am an administrator now, so I thought this would be a good opportunity.

Finally, Amanecer Adult School recruited its volunteers from the community itself. Since El Corazón de la Educación offered four other programs, most of them working with adults, they were able to cultivate volunteers dedicated to the mission and vision of the organization. Two such persons were daughters of a woman who went through the Immigrant Woman program at El Corazón. When their mother told them of the Amanecer Adult School's need for volunteers, they jumped at the chance:

> My mom went to a program here, and I saw how it helped her. I wanted to be a part of this, too. I'm in school now and getting married, so my sister took over my class.

According to her sister Margaret, she had the same feelings toward the program and was more than willing to help, as it has meant so much to her family. She was uncertain of the future, as well, being in school herself. Uncertainty aside, Margaret expressed a great deal of satisfaction taking over a class and making it her own. She also expressed gratitude for the program her mother went through and what she perceived as the benefits of Amanecer Adult School.

Volunteer commitment was high at Amanecer Adult School. The mission and vision resonated with the community and people are drawn to the potential of the program. Amanecer Adult School was in the position of being able to inspire goodwill toward a population that is typically overlooked and often shunned in American society: Adult immigrants. Most nonprofits struggle with creating a self-sustaining pool of volunteers. Amanecer Adult School has the opportunity to capitalize on this strength.

Sense of despair. It is apparent from observations and interviews that success was rare at Amanecer Adult School. Some volunteers expressed a sense of despair that things do not go the way they would like, that they have no support, and that they sometimes did not feel like they were making a difference. As Maria put it "…so far the only success that I can think of, any success, is we are still here and still open, with a little bit of people!" This view of limited success was shared by some of the other volunteers, as well. As one volunteer put it, "I'm not sure what success should…look like."

Though there is a sense that success is rare on a macro level, when it comes to the way the volunteers feel personally about their work, they do feel successful. From Frank, a volunteer:

> …on a personal level, it's the actual teaching. I had forgotten, I didn't expect that I would enjoy it as much as I have, um, I'm trained as a teacher, and I've taught middle and high school for a number of years, but as an administrator I haven't for many years. And, so, I wasn't sure how much rust I would have…and I have some. But, so I feel a personal success that I can do this and I can enjoy it.

Other volunteers reported connecting with students on a personal level and getting to know them and their families. They felt that this helped them through some of the more difficult tasks of teaching without a curriculum or roadmap. Their success was personal rather than professional, and in a professional setting, it was not the type of success that produces results.

No understanding of popular education. Amanecer Adult School was founded on the principles of popular education. According to their website, they use popular education, to create social, cultural, and educational change. Their goal was to explore political-historical action, and to foster the idea that education is not a permanent process, but rather an ever-changing process. Amanecer Adult School also professed to use popular education to analyze the reality of different social groups to understand oppression and to overcome oppression through transformative action. From AAS' website:

> Using PE [popular education], Amanecer Adult School defines its work as a fundamental expression of civil and human rights. As a liberatory educational practice, the AAA supports conscientious participation of our Latino communities, particularly immigrants, in the process of decision-making, in the critical analysis of their own realities, and in the construction of their own vision of the future.

This was a fully articulated and complete description of popular education. It was evident that El Corazón had put a lot of effort into crafting this statement. From the interviews I conducted, it was explained that the founder, Javier, was a master at popular education and at creating an atmosphere where social justice issues were explored and injustice, confronted. Before his untimely death, he and his wife, along with some long-time volunteers, ensured that this vision was concretized in writing and the seeds of what they hoped to accomplish, especially at Amanecer Adult School, were planted. As Maria put it:

> Our philosophy is great. Javier really understood the needs of the Latino community here and what would help. But, um, we don't follow through well and need help making it happen. I don't know what will make it better, but we need something.

Unfortunately, as a result of a lack of training, the volunteers did not understand what popular education was, or how to implement it in their teaching. As one volunteer put it:

> …bluntly, I'm not quite sure about their adherence to popular education. Uh, because, that might be my own, I don't know the other instructors. I know they mentioned popular education to me, but there wasn't a training, "These are the approaches or strategies we want you to use, pedagogically" and so, I feel that I wouldn't call myself and expert in the field, I read Freire's book, I have a background in education, so I think those are my crutches.

Volunteers mentioned the name Freire in interviews and conversations, as Freire (1970) is a seminal figure in popular education, and a person after which, the founder, Cruz, modeled the program. Most volunteers had a general awareness of popular education because of its pervasiveness in Amanecer Adult School's written literature, but knowledge of its bones, what it truly means, was not apparent to them:

> I know popular education from talking to [a former volunteer]. You have to use what the student knows to help them understand a topic. Like when you are talking about school, you need to connect it with their life to see what they know and then you can make your point, you know?

Practically speaking, the volunteers did not know how to implement popular education in their teaching. In interviews, the volunteers revealed that they understand the mission of the organization, but they were not sure how it fit with what or how they taught. As a result, the volunteers had taken to piecemeal teaching. They decided what they were going to teach on the day of class, and came to class with handouts.

Not surprisingly, the students at Amanecer Adult School did not have even a cursory knowledge of popular education or what it meant for their learning. Part of having a successful campaign using popular education is student construction of their own knowledge, ownership of their learning, and activism must take place. However, when asked about their knowledge of popular education, the most frequent response from students was, "I don't know."

Community and civic support. Observations of community events indicated Amanecer Adult School had an opportunity to engage community and civic leaders in a way that other organizations may not have had. The school was situated in the heart of an urban neighborhood in transition from educated, populated by middle-class White families to a predominantly Latino neighborhood. There were still pockets of a White population, but as opposed to middle-class White families, they were a young "hipster" community that had migrated to the area because of a burgeoning art scene and cheap rent. For example, adjacent to Amanecer Adult School was a *carnicería* (small store that sells meat and assorted goods) next to a vintage clothing store. As such there was a strong community bond in the Latino community, as well as recognition by local politicians and administrators that the Latino community must have their needs addressed. During observations the researcher attended two meetings that illustrated this point.

The first meeting was held at a local arts center, less than a mile from the school. The founder and volunteers of the program set up an open house to talk about Amanecer Adult School and to garner support, not only for the program, but for their future plans to incorporate as a 501(c)3 nonprofit. The arts center was large and airy with high ceilings and wide-open rooms. The room was the largest of the rooms, with about 50 chairs set up in neat rows amongst art created by local artists and students.

The researcher arrived a little late, and upon entering, noted that the room was full and there were two distinct groups of people attending. The first were students and volunteers of the program; some were other community members associated with the program. This group milled around speaking Spanish; there was nervous laughter and chatter. The second group could not have been more different. They were primarily White, dressed in business attire and standing in the back of the room.

I moved from group to group making small talk and observing. The program started and the agenda flowed nicely from introductions to an overview of the program to student testimonials and finally to a question-and-answer period. As the other attendees introduced themselves, it became clear they were all members of local government, from school board members to city councilmen. As one volunteer expressed to me, "[T]hey [the local government attendees] need to know who we are and why we are here.

The evening was set up to highlight the benefits of popular education and the program at Amanecer Adult School. As the question-and-answer period progressed, it was clear that the message was new to the local government attendees. Their questions centered on popular education and its benefits for students as opposed to traditional classroom learning. For example, one of the attendees, an older White woman on the local school board, asked: "Why should you use popular education, as opposed to standard curriculum? Isn't the current curriculum offered rigorous enough?" Another attendee, an older White man on the local city council, questioned the viability of the program: "Where do you plan on receiving funding for this? I would think that it wouldn't be easy to raise money."

The volunteers handled these questions deftly and with great skill. By the end of the night, members of the local government group offered their support in moving the program forward, though it was unclear from my interviews what action has resulted since this meeting to the present.

The second meeting held in August was an internal session for volunteers of the program. In addition to the classes taught at Amanecer Adult School, there were other programs that ran parallel, but were unrelated to Amanecer Adult School, as described earlier. These included a program for parents, a program for teens, and a program for women. The room was small and filled to capacity with all volunteers for these programs in attendance, totaling 20 people.

The meeting began with an overview of popular education and the responsibilities of each program. Javier's widow, the *de facto* head of El Corazon, ran the meeting; it was run efficiently and professionally with much discussion and debate. But, in conversation with the volunteers present, they revealed that this type of meeting was rare. As Maria explained, "We used to have planning meeting a lot when Javier was alive, now we don't too much."

It was clear from the people in attendance that they were deeply passionate about the program, with many of them either graduates, or long-time volunteers, of these programs. Much of the conversation revolved around the lack of funding, especially early in the meeting. Many of the volunteers expressed dismay at not being able to afford parts of the program of which they were in charge.

The researcher observed a break-out session for Amanecer Adult School. The volunteers sat in a small room and discussed what they wanted to see in the curriculum. Maria, the volunteer coordinator talked to the volunteers about the curriculum that was "started last year,

but never finished." There was no example of what they had constructed the year prior. As the break out session progressed the volunteers settled on broad lessons, such as "learning about the computer," "health" and "student stories," but as the break out session was only one hour, none of the lessons were explored in depth.

Reflexive Action/Conscientization

For Freire (1970), reflexive action is required to create personal and social transformation. This is a key part of developing critical citizenship, as well. This praxis begins with illuminating the injustice and oppression of the world and through active reflection the learner "commits themselves to its transformation" (p. 54). Once a commitment is made and reflective action is taken "this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed [thus becoming] a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation" (p. 54).

For critical work to occur, the student-teacher relationship must be transcended. Freire (1970) noted that once dialogue and reflexive work are implemented, the "teacher-of-the-student" and "students-of-the-teacher" cease to exist, instead being replaced by "teacher-students' and "student-teachers" (p. 80).

At Amanecer Adult School reflexive knowing was not fostered in an organized manner for the volunteers. There were no formal debriefing sessions or meetings as they developed their knowledge, skills and capacities as volunteer teachers for the program. Interviews revealed that in the past when Cruz was still alive, meetings and debriefings were held on a regular basis. In addition, there were frequent training sessions with both volunteers and students to solicit their knowledge in the construction of the program. Unfortunately, during the time of the interviews this left the teachers wondering who is in charge, let alone if they would ever get together to talk.

As Margaret put it, "I'm not sure who I should talk to if I have a problem. Sometimes I think we are on our own."

The above does not preclude the volunteers from engaging in personal reflexive action. Frank explained his reticence with teaching:

> Frank: With the students, I wasn't sure how well I would be able to react to their own interests or how, in the sense, I didn't know how much they'd be giving, in terms of me trying to build on. But, I do feel that they give me some things to build on. So, that's why you sometimes see me jump out of my chair and write on the board. That's something I recognize that it's not something they are completely familiar with. But, that…
>
> Todd: In terms of connecting, it's those things they might not know about in English?
>
> Frank: Right, Right. So it gives me the opportunity. So I don't, I found that it's I'm willing to be flexible with them.

His willingness to be flexible came directly from his ability to be reflexive about his teaching. During a follow-up interview, Frank talked about "taking stock" of what he was doing in class, what was effective and what was not working,

> I prefer to sit down after a class and evaluate what I'm doing and how the class went. Like the other day, I noticed that my lesson fell flat and they [the students] weren't engaged. I try to think through why that is and change it for the next class.

Researcher Experience as a Volunteer

As previously mentioned, prior to my role as a participant observer during this research, I was a volunteer at the school. My experience as a volunteer mirrored in many ways the experience of the volunteers interviewed. The initial few weeks of teaching consisted of the

researcher asking the other volunteers if they knew what I should teach, what the students had learned in the past, and if there was curriculum to follow.

Eventually, Maria, the volunteer coordinator gave me a packet of paper that had been used by volunteers in the past. After a cursory look, it was clear that the paperwork was a mix of photocopies from various workbooks grouped into loose themes such as health, work, and family. The level of the content was below the Level-3 class I was teaching. The content was not critical.

One example was a reading assignment regarding health. The story centered on a Latino man who takes his daughter to Kaiser, a health maintenance organization (HMO), for dental care. It covered co-pays and premiums. I decided to have the students read this passage to engage them in dialogue around health care.

The assignment was designed to teach the students about health insurance and how to navigate HMOs, but the reality was that none of the students had health insurance. If they had a health emergency, they went to urgent care or the emergency room for treatment and paid out of pocket for medical costs. The dialogue resulted in an exploration of health care in America and the disadvantages of not having insurance, a job that offered health care benefits. While critical issues were exposed, and the students participated in the dialogue, their English language skills were too low to have a deep and prolonged discussion, and I lacked the Spanish language skills to have a bilingual conversation.

I experienced as a volunteer that what became Amanecer was that the school represented a safe place for the students to come to learn. Maria, the volunteer coordinator, in speaking about a student with exceptional English skills, expressed this idea, “She should really go to [the

local community college] to keep going, but she won't. She's scared." The student's unwillingness to move to a more advanced program might have had its roots in fear, but another interpretation would be that she might have felt comfortable, supported and safe at the school.

Before the split between the found, Javier and the other organization, there was a definite sense of community, as well. One event in particular stood out: Three Kings Day. The holiday falls annually on Jan. 6 and marks the biblical adoration of baby Jesus by the three Kings, also referred to as Wise Men or Magi. While this is a religious tradition, it was celebrated at the school as well. The students from all levels gathered together and the *Rosca de Reyes*, an oval sweetbread, decorated with candied fruit was cut up and distributed. Baked into the bread was a plastic baby Jesus, that when found, for this celebration, meant that they must provide the Rosca for the next year. When the school was reorganized as Amanecer, and Cruz passed, these traditions ceased, as well. The sense of community faded.

Theme 3: Students: Ready, Willing and Underserved

Student affirmation and respect for teachers. One of the more interesting opportunities Amanecer Adult School had was the ability to build on the affirmation and genuine enjoyment the students had while attending class. The students who consistently attended class once or twice a week reported feeling welcomed and invited by Amanecer Adult School. Students also reported feeling support from the teachers, as well. As one student said:

> I like coming here. When I'm at work, I feel happy to know I can come learn English. I try very hard when I'm here because I know it is important for my future and to get better jobs.

The students at Amanecer Adult School also reported having great respect for all of their teachers. One student in particular talked about struggling in class and not understanding the content. Maria told me she believed he has a learning disability preventing him from achieving English language proficiency. In spite of all this he said:

> I have felt happy with all of my teachers that they have, that have helped us. I have felt very good about all of the teachers, and the different teachers that have helped us and like I have told you we are learning a little bit at a time. Because a little bit of time is not a lot of time.

In addition to feeling supported by the teachers, the students reported having respect for the education level of the teachers. Many students expressed respect for university-trained teachers. In their view, these teachers knew their subject and had much to share. As Jason expressed:

> …for me it have been because of the teachers that they have brought. They have dialogues. They know a lot. For example, Jennifer [a former volunteer at Amanecer Adult School], she was a student at UCLA, she is a person that knows a lot. The teachers help us learn more.

From another student, Michelle:

> For me the program is fine, because they bring good teachers who know a lot. For me, they know a lot. It is important to have people that know a lot. And that is how we will learn from them. Because this is my personal time and if I don't come I am the one who is losing out. The teacher has always treated me well and he has always been very well educated, and the other teachers, as well. Because how they treat you, they are volunteers

and we don't pay for these classes. They have a lot of patience to teach us. We are adults and they have a lot of patience for us. Today I apologized to him because I got here late, for two months I haven't had a job and on Monday I just started working.

Classes provide confidence. The students reported that they used what they learned outside of class. Often, using English meant expressing basic words out and about in daily life. Their comfort level with expressing themselves in the community was directly related to how much English they knew. As Jane articulated, "I think I talk a lot with the people in the office at work. Perhaps not well, but they understand me." John, another student who showed more willingness in class and during the interviews to speak English put it this way:

> [English] My weakness [is] not understanding too much [laughter] [Spanish] it is difficult speaking too fast. I have to think about what they are saying. [English] I need to think what did you say [laughter].

Students with lower language skills reported using what they learned, as well. These students reported feeling comfortable using English at work and at the grocery store. Students with lower language skills tended to stay in their ethnic enclave, and chose when to use English. Asked if they venture beyond their neighborhood, I received a consistent "no." It is unclear if their language skills would be used in a high pressure or majority English setting.

Lack of time for adult students. The students interviewed for this study repeatedly expressed that time was an issue for them and their studies. In interviews the students pinpointed work or family as the main reasons that they could not make it to class on time. Jane, a student, reported that she has "been focused on my family, my children and my husband." Jason, another student, reported having difficulty because of his work situation.

Jason: "…the problem is that I don't come frequently…"

Todd: "How do you deal with that?"

Jason: "I don't have a set time to go into work, sometimes I come out at a certain time and others I come out of work later so that is why I am unable to come all the time."

Although, some students miss class, they did feel the need to be there. They believed it was important for them to learn English to ensure that they continued to get jobs and be able to stay in this country.

Jane: "Sometimes I go to work and I am unable to come to class."

Todd: "How do you handle the lack of time?

Jane: "Well, I can't come to class and I do think about the fact that I am missing classes and I need to learn. We are in this country and with work, we need to learn the language to have more opportunities with work and with my daughter in school."

Jose, a student, expressed the same concern of trying to learn English while working. For him, the difficulty is that he is a day worker and does not have a consistent job:

I got off of work late and I got here late. When I don't have work I am motivated to come to class. Because they ask, do you speak English and if you do you get jobs, sometimes

they want people who speak English. I get motivated and it motivates me to come and learn more to better communicate with them.

Command of the second language. The students rarely spoke in class unless they needed clarification or were asked direct questions. Thus, during interviews with the students, I did not expect to find much regarding their use English outside of the classroom. That assumption aside, a key aspect of second language use that emerged from this research was the impact of participation on the students in their confidence in speaking in public.

Fred, a student that has been with the program for two years, was cognizant of the fact that English can be used to diffuse a hostile situation, and has used it to defend himself:

> There are people who get upset when you don't speak English. I have had problems, once I was working with someone who was Armenian; the one in charge was Armenian. He saw me as a Latino and he yelled at me in English and I told him, "What is your problem?" When I replied to him in English he calmed down. He said, "Calm down the owner of the house is there." He told me, [in English] *move your junk*, and that made me upset, so I told him "What is your problem?" Once he knew I spoke English he calmed down. If you speak to me nicely I will be nice back. But if you yell, I will yell back.

When asked if he has always been confident to speak out in public, Fred was quick to say he was not. For him his confidence had grown as his English skills grew: "I need work and I can go look for a job everyday in English. It is a problem when you don't speak English. You can't communicate with your boss."

Jose, another student, experienced a similar growth during his time at Amanecer Adult School.

> If I go to work with someone who is Caucasian, they tell me what to do, like, "Let's take out this floor," and I am able to understand. Also when I am out, when I go to work, the owner will come out of their house and say, "I want you to cut something, [in English] "*Can you trim this flower, take this out of my house?", I say "Ok.*"

His ability to speak has increased, but more importantly, his confidence in speaking to fluent English speakers has increased, as well. He attributed his confidence in communicating and getting jobs directly to the program at Amanecer Adult School.

During interviews, other students talked about similar stories of having the confidence to use English outside of the classroom. The students with children were especially proud of their ability to speak to their children's teachers, as Jane, a student, articulated, "When I go to my children's school, I understand words. I can say things, and what I need to say. I can now say things!" Another student expressed similar feelings, and said, "…[W]hen I go to school meetings, before I didn't understand anything and now I understand. This is good for me. I can speak to the teacher."

John, a student who has been with the program for four or five years, shared a story that extended beyond workplace issues or schooling for his children. During an interview he told a long and elaborate story about being lost around the Mojave Desert, unable to contact his girlfriend. At first he was hesitant to approach anyone:

> The light skinned man asks me if I speak Spanish, I tell him, yes I do. I told him that I didn't speak to him because he was light skinned and I thought he was White, he said, "No I am light skinned but I am not White," the light skinned man said, "I don't speak any English." Another man approached us and said, "I want to know how far we are from

> Mojave." [In English] *And my English, helped me*. I tell him, *what do you want*? The man said, "*I need to know how long Mojave is from here, to Mojave?"* He wants to know how far we are from Mojave, he said *50 miles, it is far and by taxi, how much?* He wants to know how much will the taxi charge $50.00. I was translating, that's why knowing English helps me. I can speak something.

Reflective action for students. The students did not receive any support in reflective action from the school. With minor exceptions, the curriculum, such as it was did not explore the students lives, nor did the discussion during the lessons delve into their lives. Only one student expressed truly contemplating her life and the lives of her fellow students in relation to the program, but it was from a personal rather than academic standpoint:

> When I come here I meet different people and what problems they have that I don't know and that are here, for example, that they leave their families in another country, that is not my situation, wow, for me to leave my children, no, it would not happen. It is something that for me personally affects me to see those types of situations. Even though this is not the case for me, I see it in my classmates.

Theme 4: Curriculum

No Curriculum

Amanecer Adult School was founded on the principles of popular education and was focused on developing a curriculum to support those principles. From the objectives, according to the school:

- Offers theoretical, methodological, and technical training that facilitates a better understanding of the reality in which we live and works toward transforming it democratically.
- Defends public education as a necessary democratic process while at the same time develop alternative educational and cultural processes and models that cultivate socially critical thinkers.
- Develops a critical and constructive curriculum that supports participatory, democratic, and inclusive processes.

There is no curriculum at Amanecer Adult School. As I began my research I asked for curriculum that I could analyze to gather data. Maria, the volunteers, and the students confirmed that there was no set curriculum that I could look at and they did not know when they would have one.

Frank, a teacher, expressed his dismay over the lack of curriculum:

> The lack of a curriculum has been a barrier…I kept asking for the book, I assumed they at least had a book that they worked from to find that there was nothing. And other than a kind of broad philosophical/pedagogical approach that I thought was, obviously not insurmountable, but for a variety of reasons, an obstacle.

As Maria put it:

> I have no idea what they are teaching over there (pointing to the Level Three area). I haven't been coming since Frank started, and so he said he developed something that he hasn't showed me what. Since I told him we are going to start working on the curriculum

that we started building last year so I told him we were going to start and get together and go through it and start on September.

Margaret, another volunteer with the program took over the Thursday class from her sister. She claimed that she did not know what to teach, "I came in and my sister didn't give me anything [curriculum]. I talked with the teacher from the Tuesday class and we decided to make some stuff up."

That "stuff" became the basis for the advanced level classes. On Tuesday the teacher focused on "conversation, talking and communication" and on Thursday the other teacher focused on "grammar, verbs, adjectives and stuff." As a result, the two teachers created their own curricula, loosely based on the themes of conversation and grammar. I observed a few consecutive Tuesday and Thursday classes and the agendas could not have been more different. For example, from my field notes:

The agenda for Victor's class solely consisted of community events and holidays. The topics read as follows:

1. Objective: to identify community services and events
2. Library
3. Fire
4. Hospital
5. Events and Holidays: 4th of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter

In contrast Margaret's agenda focused almost exclusively on grammar. For example:

1. Agenda
2. Warm-up
3. Vocabulary Words
4. Really Quick Review
5. Packet Handout

Because there was no connection between the two days in terms of themes or topics, the advanced level, in practical terms, became two independent classes. The connection between the classes was tangential, at best. The students were aware of this separation, as well. In interviews there was a tacit admission that if a student missed a Tuesday or Thursday class it did not matter because the student could pick up where she or he left off on the following Tuesday or Thursday. This disconnect created a disincentive for students to come to class.

In searching for curriculum both of the volunteers went to different sources. Frank searched and asked colleagues for suggestions:

> So, I looked online for frameworks or curriculums that have already been established that I can use, because I didn't want to recreate the wheel. I assumed other people had already. So, there were a couple of frameworks for adult English learners, so I ended up using the one from Florida. There were other ones, but some of them were too granular, some of them were more philosophical. The Florida one seemed a good mix between these are the broad strokes, these are the topics. So, based on my own comfort level, I knew my Thursday partner was going to do the grammar, so I could do more of the oral

development. So, I picked the Florida one based on that, it gave me plenty of things to work with.

Margaret tried a similar process. She searched online for adult education curriculum. Her frustration over what she found was evident: "So…I didn't know where to start. I, like, went online and found too much. I was overwhelmed, overwhelmed by the number of sites talking about this [curriculum]." Margaret decided that a piecemeal approach would be best, taking pieces from multiple sites and merging them into a curriculum. In addition, the content that Margaret chose was frequently pulled together the day of class. She would scour the Internet for pages to print out, make photocopies, and bring them to class.

As a result, the content she had chosen was fractured and unfocused. One class ranged from exploring workplace related issues to unrelated adjectives like tranquil and verbose. This unfocused curriculum also had an effect on the students, who were often confused and disoriented during lessons. This following is taken my field observations:

The beginning of the class was entirely on workplace issues. Primarily concerning office situations, something the students did not have experience in, given that most of the students are day workers, and the rest cleaned houses for a living. The students were confused and disengaged, not quite understanding what was asked of them, given the difficulty level of the content. The volunteer shortened the lesson on jobs to talk about adjectives. One of the words she chose was "aspire" (note: not actually an adjective). This is a word that was not foreign to the students, but not one that they encounter on a daily basis, either.

Teacher: Our next word is "aspire"

(Explains in Spanish)

The students began talking amongst themselves in Spanish, as well.

Teacher: Aspirar good job! (Explains in Spanish). This is a verb "to aspire"

The teacher begins to conjugate the verb

In English it is to hope or dream.

(Explains in Spanish)

Teacher: We use it when we are talking about an occupation. Let's link this back to our conversation about jobs.

Teacher: Who wants to talk about their job?

Student 1: My aspiration is to buy a new car.

Teacher: I aspire to buy a new car. What about work? Where do you work?

Student 3: I don't know…spider?

Teacher: I aspire to...

Student 3: I aspire to speak English.

Teacher: Student 4? Where do you work?

Student 4: I aspire to go back to Guatemala.

Teacher: OK. The example I have is Pinocchio aspires to become a boy.

By choosing a relatable topic like jobs and connecting it to a complex word, she quickly lost the class and any opportunity she had for discussion or learning. The students repeatedly talked amongst themselves during these sessions trying to understand the content and what was being asked of them. The volunteer, for her part, appeared frequently frustrated, at one point asking me, as I sat in the back of the class observing, how I thought two topics should be linked.

While most of the students reported that they enjoyed class, some of the students, though not many, questioned what they were learning. There was frustration that because the curriculum was not set, that they didn't know what to expect from one class to another. The inconsistency between the Tuesday and Thursday class left these students feeling lost and confused. In observation, these students appeared bored; one student in particular, would spend most of the class writing mini essays that he would show the teacher after class to elicit feedback. It was clear that this student was disengaged from the curriculum being taught and grasping for what he could teach himself.

Mimicking. There were two forms of mimicking that I observed at Amanecer Adult School: written and verbal. During lessons, the students would routinely write down exactly what was on the board in the exact order in which it was written. For example, this was how the board was laid out at the beginning of class:

Figure 1 Example of Classroom Agenda

August 4, 2012 Dr. Frank Gonzales
Agenda
Warm-up
New Vocabulary Words
Really Quick Review
Complete Handout (from packet)
New Lesson Plan (Using adjectives at work)
Journal #3
Describe a typical day at work

Figure 1. Agenda for class session.

As any teacher can recognize, this was a typical layout at the beginning of class, giving a brief overview of the day and its activities. For the students in class, it was something that created a rush of writing and copying. Not only did the students write down what was on the

board, but they copied it exactly in format. If there was an underline, they underlined, and an extra space, they put an extra space. They even went so far as to put the teacher's name at the other end of the paper, precisely as it was on the board.

This level of mimicking also extended to the lesson. Once a lesson commenced and the teacher began explaining the lesson, the teacher wrote on the white board. Some of the teachers were methodical about their writing and would write vertically from top to bottom and erase the board once they reached the bottom. The students would dutifully write from the top to the bottom of their pages.

If a student had a question, which was not frequent, or the teacher wanted to elaborate on a concept, the orderliness of writing on the white board became moot. For example, during a lesson on seasons, the students became confused over the word "fall," as in English it has several meanings. The teacher tried to explain all of the meaning using the white board:

Figure 2 Example of an Explanation of Concepts

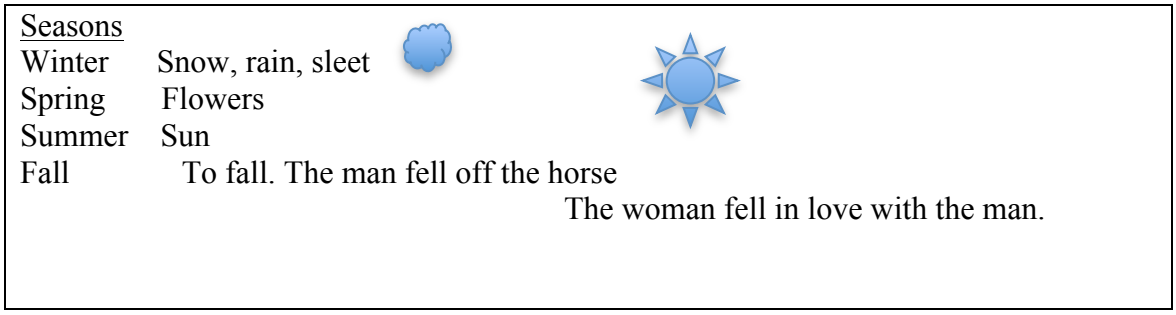

Figure 2. Shows how a teacher would illustrate concepts to students.

Figure 2 is a rough rendering of what was on the board during the lesson. As the teacher wrote, erased, drew pictures and improvised, the students dutifully copied everything he wrote, in the exact order on their papers.

It was clear from the observations, that the students lacked the cultural capital and experience to take notes. The teachers taught from an Americanized perspective of write, erase, write, improvise, erase, exactly as they had learned in school. The students, on the other hand, all immigrants, did not have the experience of taking notes in this way. All of the students had some level of literacy in their native language. The students, however, did not have a unified experience of classroom interactions in their home countries and they all had different educational levels. For example, Jane, a student from Guatemala told me that she only had a fourth grade education, and that it was difficult for her to follow along. When asked, the teachers were not aware of the mimicking in which the students were engaged, "I didn't realize that was happening. Maybe we should do a lesson on note taking."

Mimicking was also observed in verbal interactions and lessons. A component of each class was conversation. This could include conversing with fellow students on a topic, repeating what the teacher said, or answering questions directly from the teacher. Generally, the students did their best to interpret what was asked of them, but more often than not, they would repeat verbatim what was said in hope of getting the answer right.

Teacher: Where is the park?

Student: The park….mmmm.

Teacher: Yes, name a park.

Student: mmmm…the park is green.

Teacher: Yes, the park has green grass. Is there a park nearby?

Student: Yes, I go to the park.

Teacher: Do you know the name of the park? The name?

Student: Name. mmm…Bryan Park.

Teacher: Yes! Bryan Park! Great!

It was evident that the student did not understand what was being asked of her, but she understood the word "park." She grasped for what she could say, ensuring that she used the word in each sentence hoping to hit on an answer. The teacher, not getting the answer she wanted, continued to ask the question in different ways, hoping for the same response. This ensured a confusing go-around each time it was attempted.

Functional Language Learning

Functional language learning was the primary focus for most classes. These classes focused on how to get along safely and securely in broader American society. Of course, this was predicated on whether the content actually pertained to the students' lives. Cadiero-Kaplan (2004) argued that functional literacy, "while effective in increasing phonemic awareness, decoding, and specific comprehensive skills is mostly decontextualized, requires one specific answer or response, and does not consider the language and/or culture of the students" (p. 6). Functional literacy also reinforces job-related and menial task skills, while praising compliance with classroom rules and procedures.

From my observations of how Frank taught his class and reading through the Florida standards, the researcher concluded that he adhered to the Florida standards in terms of structuring his lessons. This structure was focused on functional learning and content. From the Florida Standards website:

PURPOSE: The purpose of this course is to provide English language learner adults with English language instruction that will increase their ability to communicate in English for a variety of purposes including employment, education, and life in the United States.

An effective lesson includes the following:

A warm-up activity – A warm-up is an introduction to the target structure and vocabulary. This important activity models correct usage and allows the teacher to assess what students already know.

Instruction – The most effective instruction is contextualized and brief. Using the established vocabulary and themes allows students to focus on the target grammar structure. Students should be encouraged to actively engage in grammar rule construction for themselves.

Practice – During practice activities, students focus on recognizing and accurately producing the mechanics of the target grammar structure in all four skill areas (reading, writing, listening, and speaking).

While Margaret used no particular methodological approach, her classes were structured similarly to Frank's classes. In addition, her goal was to ensure that the students were able to "make it in the real world." This included focusing on basic skills, vocabulary, verb conjugation and lectures around issues the students might face.

The teachers were not alone in being immersed in the trappings of functional language learning. The students themselves went out of their ways to explain why they wanted to learn English, understandably, for functional reasons. Jose, a student who has been with the program for years put it this way:

> When I come to class I have a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of enthusiasm to learn and get a little bit ahead. Because knowing English is necessary because sometimes people are speaking English and you don't understand and they are speaking about you, and I come to class with a lot of motivation to learn. To learn a little bit.

John, another student, who enjoyed going to the local Indian casinos, was able communicate with the casino tellers:

> Well yes, it has helped me a lot because when I go to the casino I can speak to the cashiers. What are you going to do? [English] *Give me my money; I need $50.00 or $100.00.* Yes all of this has helped me a lot.

Verbs. In the classes I observed, even the "conversation" class, there was a focus on conjugating verbs. Margaret referred to the verbs she used as the "big ten," a term she read online referring to the "most useful" verbs in the English language. The verbs are:

1. To be
2. To have
3. To do
4. To say
5. To get
6. To make
7. To go
8. To know
9. To take
10. To see

Conjugating these verbs almost became the *raison d'être* for both classes. The students were asked to keep notebooks full of handwritten conjugated verbs and referred to them during lessons.

The teachers believed conjugating verbs were some of the most important work they do with the students. In the teacher's estimation, if a student went to a store or a bank and could not communicate an action item with the correct grammar, they were in danger of not being understood or taken seriously. As Margaret stated: "It's our job to make sure they can talk to people, they need to know verbs."

Many of the students were not proponents of conjugating verbs. This was an activity they have done at every level at Amanecer Adult School, from Level 1 to Level 3. In fact, it was a foundational learning activity for lower level classes. This distinction was not lost on the students. They said that they would have liked to see a differentiation in learning activities, in part because they felt that they had moved beyond lower level instruction. As Michelle put it:

> We learn a lot about verbs, he is, she is, they are, we are. But, I don't like grammar. I like the focus on communication; because grammar obviously at my age I will never learn this well. I don't like how the Thursday teacher makes us write so much grammar.

Vocabulary. Teaching of vocabulary words took two forms at Amanecer Adult School: as functional use words, and as incredibly obscure, abstract words tangentially related to the topic being discussed. Due to the fractured nature of the curriculum and content, the vocabulary lists were different for the two classes being taught. The "grammar" class focused on basic, utilitarian words found in English. For example, the following lists words one of the volunteers used on a lesson for the body:

1. arm,
2. eye,
3. eyebrow,
4. belly,
5. leg,
6. breast,
7. thumb,
8. elbow,

These words were not only basic, but below a Level-3 class, even at Amanecer Adult School. In interviews with Maria, I learned that the vocabulary lists in Level's 1 and 2 covered the basic themes like food, work, body, holidays. These functional words were the direct result of having no curriculum at Amanecer Adult School. The vocabulary that was taught served to cement the basic "get-along" strategy of functional literacy.

The second kind of vocabulary taught at Amanecer Adult School were words that a student had little chance of encountering, let alone using to express themselves in any

meaningful way. During a lesson on sports, the students were engaged in a conversation about the conditions of the local soccer field. The teacher introduced several vocabulary words:

Student: I go to park on Sunday, because you know, the team play soccer on Sunday. Sometimes at [the local park] sometimes here. The field have holes.

Teacher: The other fields have holes in them? Why do you say they are no good?

Student: Need more maintenance for the field. You have to play be careful. Sometime play soccer in the morning the field is wet.

Teacher: I like to use the word, synthetic. Arid. Can you repeat arid? It's dry. Um…you like the synthetic field because it's green?

Student: Good for play.

Teacher: When the field is green you use the word, verdant. It means a lot of green. A lot of green plants is lush.

Self-protection. There was a distinct notion of self-protections among the teachers at Amanecer Adult School, not for protection for themselves, but for the idea that they needed to teach the students how to survive in America. As a result, some of the lessons turned into mini-survival activities.

During one class, Frank, the teacher wanted to talk about direct and indirect services. The lesson began with the instructor talking about what constitutes direct and indirect services.

If I ride the bus, I go and use the bus directly. An indirect use of services might be the police dept. I don't go to the police department and use them. But, I benefit because we have police, there aren't criminals bothering me at the time. Fireman, indirect. I don't call

the firemen all the time. Post office direct use. I go to the post office to mail letters. The post office comes to my house. That's direct.

The lesson quickly became a survival manual for using these services without "getting in trouble." Examples include students learning when to call the police, how to talk to the police, and where to avoid the police. Even a service as innocuous as using the library became a cautionary tale. From my field notes:

> The teacher asked the students whether they had used the library and for what purpose. Some of the students were enthusiastic about their use of the library to check out books for their children and English dictionaries for their personal use. The teacher became adamant that they had to be careful about what books they checked out, lest they arouse suspicion (due to legal status). The students didn't seem to understand what he meant, but the teacher did not clarify further.

The post office received the same level of scrutiny. The teacher focused on telling the students about the security of certified mail above all other types of postage.

> Certified, what is certified? If I send a certified letter, what am I sending? (Silence). If I want to send you a letter, and I want to make sure you get the letter, I pay extra at the post office. Certified has your name on it and you have to sign for it. The post office keeps track of it. That you received the letter. This is a smart way to send letters. You can make sure it gets to the person so you can protect yourself.

Fred, a student, expressed a personal experience of self-protection: "When I first came here [to the US], I stayed in my room a lot. I only went to places I knew and spoke Spanish." From years of teaching Fred and getting to know him, I know his legal status had much to do

with this. When he first came to the US, he was fearful of the unknown and did not want to expose himself to legal consequences.

Silent period in second language acquisition. This section is not about the abstract theme regarding silence of student voice or culture. It is not about the invisibility of the Latino voice in the community. It concerns the literal audible silence of the students in and out of class. Frank, a teacher, expressed his frustration with the silence this way: "The students are very nice and they answer the questions when I ask, but it's like, like pulling teeth. They answer when they want and rarely say anything aside from what they think the answer is."

During a lesson, when a teacher asked a question, silence followed. The teacher typically asked again and after more silence the teacher started picking students out individually to answer. The researcher recorded this observation:

> Teacher: There are four seasons. What are the others?
>
> (Silence)
>
> Teacher: In the summer is it hot or cold? In the autumn? What's another word for so-so?
>
> (Silence)
>
> Teacher: Let's think of some words. You can use mild, or cool, temperate. I'll say it and you can repeat it.
>
> (Silence)
>
> Teacher: Spring-what is the temperature like?
>
> (Silence)
>
> Teacher: Anybody? What is the temperature like in spring?
>
> (Silence)

Teacher: OK…Alma? What is the temperature like in spring?

Alma: Warm?

Teacher: OK! It can be warm…or temperate!

During one classroom observation, I noticed that the students rarely, if ever talked to each other. Parts of the lesson elicited questions from the students for each other, but it was not idle chatter or conversation; they sought simple clarification. The students became single-mindedly focused on copying what the teacher wrote on the board, almost to the detriment of listening to what the teacher said.

The silence also extended to before and after the class. Generally, before class the students sat next to each other on a bench waiting for the lesson to start. They did not engage in conversation. This group of students had attended class together for at least two years. They had the opportunity to talk and engage in social activities, but for unknown reasons they chose not to speak to one another. The teachers did not provide icebreakers or warm-ups the before class. Once class ended, the students silently cleaned up and left separately.

Based on my time as a volunteer and as a participant observant, the issue of silence can be explained, in part, by the student's legal status. Though a criterion of this research included not asking about the students' legal status, and because of my knowledge of the students for several years, the issue of documentation had arisen numerous times in the past. "Immigration" or "La Migra" was spoken of with fear by the students. That fear often led to silence. The more a student spoke, the more conspicuous he or she was, the chance of being stopped and questioned about immigration status increased. From the student's perspective, it was better to be safe and quiet than to engage.

No Assessment

There is an interesting dichotomy regarding assessment at Amanecer Adult School. When a student signs up for classes, they are given an evaluation to test their English language proficiency. Once the test is graded, they are placed in an appropriate level. One issue arises from these tests; almost every student protests his or her language test score, and rarely do they want to be placed in the Level-3 (highest) class. Amanecer Adult School invariably relented, thus Level 3 had a small number of students and the lower levels were always full. All students were tested upon entry or reentry if they want to continue with classes, regardless of how long they have attended Amanecer Adult School.

On the other hand, the teachers at Amanecer Adult School did not assess student learning, or measure any type of student outcomes. As mentioned above, curriculum was not set and frequently created the day of class. In turn, no consideration was given to whether the students were retaining knowledge, or whether the students were able to use their knowledge in any meaningful way. Margaret expressed it this way, "I don't give the students, tests or anything. Sometimes I wonder if I did what they would look like. I don't know if multiple choice would work."

Though there was no formal assessment, Amanecer Adult School held a graduation ceremony at the end of every year. There were no criteria except showing up to class to receive a diploma. Maria saw this as a valuable part of the program: "The students love to receive diplomas. They feel like they are accomplishing something. Finishing to the end." When asked about exit exams or evaluations, Maria was very adamant that "[we] just don't, we don't do those. I don't remember ever having evaluations."

Maria was correct; students expressed that they liked receiving a diploma. As John, a student said in response to a question about success, "I have diplomas. I have three or four diplomas." Based on the number of diplomas John has received, he had clearly been with the program for three or four years. Unfortunately, during the interview, he was unable to express himself well using English.

Conversely, he also loved the school, what he learned, and thought the program was successful for him. John did find edification in receiving the diplomas, "I like the end of the year and getting a diploma." Receiving the diplomas gave him incentive to continue the program and continue his studies outside of class. His body language during the interview expressed his pride in achieving four consecutive diplomas. For him, the diplomas were Mylestones in his progress.

No Lived Realities or Critical Engagement of Society

To engage the students in critical citizenship required an exploration of their lived realities from a social, historical and political perspective. In observations and interviews it became clear that attempts were rarely made, and the volunteers did not systematically tackle these issues. During an interview with Maria, she mentioned one example of this type of teaching at Amanecer Adult School:

> Like one time, Jane [a former volunteer] did that with her [students] too, they worked together at one point, and they tried to do a project with the city. I believe it was about main buildings in a city and they worked on vocabulary and, um, but yeah, she does some collages with them and explains problems that arise when…she makes them…when…I came here when she was doing that and she's very good at it. They cut something and she asked them, "Why did they cut that picture, what was it that caught their attention."

And then they start talking about the picture because it reminded them of someone or something.

In interviews with the students, there was no indication that they explored their lived realities in class or even thought about it in relation to learning English. Part of the problem was the content being taught and the way in which it was presented. During observations, I witnessed attempts by the volunteers to have the students write and talk about their lives in the context of a lesson. Margaret tried this by doing a journal activity with the students. From my classroom observation of Margaret's class:

Margaret: OK, take out your journal and write down your typical day at work. So if you get there at 8am and go to the cafeteria to get coffee, I want you to write that down.

The example she used was telling. First, by framing the "typical day" as arriving at work at 8 a.m. and going to a cafeteria, she had already precluded every student in the room from relating to the assignment. None of the students had a mainstream job that afforded them this opportunity. All of the students had either "day labor" jobs, which were unstable or inconsistent, or they worked full time cleaning houses. Second, this assignment was not critical or reflective, but rather it offered a functional writing assignment.

Frank also talked about his efforts to connect the student's lives to a lesson during class. He talked about a lesson he gave after the shooting in Colorado at a screening of *The Dark Night Rises*:

Frank: At the risk of seeming salacious- booby trap, one of them said "doesn't booby mean a woman's breast?" I said well, not in this context. Um, and for some reason, I don't know why, I always think of violence and weapons and guns as being so prevalent

in the media that I was surprised that they almost seemed, they really didn't seem to know many of the words in English for weapons.

Todd: Did they associate that with their current situation?

Frank: They mentioned in passing about gunshots in their neighborhood, but they seemed most interested in the event.

The practice of critical consciousness was a clearly stated aspect of El Corazón and Amanecer Adult School: "Our goal is to develop a critical consciousness that can translate into action to defend human and civil rights." Even though a fundamental element of Amanecer Adult School was to develop a strong, intelligent and critical citizenry, they provided little to no opportunity for students to engage authentically in their communities in a sustainable and mutually beneficial manner. This was in part due to their lack of knowledge of popular education and of critical pedagogy.

Part of the issue from Frank's perspective was that the students did not see their community as a problem, and for him that was enough:

Michelle, loves her neighborhood, it's always beautiful, very nice people around her, except for the guy who smokes.

This lack of critical engagement in the classroom has had a deleterious effect on the student's critical analysis of society. At no time during interviews and observations did any of the students talk about how larger social relations were organized around racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression.

Conclusion: The Hope for a Liberatory Educational Practice

In some ways I began this research over ten years ago when I worked in family literacy. There I saw the power of conscientization in the lives of those who were oppressed and voiceless. I watched women who survived a civil war, rape, and a 3,000-mile journey to America transform from quiet and subdued persons, to fully active members of their community. These women not only understood oppression and hegemonic power structures, but they knew how to navigate and fight within those structures for social justice.

Amanecer Adult School offered that same opportunity and I believe that they had the ability and passion to create an engaging environment for their students. Part of the vision (from their website) of Amanecer spoke to me, above all else, "As a liberatory educational practice, Amanecer Adult School supports conscientious participation of our Latino communities, particularly immigrants, in the process of decision-making, in the critical analysis of their own realities, and in the construction of their own vision of the future." It was a large part of my decision to volunteer for them, and will continue to be the reason I return for more volunteer work. This research has illuminated, for me, the importance of this work in the lives of so many who are living in the shadows and those that have yet to make it here. This research has had the effect of reenergizing and reengaging me in the process of critical work. I will continue to work with Amanecer to further explore the questions, possibilities, challenges, successes, and recommendations offered by this study.

Chapter Summary

Utilizing thorough inductive analysis, Chapter 4 detailed the findings of the evidence as it related to the research questions. The research questions pertained to the challenges and

successes faced by Amanecer Adult School, as well as the perception of the Spanish-speaking participants on their acquisition of English and critical citizenship. The research revealed many more challenges than successes; it also revealed commitment to the program by volunteers and students.

The research revealed a lack of resources, both material and pedagogical, that prevented the volunteers from creating a consistent and articulated program. Additionally, the fact that there was no curriculum or formal training in popular education inhibited the school from fulfilling its mission and vision.

The data revealed that the students experienced a literacy instruction focused mainly on functional learning, with the lessons exhibiting a skills-based focus on low frequency decoding, including verb conjugation, and the memorization of vocabulary words. Additionally, survival skills were emphasized over critical learning or exploration.

The students followed the structure and direction of the program without questioning its purpose or methods. The program did not provide the students with a space for critical inquiry about their learning. There was no room in the curriculum for culture, conversation, or critical citizenship.

Chapter 5 analyzes the data presented in this chapter related to the research questions, including student resistance, curriculum, language acquisition. Chapter 5 also presents recommendations for Amanecer Adult School, for nationwide research, and for exploring the program by critically questioning various aspects of Amanecer Adult School.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of the Study

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study had two goals. The first goal was to understand how a critical, non-formal, adult literacy program addresses the challenges and successes which the students and volunteers identify at Amanecer Adult School. The second goal was to explore the perception of the student Spanish-speaking immigrants on the extent to which this program contributes to their second language acquisition and critical citizenship. These goals were examined through studying a local nonprofit organization, Amanecer Adult School, (AAS) that espouses critical literacy as its main goal. Ultimately this study focused on how the school addressed the dialectical role of helping adult immigrants assimilate to the new culture and fitting in with mainstream society while learning English for critical citizenship.

Research Questions

The following are the two research questions this study used to reach the goals as mentioned above:

1. What challenges and successes do students and volunteers identify in the critical literacy program at Amanecer Adult School?
2. What is the perception of the Spanish-speaking immigrant about the program's contributions to their second language acquisition and critical citizenship?

Findings

Over a three-month period, I conducted interviews and focus groups with nine students and volunteers at Amanecer Adult School. In addition, I observed classroom interactions and community meetings, and analyzed documents to understand historical and current instructional practices. Utilizing inductive analysis (Hatch 2002), four themes emerged from the data through findings and domains. These themes were significant in that they illuminated the culture of the institution and the realities faced by both the students and volunteers at the program. They also provide a platform for recommendations for future practices and research. The themes that emerged were:

1. Culture of the Insitituion,
2. Volunteer Trial by Fire,
3. Students: Unready, Willing and Underserved,
4. Curriculum.

Discussion of the Findings

According to Brown (2000) communicating genuinely, spontaneously, and meaningfully in the second language should be the goal of second language acquisition (SLA), especially for adult immigrant learners (p. 14). To do so, the teachers and volunteers must move beyond rules, patterns, and definitions in SLA teaching and learning. By revealing the voices of the students and volunteers this study found the challenges and successes faced, as well as the students perception of second language acquisition and critical citizenship. A discussion of the findings in relation to the two research questions follows.

Question 1: What challenges and successes do students and volunteers identify in the critical literacy program at Amanecer Adult School?

Volunteers and students reported many challenges they faced as members of Amanecer Adult School. The lack of resources, physical space to time and money, diminished the ability of the staff and volunteers to produce a coherent program. Additionally, a lack of curriculum or formal training in both general education and popular education inhibited the school from fulfilling its mission and vision. The staff, volunteers, and students all expressed frustration working with these challenges and a desire to see the program change. Though the challenges for Amanecer Adult School were large, there were several successes that arose from the research, including community and civic support, student affirmation, volunteer commitment to work, and evidence that students used what English they learned.

One of the first issues that arose in the study included a lack of resources available to the volunteers and students. The physical location and condition of the school was cramped, uncomfortable, and hot or cold, depending on the season. Once in the "classroom" both the volunteers and the students were faced with the challenge of finding their own materials, from procuring a white board to bringing their own handouts that they paid for themselves, or students having to supply their own dictionaries. Behrman (2006) reviewed literature about critical literacy practices and found that some of the most commonly used practices were: reading supplementary texts; reading multiple texts; producing counter-texts; and having students conduct research about topics of personal interest. These are laudable goals and necessary steps for critical literacy to take place, but they were nearly impossible for a school that cannot afford to provide dictionaries to its students. Additionally, many of the students were not in a position

to afford the necessary materials, and while some students came to class with dictionaries, and notebooks, others would have to borrow paper from their neighbor.

Assessment posed another issue that was revealed in the research. Assessment of students was limited to their entry to the AAS. Though the students took an entry exam, the results were not used in any meaningful way. The students dictated in which level they would prefer to be placed, which led to lopsided classes, the lower-level classes having many more students than the higher-level classes. There were no assessments to measure the learning of the students in class, either.

As Met (1994) pointed out, assessment for second language acquisition poses unique problems, such as difficulty determining exactly where students are underperforming. Portfolios including items such as writing samples, art, audio and video components, posters, and so forth are ways to gauge the cumulative learning of a language learner over time. Once a student's language proficiency has increased, writing tests can be used. Goldenberg (2000) suggested that simplifying test items, but keeping the content the same is an effective accommodation (p. 21).

A lack of assessment was detrimental to the students' learning process. Because the teachers did not know where the students were underperforming, the teachers could not enhance the curriculum or instruction to meet the students' needs. Additionally, the students did not have a way to measure their own learning. They progressed through the semester, never having to demonstrate competence in content knowledge. As a result, the students truly believed they were learning English and using it in their daily lives.

Maria, the volunteer coordinator, indicated in an interview that she did not know what the volunteers were teaching and the volunteers were clear that they did not know what to teach.

Based on observations, since every class was different in both methodology and content, the students were unable to anticipate a structure for the class. They entered the day not knowing what would be expected of them or what they would learn.

Freeman, Freeman, and Mercuri (2002) have pinpointed four points for school success for adult English learners:

1. Engage students in challenging, theme-based curriculum to develop academic concepts.
2. Draw on students' background-their experiences, cultures, and languages.
3. Organize collaborative activities and scaffold instruction to build students' academic English proficiency.
4. Create confident students who value school and value themselves as learners. (p. 16)

The curriculum at AAS turned out to be a hodgepodge of information gleaned from the Internet. The curriculum was also ever changing, not because the students challenged it in either a positive or negative way, or because the teacher thought that it was not producing a critical exploration of the student's lives. It changed because the teachers were desperate to find something that would connect with the students. Unfortunately, the curriculum did not lead the students to critically explore the second language through their lives or through larger structures of oppression. At best the students learned sets of vocabulary and high-level concepts.

The curriculum also did not allow for a critical exploration of, as Pennycock (1999) termed it, the second culture. At best the students learned a "food and flags" type of curriculum. They were exposed to things like holidays and the types of food eaten on those holidays, but were not asked to critically examine where the holidays came from, or who the holidays benefited. For example, during a conversation about Thanksgiving, the volunteer teacher was

quick to speak about the virtues of the holiday, "Thanksgiving is about coming together to share food with family and friends and to give thanks." Left out of the discussion was any historical context around colonialism or oppression, or any connection to the students' lives and culture.

Bartolome (1994) posited that critical second language acquisition should be situated in the students' cultural experiences. If not, students will have difficulty in mastering a content area that is not only alien to their reality, but also often antagonistic toward their culture and lived experiences (p. 191). This was true at AAS, as well. In observations and document analysis, it was clear that the lives of the students were not a factor in either the classroom interactions or curriculum. Lessons consistently referenced commonplace terms and concepts acceptable in Americanized classrooms. For example, during one lesson the teacher prefaced a lesson with the idea that the students think about starting their day at work by going to the office, heading to the cafeteria and getting a cup of coffee. Even for myself, as a White American, this is not applicable. I don't have a cafeteria in my building, but I understand the concept. For the students, even the concept of an office job was foreign. Most of the students work manual labor type jobs such as house cleaners, maintenance workers, and gardening. By not respecting and validating the lived realities of the students, the program at AAS ran the risk of alienation and detachment.

According to Macedo (1987), Freire's emancipatory model of literacy represents two dimensions to literacy. First, it entails students becoming literate about their histories, experiences, and the culture of their immediate environments. Second, students should "appropriate those codes and cultures of the dominant spheres so they can transcend their own

environments" (p. 47). Without an opportunity to explore their own histories and experiences, the students did not have an opportunity to transcend their own environments.

For the students to transcend their own environments, the volunteers should have the skill necessary to teach. The lack of training for the volunteers remained a challenge for AAS.. The volunteers reported having no training in popular education at Amanecer. While some of the volunteers had teaching experience, none had experience teaching critically. As Freire (1970) outlined, in speaking about teacher training:

- the educator is the subject of his or her practice, it being necessary to create it and recreate it through reflection about his or her daily work;
- the training of educators must be ongoing and systematic, because practice is done and redone;
- teaching practice requires understanding of the very genesis of knowledge, that is to say of how the process of knowing takes place;
- the training program of educators is a condition for the process of restructuring the school curriculum. (p. 80)

The volunteers at Amanecer Adult School were not afforded the opportunity to become the subject of their practice. After the death of the founder, Javier Cruz, training at the school ceased, and the volunteers relied on what they knew, or what they learned from each classroom interaction.

My experience as a volunteer was different that those of current teachers. While Cruz was alive, the volunteers had regular trainings on popular education. In addition we were invited to attend public presentations and trainings on critical pedagogy. As volunteers we were also

expected to provide updates on our experiences and work as a group in constructing practices and curriculum. Unfortunately, this was not an institutional or structural practice, but a personality driven practice that did not transcend Cruz's death.

Several successes arose during the research which are key to building a successful program at Amanecer Adult School. First, through observations and interviews, community support for the program was revealed. This was important, as popular education was a "grassroots" movement, in that action arises from a community or group of people. As popular education was informal and used in community groups or social movements it comes from the "bottom-up" and the lived experiences of the participants. In the future, Amanecer has the opportunity to capitalize on a community that is engaged, to create real and meaningful change. In the two years I volunteered with the school, before they reorganized as Amanecer, I saw how important the community was to the work of literacy.

Amanecer can also build upon the commitment of the volunteers, as well. In spite of the volunteers feeling unsupported and sometimes lost without a curriculum, they expressed gratification in the job. If the goal of critical pedagogy is to create a teacher-student, student-teacher (Freire, 1970) dynamic, dedication to the work is important. Relatedly, as the volunteers were committed to the work, the school acted as a safe place for the students to come. Safety and security especially for a group of people who are undocumented and constantly living with uncertainty creates opportunity. The opportunity then is to engage the core group of students who come, regardless of a lack of space, temperature issues and other issues, to socially conscious and critically responsive community.

Question 2: What is the perception of the Spanish-speaking immigrant about the program's contributions to their second language acquisition and critical citizenship?

Freire's (1970) work as a literacy instructor and research in education revolved around teaching critical literacy to oppressed peoples around the world. Methodologically and philosophically, his approach was composed of three processes: naming, reflection, and action. Naming asked what the problem was; reflection explored the "why" of the problem, and finally, action strove toward a change to the situation. Though Freire dismissed the idea of a "Freirian Method," this set of ideas has become important for critical educators in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) (Crookes, 2005).

As such, these guidelines have steered critical educators for forty years. Critical educators come to the work in different ways and teach using different methods and curriculum, but all are dedicated to the conscientization of the oppressed. While Amanecer shared in these beliefs and expressed this philosophy in its mission, their methods and curriculum were far from critical in nature.

Pennycock (1999) asked the question, "What are the interests served by functional proficiency-based language programs" (p. 311)? Functional literacy is a part of the curriculum that prepares students to become members of the work force, which, in turn, support marketplace ideologies (Apple, 1990; Cadiero-Kaplan, 2004). The focus of texts that operate from a functional literacy perspective are primarily reading comprehension, decoding, comprehending vocabulary, and following directions (Myers, 1996). Pennycock's (1999) question remains central to functional literacy being taught at AAS.

The students at AAS were continually asked to read large chunks of text and decode them, not in a critical way, but rather in a way that ensured they understood the words, but not the meanings behind the sentence. The students mastered understanding letter patterns, and to correctly pronounce written words. Unfortunately, they were never asked to move beyond this most basic type of literacy to examine hegemony or oppression.

Similarly, the banking model of education was clearly evident in the research at AAS. As Freire elucidated, the banking concept assumes a dichotomy between people and the world:

> …a person is merely in the world, not with the world or with others; the individual is a spectator, not re-creator. In this view the person is not a conscious being (*corpo consciente*); he or she is rather the possessor of a consciousness: an empty "mind" passively open to the reception of deposits of reality from the world outside. (Freire, 1970, p. 247)

The students at AAS were also the beneficiaries of banking education. As there were no assessments at ASS, the students were not required to repeat what they learned, but they were given a seemingly endless array of things to "learn." The curriculum was not only disconnected from their lived realities, but the content was neutral and expected to be learned passively. Verbs and vocabulary were given in lists to be digested regardless of context and not problem posing in nature.

It can take three to seven years for students to acquire a second language if they possess literacy skills in their native languages. If the student does not possess literacy skills in their native languages secondary language acquisition can take anywhere between seven and ten years to achieve (Cummins, 1979). As previously mentioned, language acquisition was not assessed at

AAS. After analysis of the data, including observations and interviews, the students professed to using the English they learned, and they used minimal English in class. The teaching methods, curriculum, and theoretical framework of the teachers limited language acquisition for the students.

Evidenced from the observations of Level-3 English classes showed that the students learned phrases and vocabulary, since the curriculum was geared more toward these pieces. The students answered leading questions that required one-word answers such as: "What color is a tree?," and "Is the man tall or short?" Rather than using English more fully, the students parsed out key words and, sometimes, guessed at a correct answer. Students reported using English at work or their children's school. On the surface this would indicate that some level of English language proficiency was begin attained.

Reflection and action remained missing pieces at AAS. At no time were the students asked to reflect upon their lives or about the world around them. Instead they were fed phrases and vocabulary about weather and public services, many of which were not applicable to their lives. As a result, the students continually wrote and rewrote sets of vocabulary and read text that was disconnected from their everyday experiences. Freire's (1970) concept of conscientization was the ultimate realization of what these students should be experiencing. The process of conscientization, or developing a critical awareness of one's social reality happens through reflection and action.

The separation between the lives of the students and what they learned, created a disconnected student body. The students were consistently quiet during class, not engaging in

dialogue or participation in the learning process. They kept their heads down and copied the board for a majority of the class.

Understandably, the action required for conscientization was absent from at AAS. Because the students were not asked to reflect upon social inequalities and oppression, there was no call to action, either. The goal became teaching about self-preservation within this reality without addressing ways to create change.

Reflecting upon conscientization, Freire (1970) reinforced the idea that it is a necessary condition for humanity:

> In truth, conscientization is a requirement for our human condition. It is one of the roads we have to follow if we are to deepen our awareness of our world, of facts, of events, of the demands of human consciousness to develop our capacity for epistemological curiosity. Far from being alien to our human condition, conscientization is natural to "unfinished" humanity that is aware of its unfinishedness. (p. 48)

Until AAS embraces not just the verbiage of conscientization, but establishes the necessary components to ensure its fulfillment, the students will continue to be disengaged and have an "unfinished" humanity.

Significance of the Findings

Several years ago I worked at a nonprofit that conducted adult second language classes with the same philosophy, based on critical literacy, as Amanecer Adult School. The nonprofit worked hard to understand their students, the students' histories, and the students' current realities. The school administrator was a Dominican nun with extensive experience in social justice and critical work. In addition to the nun, the school partnered with two professors at a

local university to help create curriculum and conduct professional development. The teachers and students were supported and involved in all levels of their work. This is not to say that the program was perfect, but that there was a structure in place and gave success a chance to flourish.

The findings of this study clearly indicate that the stated goals of Amanecer Adult School were not upheld. Some positive aspects of the program were revealed in the study, including community and civic support, the volunteer commitment to work, student affirmation and respect for the teachers, and the fact that students used what little they learned.

The challenges of the program far outweighed the positives found in the data. The students, while respecting their teachers, were rarely assessed; there was no established curriculum nor means to discuss the students' lived realities. Additionally, the lack of resources, including money, time, space and classroom materials, at AAS was almost overwhelming for the volunteers. The lack of training in, and no understanding of, popular education by the volunteers at AAS stood out as a major issue.

The significance of the findings indicates that this type of program is not easy to do without ground-level support. Running a program with a critical framework requires more than dedication. It also requires institutionalization of and expertise in that framework.

Additionally, this study allowed for the voices of participants to be heard, sometimes for the first time. The students felt affirmed by the program and the teachers. The student's also expressed great respect for the teachers, giving a glimpse into the way in which they view expertise. Finally, the students used what little they learned in the real world.

Implications

While the general findings for this study cannot be extrapolated to every second language program using popular education in the country, there are several implications for similar programs. Giroux (1997) stated that pedagogy is always related to power. Moreover, Giroux claimed that dominant educational philosophies only educate students to adapt to the current social norms rather than interrogate and critique current social norms. Freire (1970) in speaking about education said:

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration…into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (p. 34)

The program at AAS was not fulfilling its promise of critical education. While there are programs across the country that teach adult literacy classes from a critical perspective, a majority will undoubtedly teach for assimilation and functional literacy, not because they are calloused or want the worst for their students, but rather because the dominant culture requires assimilation. The broader implications of this study illuminate the pitfalls that AAS faced and to create means to eliminate such pitfalls in similar programs. Other programs can learn to incorporate student voice, to create dialogue, and to write comprehensive and inclusive curricula. In doing so, standard second language programs can claw their ways out of the doldrums of oppressive education and toward a more socially and democratically just education.

Recommendations for Amanecer Adult School

Based on the analysis of the data and its relationship to the literature reviewed, this research study suggests certain areas of improvement for Amanecer Adult School. They relate to training and curriculum. The data indicate that AAS faces these two most pressing issues.

Training. When asked about their knowledge of popular education and how it related to the program at AAS, the volunteers unanimously stated they did not have knowledge of nor did they receive training in popular education. The volunteer staffer at AAS also expressed her dismay at the lack of volunteer knowledge in this area. It was clear that the adherence to popular education fell off after the death of AAS' founder.

Popular education is a "grassroots" movement in that action arises from a community or group of people. Popular education encourages people to generate their own knowledge about aspects of their current culture and lived realities rather than relying on an outsider raising awareness or educating the group. Dialogue and critical thinking is key to popular education being successful. There is a strong emphasis on political intention in popular education with the ultimate goal of creating change. For this change to take place, popular education focuses on action to create a more equitable and critically conscious world (Freire, 1970).

Popular education is informal and used in community groups or social movements: informal because it comes from the "bottom-up" and the lived experiences of the participants. Because popular education is informal and requires that the community initiation, AAS needs to engage its student community in this work. As the program is currently structured, the volunteers hold the power and knowledge is bestowed upon the students. Ferrer (2011) posits that popular education is a set of processes aimed at educating the popular class, dominated,

subordinate, and instrumental social groups, including young people without formal schooling and adults who are illiterate or looking to complement their education.

AAS needs to train both volunteers and community members in popular education. Only then can AAS begin to explore how the program should move forward, or if it should move forward, at all. The voice of the participants needs to be heard and analyzed with an expert knowledge base on both sides.

Curriculum. Without a doubt, AAS needs a secondary language acquisition curriculum. From observations and interviews, the *ad hoc* and disjointed curriculum the volunteers were using was not effective in achieving the program's stated goals. The curriculum was also the antithesis of the philosophical underpinnings of AAS. The AAS website indicated:

> Popular education centers a historical consciousness, arguing that within each time period diverse forms of transforming the world existed. PE provides a historical analysis of human relationships and the value of human life across different societies.
>
> On the one hand, PE critically analyzes the reality of different social groups to understand how oppression operates in society. On the other hand, it works to organize and implement different strategies for transforming that reality.

Choules (2007), speaking about popular education, posited that curriculum comes from the lived realities and material interests of social movements and communities of resistance and struggle. The pedagogy is group oriented, not focused on individual learning, and the curriculum is collective and democratic. Finally, its goal is to create a link between education and social change.

The current curriculum did not provide historical analysis of human relationships nor did it explore how oppression operates in society. AAS must move beyond rhetorical platitudes and engage the community in critical dialogue. Only then will they have content to establish a collaborative process to create a curriculum. Trying to figure out what to teach on the fly is not optimal for any educational setting, let alone one that professes a critical framework.

Additional Research at Amanecer Adult School

Additional research at AAS is recommended based on the outcome of this study. The findings reveal that the community is enthusiastic about the English classes at AAS. When semesters start, the classes are full and students regularly attend classes. As the semester progresses these students fall of leaving a core group of students who consistently attend class. While this study outlined many of challenges the program faces, it did so with students and volunteers currently attending the program, thus, they somehow see the benefits of the program. Conducting a qualitative study of the students who stop attending classes would potentially yield data that could indicate student perceptions about some of the weaknesses at AAS.

Additional Nationwide Research

National research around the issue of second language acquisition for adult immigrants and popular education should be conducted. While AAS was the only program of its kind in the area in which I live, similar programs exist nationwide. These programs have funding, curricula, staff professional development, and consistent student populations. It would be helpful for AAS to study these programs using the same or similar research questions used in this study.

Depending on the findings, AAS could use what was learned to strengthen their program and better serve their community.

Recommendations for Teachers

As Met (1994) stated, "All good teachers must be good planners" (p. 161). They think about long-term and short-term goals. They consider the lesson from the point of view of their students. They anticipate how their lesson will unfold over a period of time. Finally, they know what their students will be doing at any point in the lesson. This type of teaching is not only beneficial for mainstream native language learners, but also for second language learners; it does require special modifications and accommodations to be effective.

In this research with the teachers at AAS, the lack of training, curriculum and knowledge of popular education were evident. Examining the literature, the researcher continuously returned to two questions that should be reflective in nature, a questions that teachers can use to strengthen their practice and methodology: How can students pose their own problems through the second language?

Problem posing through the second language. Apple (1990) elucidated that "If skills are not learned in a problematic context drawn from experience, then the teaching will serve to domesticate the students to the methods of the discipline" (p. 105). This was evident in the study. The functional teaching methodology and curriculum did not leave room for the students to perceive, critically, the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves.

To facilitate problem-posing education, the teachers should incorporate dialogue into the lessons. Auerbach (1992) outlined five steps to creating problem-posing education through

dialogue: Describe the content, define the problem, personalize the problem, discuss the problem, and discuss alternatives to the problem. The teachers at AAS should bring constructive dialogue to the classroom to ensure that the students are exploring their lived realities. Through dialogue everyone can become responsible for education. As Freire (1970) posited, the "teacher-of-the-student" and "students-of-the-teacher" cease to exist; instead these roles can be replaced by "teacher-students' and "student-teachers" (p. 80).

Recommendations for the Field

Based on the data from Chapter Four, it became evident that the culture and lived realities of the students at AAS were missing, ignored, or marginalized. Teachers at programs across the country should ask themselves how they could incorporate the culture and experiences of their students into their curriculum and teaching methods to promote critical citizenship. Educating the students from a critical perspective will give them the opportunity to explore inequities in society and link those inequities with their experiences.

The potential of this would be to allow the students to fight domination and work toward their emancipation by employing their historicity as a starting point. In Freire's (1970) own words, he argued that no one is better prepared to understand the "terrible significance of oppressive society" more than the oppressed, because they suffer the effects of that oppression every moment of their lives (p. 45).

Similarly, teachers and programs nationally, should focus on critical SLA, as well. The ultimate goal of critical SLA is to teach language within a broader, critical view of social, political, cultural and historical relations. From this point of view, critical SLA would empower

the student, help them draw upon their own cultures and lived experiences and, hopefully, create a transformative vision that would transform society itself.

Recommendations for Adult Education Nonprofits

Legal status. 501(c)3 nonprofit status is a valuable tool for any community program that seeks to engage in adult education. To attain this status, there are a plethora of topics that must be mastered for a nonprofit to run efficiently, such as:

1. Creating governing documents;
2. Establishing board governance;
3. Strategic planning;
4. Risk management;
5. Fundraising;
6. Human Resources development;
7. Volunteer and intern management, and;
8. Finance

This is not and exhaustive list, but one that illustrates the complexity of running a successful nonprofit.

Attaining 501(c)3 status requires particular knowledge and skill in both taxes and grant writing. Recruiting volunteers with these particular skills is definitely paramount. During my tenure at the family literacy program in Florida, we had several volunteers that had expertise in law and grant writing that we could turn to either clarify a situation, or help us navigate something potentially legally precarious. Grant making organizations also look for this type of expertise in administering grants. They need to know that the money they dedicate to an

organization will not be wasted, but accounted for both in terms of financial accounting and programmatic outcomes.

Fundraising. My entire professional career has been in the nonprofit sector. The most important thing one learns working for a nonprofit is that to stay in business requires everyone to raise money. By everyone, I mean everyone from the Executive Director down to the unpaid volunteers. As evidenced by the data from Amanecer, piece meal fundraising and relying on volunteers to pick up the slack, is not effective. A program needs a strategic plan that is in place and followed. Each level of employee must be given tasks and responsibilities and the support to ensure success.

Paid professional staff. Alongside fundraising, the staff of a program should be paid and trained to do the job for which they were hired; this includes administrative staff as well as programmatic staff. Administratively, keeping accurate records of students, student recruiting, and logistics are required to run a program smoothly. Having an administrative professional on staff also alleviates pressure from the teachers. At Amanecer, one volunteer was in charge of teaching an English class, and monitoring, recruiting, and evaluating all students. In addition, she was responsible for negotiating the logistics of classrooms, and how to obtain teaching materials. No matter how dedicated a volunteer is, these are unrealistic expectations that will eventually drive away an otherwise valuable person.

The teachers of a program also need to be paid and have professional training. Goldeberg (2008) has articulated that second language learners benefit from clear goals, learning objectives, and meaningful, challenging, and motivating contexts in the curriculum (p. 17). Only a teacher

well trained in the appropriate pedagogy can do this effectively. To recruit a teacher with this training requires a salary and benefits.

A paid teacher must also be a trained teacher. They must be trained in appropriate methodology for second language learners. Goldenberg (2008) also articulated that well-designed, clearly structured, and appropriately paced instruction, active engagement and participation opportunities to practice, and opportunities to interact with other students in motivating and appropriately structured contexts are deeply meaningful to second language learners. Adult second language learners need space and time to acclimate to and practice the second language.

They must also have training in curriculum development. Curriculum rooted in critical pedagogy and praxis is necessary for adult education programs. As Freire (1970) describes praxis:

> When a word is deprived of its dimensions of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter, into verbalism, into an alienated and alienating "blah." It becomes an empty word, one which cannot denounce the world, for denunciation is impossible without a commitment to transform, and there is no transformation without action. (p. 87)

Many of the students at Amanecer experienced the "alienating blah" even if they did not have the means to express it in this way. Much of their experience was a direct reflection of curriculum being taught. It was disconnected and hodgepodge, producing a disengaged student population. Having teachers who have had professional training and are paid a fair wage would mitigate this issue at Amanecer and programs across the country.

Methodological Recommendations

This case study was intrinsic in that it was not undertaken primarily because the case represented other cases or because it illustrated a particular trait or problem, but because in all its particularity and ordinariness, the case itself was of interest (Stake, 1995). While that was true, methodologically, given that the program at Amanecer claimed to focus on critical literacy, restricting the data collection to a straight qualitative case study was limiting.

While I was studying this program from an emic status, I was studying issues that were outside of my control. Using action research may have yielded richer data. There was little to no emancipatory benefit to the students through the use of a straight qualitative methodology. Ideally, when studying issues from a critical perspective, creating a study that engages the participants as co-researchers could yield an increase in critical consciousness in the participants.

Methodological recommendations must also be made for researchers using an interpreter. This research was difficult for me as I did not speak Spanish and my participants spoke limited English. While I had a translator to help me with the exact words that were spoken, much of the unspoken understanding that one gleans from an interaction was lost. Finding a translator that understands the culture of the participants is important for those unspoken interactions.

There are additional pitfalls that one may encounter when doing research with an interpreter (Freed, 1988). As interpreters can introduce their own beliefs into the interaction, a researcher must be cognizant and work toward effective questioning both the participant and interpreter. An additional challenge of which a researcher must be aware is the potential for an interview devolving into conversation between the interpreter and interviewee. While a

conversation is not necessarily a negative thing, there is the danger of loosing objectivity and potentially loosing vital data.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that it specifically focused on adult learners, mostly undocumented, in a large urban population. Thus the findings cannot be generalized to the entire population. It may be generalizable to similar programs across the country. Additionally, portions of the study may also be useful to other programs.

Conclusion

I sought out Amanecer Adult School over three years ago. I knew I wanted to do research at this site. From the first day I volunteered at their program I knew the volunteers and the students were dedicated to the ideals of transformational education. I saw, first hand, the power and influence of the founder of AAS. His vision and charisma carried AAS, and his respect for, and knowledge of, popular education was vital to their early successes. Unfortunately, as time moved on after the founder's death, I saw these ideals slowly diminish to what is left today. Freire (1970) once said:

> For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other. (p. 72)

AAS is a program standing at a crossroads. The program was invented years ago to create critical literacy and popular education, and I truly believe it was effective; it is time for a

reinvention. AAS must pursue their impatience with the status quo and renew itself. AAS was created to serve a community in need and it will only be through inquiry and praxis that they improve their program and pursue the word and the world.

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