UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

"WHAT COUNTS" IN YPAR?: MOBILITIES AND IMMOBILITIES IN AN ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSROOM DURING THE PANDEMIC

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

EDUCATION

by

Sarah M. Rapp

June 2023

The Dissertation of Sarah M. Rapp is approved:

_____
Professor Judith A. Scott, chair

_____
Professor Cynthia Lewis

_____
Professor Jessica Zacher Pandya

_____
Peter Biehl
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

CONTENTS

TABLES

FIGURES

ABSTRACT

"WHAT COUNTS" IN YPAR?:
MOBILITIES AND IMMOBILITIES
IN AN ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CLASSROOM DURING THE PANDEMIC

Sarah M. Rapp

In this semester-long study in a high school English class that was online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a class of ninth graders engaged in communication with people outside of their classroom about their collectively chosen project topic: racism. The transliteracies framework was used to explore students' participation in multimodal events and texts, as well as the teacher and students' views of the projects. This study helps to complicate, contribute to, expand, and bring together the related pedagogies of youth participatory action research (YPAR) and critical literacy. More specifically, the findings of this qualitative study were that students used a variety of transliteracies practices to move with and against the projects. Self love and skepticism were themes that emerged and deepened the projects, while the teacher grappled with issues of control, legitimacy, and representation. More research and collaborative practice is needed that explores limitations and the role of emergence in YPAR.

Keywords: youth participatory action research, transliteracies, critical literacy, adolescent literacy

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I appreciate my advisor Judy Scott and my hands-on committee members, Cynthia Lewis and Jessica Zacher Pandya, whose support was needed through the challenges and discoveries of this dissertation process.

I appreciate my mentor Dave Low for his wit and wisdom and warmth. Our serendipitous meeting and emergent collaborations have been fun and fulfilling.

I appreciate my University of California, Santa Cruz, Education Department cohort, colleagues, and professors for giving me new perspectives, ideas, and purposes.

I appreciate my wonderful Family Student Housing neighbors at UCSC for teaching me about community, parenting, and different perspectives.

I appreciate my colleagues at my new (and old) institution, Sonoma State University, for the warmest welcome anyone could ask for, and for the constant support and nudging to prioritize my dissertation.

I appreciate all of the educators I know, who are working so hard to continue their own learning in order to better support young people's learning.

I appreciate my parents for their unconditional love and *nachas*.

I appreciate my family and friends who have been patient with me when I have not been as present as I would have liked.

I appreciate my brave teacher friend who embarked on this research with me.

I appreciate the brave students in this study who engaged in projects during a very challenging time.

I appreciate every student and teacher I have ever worked with - the truth is that you taught me more than I taught you.

I appreciate the equity-oriented educational leaders I have worked with in the past and present, and am inspired by your own emerging projects.

I appreciate my supportive husband, who believes that I can do important things and then carries the load so that I can do the work.

I appreciate my three kids who are all so “extra” in every way - being your mom has given me the biggest opportunity for love and learning.

I appreciate the full circle nature of this work, which has reconnected me with important people, sites, and learning, brought together my personal, academic and professional lives, and given me new perspectives and connections as well. I look forward to continuing this emergence…

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation contains many voices and stories. It begins with the idea of youth participatory action research, which centers youth and community voices, and also suggests that what these voices have to say is complex and warrants more attention. This study is the story of how a classroom project unfolded, and includes students' stories, projects, and ideas, which are shared through varied modes of communication and languages. What happened in the classroom and for these students was embedded in the broader contexts of a pandemic, political unrest, and racial violence. As the researcher, my own voice and story is present in my interpretations, and I was also influenced by the voices and stories of others, including the students, the teacher, community members, and colleagues. The insights that will be shared, part of this ongoing story, speak to the challenge and promise of including youth voices in literacy classrooms and in youth participatory action research.

In a four-year study of digital video-making practices in which bilingual students represented themselves and communicated messages they cared about to audiences they cared about, Pandya (2019, p. 104) concluded that youth participatory action research (YPAR) and critical literacy complement each other and could be used together to "[open] curricular spaces to create powerful texts." Pandya's (2019, p. 109) suggestion is important because YPAR has been primarily associated with only one of the two strands of critical literacy: a Freirean (1970/2007) approach based

on a praxis of reflection and action (Cadiero-Kaplan, 2002) (expanding what students do with literacy in the world) rather than an approach grounded in sociolinguistics that allows for a deeper examination of texts and language (Morgan, 1997) as ideological (Street, 1984) and dynamic (New London Group, 1996; Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) (expanding "what counts" (Street, 2003) as literacy and who counts as literate). This study builds upon Pandya's (2019) suggestion by bringing current versions of these respective critical literacy traditions together: YPAR and transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017). YPAR creates a context for students' outside-classroom action, and a transliteracies perspective provides a lens to more deeply study the literacy practices, texts, and actions that emerge.

Engaging marginalized student populations in YPAR is particularly important because they may have had less access to agentive school literacy learning contexts. For example, literacy learning for linguistically diverse students has been even more didactic and teacher-centered than that of their monolingual English-speaking peers, as a result of gatekeeping policies and practices, ranging from the classroom level to the national level (Duke, 2016; Kibler & Valdés, 2016; Kroskrity, 2010; Mintrop et al., 2009; Noguera et al., 2015). Sociolinguistic perspectives are needed to resist the ways in which minoritized students' language and literacy practices are often framed as deficits in school, a result of persistent English-only and standard English language ideologies that are more about leveraging monolingualism to maintain societal powers than about teaching students language (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). School YPAR

exists in this hegemonic context, and this study is unique in exploring the roots and effects of these ideological contradictions.

Conceptually, transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) replaces framings of literacy as cognitive, formal, and fixed with framings of literacy as social, purposeful, and dynamic. Such a shift has the potential to reconfigure YPAR learning contexts (away from notions of "buy in" and "academic literacy") so that all students have more access to learning. In this study, exploring the students' transliteracies practices and views, as well as the teacher's intentions and views, illuminated the mobilities and immobilities that emerged as part of high school students' outside-classroom communications (my research questions). More specifically, understanding (rather than ignoring or rationalizing) the barriers of YPAR implementation in school can help create new paradigms and practices that can hopefully help overcome them.

In the next chapter, I use existing YPAR literature to make a claim that, despite its potential, YPAR in school often involves texts, contexts, and mindsets that are too limited and limiting for students. Research from sociolinguistically-oriented critical literacy and addressivity is used to suggest the ways in which it could supplement YPAR approaches and help YPAR to evolve. I also share insights about the specific challenges of Zoom YPAR projects that are relevant to this study.

Chapter 3 describes my theoretical framework of transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) in more detail, focusing on the "paradox of mobility" (p. 70) and the tracing of emergent activity through the use of the transliteracies tools of emergence, uptake, resonance, and scale. I also conceptualize transliteracies events, practices, and

texts as a way to understand students' multimodal and hybrid composing. My use of classroom communication projects focuses my inquiry on the students' outside-classroom communications specifically.

In Chapter 4, I describe my methods, site, and participants. The study took place from January to June in 2021 in an online high school English classroom. The data I collected was field notes and recordings of classroom observations, student work, and teacher interviews. My data analysis draws from Low and Pandya's (2019) approach to Multimodal Data Analysis, and their suggestions to supplement blended analysis with attention to researcher positionality, participant perspectives, and analysis with colleagues in order to crystallize (Richardson, 1994, as cited in Low & Pandya, 2019) rather than triangulate the data. My blended approach to data analysis involved ethnography, the identification and analysis of four transliteracies events, and the open coding (Saldaña, 2013) of the three teacher interviews. The findings that related to this blended analysis are described in the three chapters that follow.

Chapter 5 provides a holistic, ethnographic portrait of what happened during the six months of the study, beginning with the turbulent contexts in which the study took place and then describing the classroom environment and the four transliteracies events as students worked on their projects designed to help combat racism. Four key participants emerged and were also described.

The findings presented in Chapter 6 address RQ1 regarding the transliteracies practices and views that emerged through students' participation in the classroom communication projects. Across the four transliteracies events, I found that students

were utilizing 18 transliteracies practices that could be grouped into 5 categories according to their primary purpose: Communicating Effectively, Taking Action, Building a Case, Thinking Critically, and Taking a Stand. The transliteracies tools were utilized to better understand the key findings: that students were engaged by opportunities to communicate with their audiences, that they brought in a wide range of relevant everyday texts and examples, and that at least one student was skeptical that the projects could make a difference.

The findings shared in Chapter 7 address RQ2, the teacher's intentions for and views of the classroom communication projects. Through the analysis of the three teacher interviews using coding and the transliteracies tools, I found that Sophia hoped to teach students about collaboration, reflection and action, communication, and writing and school literacy practices. However, her concerns related to issues of control (over students' plans and topics), legitimacy (related to whether or not project work was as valid as traditional written assignments), and representation (regarding how the students, school, and teacher would look to their audiences) persisted despite her goals of enacting a student-centered social justice pedagogy.

My discussion in Chapter 8 explores these findings more deeply, arguing that control and legitimacy are schooled ideologies that are difficult to shift, even for equity-oriented researchers and educators. A focus on emergence and youth epistemology counters these ideologies and could help YPAR evolve. In order to move in this direction, I offer suggestions for educators: loosen conceptions of YPAR, explore tensions, and collaborate with colleagues. I also offer suggestions for future

research: study other classroom communication projects, study YPAR failures, and research teachers' perspectives about emergence. YPAR's potential remains compelling, and its limitations only partially understood.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is focused on students' outside-classroom communication within social justice projects, which has been studied most extensively in Freirean critical literacy and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) projects specifically. The first section of this literature review will briefly explain the history and contributions of YPAR. The second section will demonstrate some of YPAR's limitations. In the third section I use these limitations to make a case for Pandya's (2019) idea that YPAR would benefit from the other strand of critical literacy, a sociolinguistic rather than Freirean approach which includes the transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) framework that I employ in this study (and define in the next chapter). In the fourth section I propose that there is a gap in the research on YPAR texts that needs to be better understood: how addressing outside-classroom audiences influences students' composing, roles, and views. The final section shares recent research on doing YPAR in an online context, which is relevant to this study.

Studying YPAR projects through a transliteracies lens could bring together their respective expanded views of literacy: what students can do with texts in the world with the dialogic nature of texts themselves. This dual lens is needed because of its potential to counter deficit views of students' literacy practices and engagement that persist even in social justice pedagogies. This updated version of YPAR could honor students' multilingual and multimodal literacy practices as central to their learning and views of themselves, their language, and their communities.

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)

Though participatory action research (PAR) has a varied and international history since at least the 1960s and 1970s (Caraballo et al., 2017; McIntyre, 2000), YPAR, an extension of PAR that Cammarota and Fine (2008, p. 8) called "explicitly pedagogical" draws from a Freirean perspective of praxis (reflection and action) and has become more prominent in the last two decades (Caraballo et al., 2017). However, YPAR is still not considered a mainstream approach in educational research, likely because of the ways in which it contests traditional research methods, roles, and data. In the first YPAR study, McIntyre (2000) suggested three essential elements of YPAR: the need or desire to solve a community problem, the emphasis on individual and collective knowledge about the problem (what Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008, p. 108) call "indigenous knowledge"), and a commitment to taking action to help resolve the problem for the community. In McIntyre's (2000, p. 32) study, urban youth of color told their own "visual stories" with "community photography" as subjects rather than objects of research (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Noting that youth who have often been considered "at-risk" flourish in YPAR settings that are more relevant to their lives, Cammarota and Fine (2008) called for an expansion of YPAR that counters traditional educational reforms that have pathologized youth rather than educated them. The commitment of YPAR scholars to positioning young people as subjects whose questions, knowledge, and action matter (in school and beyond) offers a hopeful path to improving learning for all students.

Because YPAR approaches differ greatly by contexts, emphases, and disciplinary foundations, any efforts to expand this construct require a more in-depth understanding of how YPAR is defined. Helpfully, Caraballo et al. (2017) explained that YPAR can be understood as a pedagogy, methodology, or epistemology. They also offered a framework to organize four distinct and related YPAR "entry points" (p. 318): academic learning and literacies, cultural and critical epistemological research, youth development and leadership, and youth organizing and civic engagement. The first entry point, with its focus on how YPAR in schools can enhance students' literacy learning, is most relevant to this study, and much of the research in this area has been done by Ernest Morrell, one of the authors of the framework. In conjunction with the Council of Youth Research, a collaboration between UCLA and local schools that lasted over ten years, Morrell (2008) offered multiple examples of youth projects with two main goals: 1) "[helping] students acquire the language and tools they need to function within the academy" (p. 20) and 2) furthering "the struggle for educational justice" (p. 21). These goals are representative of YPAR that has been focused on academic learning and literacies, and simultaneously demonstrate its potential and its limitations.

The Limitations of Freirean YPAR

YPAR has seldom thoroughly addressed its own limitations, which can be logistical or implementational (Caraballo et al., 2017). In terms of the latter, navigating roles and purposes can be complex for teachers and for students, who may

not always take up the YPAR topic as expected (Bertrand, 2016; Caraballo et al., 2017; Winn & Winn, 2016). The ways in which YPAR's dual goals of social justice and academic literacy (Morrell, 2008) have inadvertently contributed to these tensions will be discussed next.

As stated, one of the main goals of YPAR is to focus on social justice issues that impact youth, but these topics are frequently suggested by the adult collaborators in accordance with their own definitions of "critical." Winn and Winn's (2016) article titled "We just want this to be owned by you" showed the complexity of YPAR implementation and impact with two groups of Black youth who were not used to having their voices heard in school, and suggested that these challenges could be addressed by developing trusting relationships over time, accounting for the youths' complicated connections to the topics, and offering more guidance. However, they did not address how the choice of the topic itself may have impacted whether or not the students "owned" the project. In conceptualizing YPAR in their literature review, Winn and Winn (2016) wrote that students should choose their YPAR topics, but they later described how one project began when one of the researchers introduced the topic of the school-to-prison pipeline and then "[asked] the youth if they were interested in learning more about racial inequities and disparities and if they would consider becoming part of the solution" (p. 117). That "without any pushback or hesitation, all 14 youth agreed to engage the project" (Winn & Winn, 2016, p. 117) does not necessarily demonstrate the young people's investment or enthusiasm. Other Freirean (1970/2007) critical literacy projects that share YPAR's key principles of

youth-centered research and action have been similarly critiqued for having predetermined agendas and outcomes, rather than providing opportunities for students to make meanings of their own (Freebody, 2017; Vasquez, 2000), or for reducing social justice projects to a series of steps at the expense of their broader goals or students' connection to them (Pandya, 2012).

In addition to the goal of social transformation, YPAR has been focused on developing students' "academic literacy" (Morrell, 2008, p. 20), a concept that is contested by sociolinguistic critical literacy. Most YPAR projects culminate with students' sharing their research findings via a formal paper or presentation to a relevant audience (Bertrand, 2016; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Winn & Winn, 2016). In Duncan-Andrade and Morrell's (2008) study, students were researchers and "public intellectuals" (p. 125) who presented information to university faculty, policymakers, families, and school faculty in speeches, PowerPoint presentations, and written reports in what was characterized by the researchers as a "praxis of distribution" (p. 124). While YPAR's goal of giving students access to the "language of power" (Wiley & Lukes, 1996) is important, its emphasis on school language and "distribution" (rather than dialogue) might default to an autonomous view of literacy (Street, 1984) that perpetuates a deficit view of historically marginalized students whose literacy practices do not match the white middle class language that is expected in school (Baugh, 2000; Fromkin & Rodman, 1988; Gee, 1989; Heath, 1983; Labov, 2003; Michaels, 1981; Smitherman, 2004).

Supplementing YPAR with Sociolinguistic Critical Literacy

Insights from the sociolinguistic strand of critical literacy could be helpful in expanding YPAR conceptualizations of critical projects and academic literacy. Understanding literacy as ideological challenges the autonomous view (Street, 1984), and aligns with calls for literacy pedagogy to incorporate the literacy practices that all students bring to school in changing global and technological contexts (New London Group, 1996). The New London Group's (1996) idea of multiliteracies in a design process and Street's (1984) ideological view of literacy have been brought together and updated with the concept of transliteracies within a "paradox of mobility" (Stornaiuolo et al. 2017, p. 70), which described how literacy and literacy learners are simultaneously in fluid development and constrained by multiple systems. In a later article, the authors (Smith et al., 2018), offered a "pedagogy of transliteracies" (p. 20) that included these three moves for educators: planning for emergence, practicing relational reflexivity, and surfacing critical lenses. These moves have influenced the development of this study because of their potential to overcome some of the previously discussed limitations of Freirean YPAR.

Like Stornaiuolo et al. (2017), Matusov (2020) drew from Bakhtin, writing that a truly dialogical pedagogy involves students' determination and pursuit of their own questions and interests. Dockter et al. (2010) studied low-income, urban high schoolers who learned literacy through the production of original documentary films. Moving away from "critical literacy," the authors described that the students instead demonstrated "critical engagement" in their challenging task, which the authors

defined as “a stance that combines critical distance with immersion and emotional investment” (Dockter et al., 2010, p. 418). This engagement was fueled by the students’ ability to tell their own stories to an audience of peers, family, school personnel, and community members.

In Love’s (2014) study of fifth-graders making storyboards and movies in an after-school program, she described the benefits of using Hip-Hop-Based Education (HHBE) alongside other critical and democratic pedagogies to teach English language arts to black youth. Love (2014, p. 54) presented hip-hop as a culture and a pedagogy, and illuminated its five elements: “rapping, breakdancing, graffiti, deejaying, and knowledge of self and community.” Love grounded her theory and practice in the New London Group’s (1996) multiliteracies, explaining how HHBE supported the students’ critical literacy practices.

Love’s students chose to educate people about Trayvon Martin’s death and the stereotypes that contributed to his death by making a movie that included a mural and a rap. Love wrote that the students’ digital composing of counternarratives functioned on two levels: the students represented themselves and their communities in regard to their chosen topic of the disproportionate violence against black youth, and the students also represented themselves more broadly as youth of color who contributed important ideas and actions to create social change. Pedagogical practices such as these have the potential to help YPAR implementation better reflect its ideals of student-driven critical projects.

YPAR researchers themselves have recently recognized the need to foreground YPAR as a critical epistemological stance that allows for its methodological and pedagogical evolution (Caraballo et al., 2017). Such a stance might allow for a loosening of some aspects of YPAR that could address some of its challenges. As teachers themselves, Mirra et al. (2015) offered the promising example of Filipiak revamping her earlier service-learning projects and concluded with updated guiding principles for YPAR: listen to students to discover their concerns and interests, coordinate YPAR with the existing curriculum, and utilize a wide variety of community resources. Irizarry (2009) used a culturally sustaining approach to engage high school students in a PAR project in which they designed their own curriculum. Irizarry identified two elements as important: 1) that students' existing languages, literacies, and knowledge were seen as resources, and 2) that students' efforts were directed toward the collective good. Both Freirean and sociolinguistic critical literacy aim to give marginalized students more agency, though how agency is defined in each can illuminate how YPAR's pedagogical evolution could be supported by sociolinguistic critical literacy. While agency for Mirra et al. (2015) was "...the power that derives from the pursuit of those questions that matter most to students" (p. 53), Moje and Lewis (2007) defined agency as "...the strategic making and remaking of selves, identities, activities, relationships, cultural tools and resources, and histories, as embedded within relations of power" (p. 18). The latter emphasizes both a micro and macro analysis of the context (Lewis & Moje, 2003) and shows how

sociolinguistic critical literacy allows for a deeper examination of students' texts, language (Morgan, 1997) and "momentary identities" (Pandya et al., 2015, p. 11).

Freirean YPAR has rarely involved a "micro analysis" of students' contexts and texts, but Bertrand's (2016) study of one Council of Youth Research after-school project employed the notion of intertextuality (Kristeva, 1986) after the researcher noticed how one specific metaphor (curriculum as food) was co-constructed by a teacher and student and subsequently circulated in the youth-led professional development presentations, where it was taken up by another teacher. Bertrand concluded that shifting to an analysis of this "micro-level phenomena" could shed more light on YPAR's impact, as well as serve as a way to investigate one challenge of YPAR, that of ensuring that students' voices and ideas remain central. In addressing the limitations of her study, Bertrand suggested that future research invite YPAR participants to reflect upon their own language choices. This study uses ideas in sociolinguistic critical literacy to build upon Bertrand's "micro-level" focus on YPAR texts, specifically addressing how students' compositions are shaped with their audiences in mind. This study also includes an element that Bertrand recommended that was missing in her own, in terms of creating opportunities for participants to share their insights about their own rhetorical choices. Intertextuality comes from the idea of heteroglossia in Bakhtinian (1981) dialogism, in which language is always a response to what has previously been said, written, or thought, and in anticipation of what will be said, written, or thought next. Heteroglossia is related to the idea of addressivity that is central to this study and the focus of the next section.

Bringing Addressivity to YPAR

Bakhtin's (1986) emphasis on addressivity, that composers tailor their utterances to their particular contexts and addressees, has been utilized in sociolinguistic critical literacy research to study in-school or out-of-school settings, but has seldom been used to better understand students' literacy practices in YPAR, which bridges both. This study explores what happens when the range of addressees for students' texts expands beyond their classroom peers and teachers. Because YPAR has not yet been studied through this lens, this section focuses on research on addressivity in order to suggest the ways in which it could supplement what is known about students' literacy practices in YPAR.

Ede & Lunsford's (1984) germinal work challenged dichotomous theorizations of audience as either addressed (external) or invoked (imagined) in order to propose a more complex construct of audience as dependent on the interactions between readers and writers in their unique rhetorical situations, which always involve both addressed and invoked audiences. Their updates to the original article (Lunsford & Ede, 1996; Lunsford & Ede, 2009) aligned with sociolinguistic critical literacy by adding an emphasis on the negotiations writers face in order to address the needs of their audiences amid power relationships and societal inequities, and by offering a revised rhetorical triangle that accounts for different communicative contexts and modes in our changing media landscapes. Lunsford and Ede's (2009) insights are important to this study for multiple reasons: they connect Bakhtinian addressivity and sociolinguistic principles to classroom composing contexts, they

avoid generalizations and romanticism about the benefits of "real world" communication and new media, and they call for educators to help develop students' "writerly agency" (p.48) and "self-sponsored writing" (p. 51) while still supporting their success in the structure of school. In terms of the last insight, this balance is viewed as a complex challenge that can be furthered through research that is grounded in specific rhetorical situations and through pedagogy that focuses on audience by mapping out potential audiences and helping students to bridge between personal and academic public voices. Ede and Lunsford's work has been most often referenced in composition studies and connected to teaching writing in university settings, but the research that follows shows how some of these ideas have been productively used to study the composing practices of younger students. While none of these studies have explicitly addressed the idea of audience in YPAR, they give us a glimpse of what can be learned from the specific rhetorical situations which are the focus of this study.

In their study of how bilingual Spanish-English eight- to ten-year-olds interact with the audiences of their digital movies, Pandya and Low (2019) concluded that audience, which they conceptualized as a "dialogically addressive relationship between real people" (p. 3) is undertheorized by research and underutilized in literacy pedagogy. The students in their study crafted their digital compositions with the intent to inform and move their audiences. Solomon (2012) studied the meaning that was made in the space between eight African American first-grade composers of digital stories and the audience of their peers, modifying Rosenblatt's (1938/1995, as cited in

Solomon, 2012) transactional theory to conceive of this space as a "poem" (p. 14) that was jointly constructed by the composer and the audience. The reactions of their audiences sometimes confused, dismayed, embarrassed, or delighted the original composers, who learned to consider their audiences through several cycles of composing. These two studies utilized a Bakhtinian lens to emphasize the importance of dialogue with an audience in multimodal and multilingual school literacy learning that included student agency and emotions. In her study of how nine eleventh graders' awareness of audience impacted their writing, Magnifico (2012) found that effective peer review conversations helped students shift from seeing the writing (poetry in this case) as an assignment to seeing it as communication with a reader. Magnifico noted that, in this case, the peer readers stood in for external audiences.

The studies discussed in this section thus far have focused primarily on peer audiences in classrooms, but some researchers have studied the benefits and challenges of engaging students with outside-classroom audiences. Behizadeh (2019) collaborated with a middle school English teacher to attempt to create a more "authentic" writing curriculum. She discovered that student engagement is heightened when students have choices, can express themselves in multiple ways, and can "[write] for impact" on a real audience (Behizadeh, 2019, p. 413). Behizadeh found that this last point that students' writing should be shared with an authentic audience was the most important and also the most challenging to actually implement. In the study, students were offered several presentation choices, such as reading their narratives to a family member or contributing to a published book that would be

available in the school library. However, these options were only revealed to the students after they had already written initial drafts, so Behizadeh viewed this as a missed opportunity for the authentic audience to shape the students' rhetorical choices. Behizadeh suggested that grounding students' work in social justice issues may also help boost authenticity. This literature review suggests that this would need to be done carefully in order to ensure student agency and avoid the previously discussed limitations of Freirean critical literacy.

Research from outside of school has shown the potential for learning when adolescents dialogue with an authentic audience of their choice. Curwood et al. (2013) studied how authentic audiences and multiple forms of participation in multimodal contexts contributed to adolescents' enthusiasm for developing their composing in online fan-based affinity groups. Sheena, a fan of the online Neopets game, remixed content in different genres (informal narrative stories and articles for site publications) for different audiences, was motivated by "friendship and feedback," and saw herself "as part of an exchange, on par with other writers, regardless of age" (Curwood et al., 2013, p. 681). Eve, a Sims player and author, was motivated by expressing her creativity multimodally, in ways that made her see herself differently as a writer, in contrast to the lack of confidence she had in school as a student with dyslexia. This study demonstrates the power of multimodal dialogue with external audiences to encourage the development of students' new literacy practices and views of themselves, especially for those who have not traditionally been as engaged or successful in school.

The ways in which adolescents can leverage their literacy practices and reflect on their rhetorical choices outside of school should motivate educators and researchers to continually open up school literacy learning opportunities to make them more relevant to students' lives. Lewis and Fabos (2005) found that the social and complex context of instant messaging enhanced their seven participants' language use. The dialogical aspect was important to the youth, who expressed that they liked being part of an "ongoing story" (Lewis & Fabos, 2005, p. 487). They chose their words and tone based on their audience and goals, monitored their spelling and writing, and navigated among multiple conversations simultaneously. One participant said that she used a "softer and sweeter" tone in IMs with a friend while another participant said that he avoided abbreviations for "you" and "are" in order to appear "smarter." The participants drew from traditional ideas about literacy and also reinvented them in the multimodal space, as they blurred commonly assumed binaries (speech/writing, online/offline, print/digital, deeper reading/lateral reading) in ways that demonstrated the learning opportunities in such contexts. An important point made by Lewis and Fabos (2005) was that participants performed different aspects of their identities depending on the particular IM interaction, and that they were sometimes able "to write [their] way into the textual worlds of the new group to which [they] wanted to belong" (p. 495). This study provides inspiration for the sort of learning that could occur with an expansive school literacy pedagogy that values and extends students' complex and sophisticated literacy repertoires and identities.

YPAR on Zoom

Though the COVID-19 pandemic presented numerous teaching challenges, it may also have created opportunities for educators to be flexible and to prioritize students and their well-being. It has been a unique time to investigate and expand YPAR. Marciano et al.'s (2020) article "Centering community: Enacting culturally responsive-sustaining YPAR during COVID-19" documented how their YPAR project shifted to accommodate physical distancing mandates and the changing needs and interests of the participating youth. The researchers found three key factors that can support YPAR during and beyond the pandemic: maintaining relationships among all participants within the YPAR group, reconfiguring projects to address the youths' immediate and local concerns, and exploring future directions collaboratively. The descriptions of how YPAR was able to continue through online messaging and Zoom meetings informed the multimodal YPAR context in this study.

In Meng et al.'s (2022) study of an online nutrition-focused YPAR project that took place during the same school year as this study (2020-2021), the eight educators expressed that building relationships, adapting curriculum, and keeping things moving was challenging. The fifty-four students reported that they were challenged by internet issues, communicating with and feeling connected to the other people in the project, and staying engaged. Some benefits for all included that the project "allowed folks to connect with each other even during tumultuous times" (p. s5), involved new digital teaching methods, and was convenient.

In Rivera et al.'s (2022) study of the impact of moving YPAR online in the same school year, psychology students and faculty engaged youth (seven young women of color) in projects related to their chosen topics of recycling, racism on social media, homelessness, and the impact of incarceration. They found that marginalized students became more disenfranchised due to the online context, and that "the importance of shared physical space was painfully realized throughout the academic year as it affected [them] in many ways" (Rivera et al., 2022, p. 8). Challenges included the lack of student engagement and resultant difficulty of balanced decision-making among adults and youth, and "awkward silences" (p. 8) while students waited for responses in their preferred mode of communication in the chat. They also found that, because students were not physically together, the projects took a "community turn" (Rivera et al., 2022, p. 7). A further complexity was that some students seemed to want the Zoom sessions to be a context to engage in the social justice efforts that the projects involved, while others seemed to want the Zoom sessions to offer a reprieve from the intersecting societal crises they were facing. Though there were some positive outcomes in this study, "being fully remote made it very difficult to assess the impact of the YPAR project" (Rivera et al., 2022, p. 12). These three studies share similarities with the study that is the focus of this dissertation, though none of these took place as part of school online learning.

In this chapter, I have described the history and contributions of YPAR, some of its limitations, as well as how the addition of a sociolinguistic approach and a focus on addressing outside-classroom audiences could help YPAR to evolve in needed

ways. These larger considerations, as well as the added challenges of doing YPAR on Zoom during a pandemic, are all relevant to my study.

Sociolinguistic critical literacy researchers have made important contributions to research on audience by recognizing and valuing the possibilities of adolescents' multilingual and multimodal texts, rather than limiting them. Bringing these perspectives to YPAR would be helpful because it is primarily in YPAR contexts that youth have had the opportunity to engage in meaningful communication with outside-classroom audiences. The expanded view of both texts and contexts are employed in this study to investigate the "poem" (Solomon, 2012), the dialogical space between student composers and their outside-classroom audiences. Studying students engaging in dialogue with outside-classroom audiences can build upon what is already known about the complexities, challenges, and potential of YPAR. These understandings can help YPAR evolve (Caraballo et al., 2017) by foregrounding the emergence (Smith et al., 2018) of students' unfolding literacy practices and views. In the next chapter, I will explain the theoretical framework grounded in transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) that follows from this literature review, that will be used to analyze my data, and that addresses my research questions of what mobilities and immobilities emerge when students engage in outside-classroom dialogue during online schooling in a pandemic.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The first part of this chapter explains the transliteracies approach (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) that is central to my theoretical framework. The next section describes how I extend transliteracies to conceptualize students' literacy events, practices, and texts. Lastly I define the classroom communication projects that are the focus of this study, and state my research questions.

Transliteracies

In this study, the transliteracies framework (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) provides a theoretical foundation for exploring what students learn about literacy, racism, and themselves when they engage in outside-classroom dialogue as a literacy learning pedagogy. Stornaiuolo, Smith, and Phillips's (2017) transliteracies builds on the work of both the New Literacy Studies' (Street, 1984) view of literacy as ideological and the New London Group's (1996) view of literacy as multiliteracies in a design process. Through the lens of transliteracies, people's literacy practices are both mobilized and immobilized as they are enacted through interactions and texts. Stornaiuolo et al. write,

> A focus on the paradox of mobility invites close analysis of how people's literacy practices can be differentially valued and recognized, in turn reproducing, exacerbating, or challenging existing social inequities. We propose that a transliteracies framework can serve as a flexible heuristic for

> addressing this mobility paradox in its efforts to examine who and what moves, how, why, and under what conditions (p. 70).

The authors argue that the transliteracies framework retains a needed focus on immobility (and persistent inequities) that may otherwise be obscured by recent literacy scholarship that highlights students' agency and mobility. Similarly, the body of literature on YPAR could be seen as highlighting agency and obscuring inequities and complexities in ways that were discussed in the literature review.

In the opening data example in Stornaiuolo et al.'s article, a high school student was sent out of class to the literacy lab because of her disruptive behavior in her math class. Once in the lab, the student engaged in a variety of activities across modes and devices, in dialogue with others: chatting with other students in Spanish and English, fixing her hair, and sharing an online book on her phone with peers and the researcher. The authors use this example to show how the possibilities for youth's mobile practices continue to expand, even as they continue to be constrained by multiple factors, many of which arise from school itself. In their words, "Eva's movement across spaces, times, and texts emerged in relation to, and was regulated by, the institutional norms of school" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017, p. 70). Similarly, my dissertation study addresses how students' movements emerged and were constrained by norms of both literacy and school. The unique contexts of the pandemic, online learning, and dialogue with outside-classroom audiences also affected these mobilities and immobilities.

Stornaiuolo et al. use the prefix *trans-* to highlight mobility across boundaries, and *literacies* to signify meaning making practices. The goal of the transliteracies framework is two-fold: to encourage that researchers are reflexive and take an inquiry stance on emergent practices, and also to offer researchers four analytical tools to help understand the paradox of mobility and immobility in literacy practices. (The former, what it means to be a transliteracies researcher, will be discussed further in the next chapter about my methods.) In regard to the latter, the four analytical tools are emergence, uptake, resonance, and scale.

As mentioned, emergence involves the research process itself and also the literacy practices being studied, activity in which "affect, feeling, surprise, interruption, and movement are seen and given analytic space in the moment-to-moment unfoldings of human action" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017, p. 78). Uptake addresses how meanings are made and assigned value through people's interactions and relationships. Resonance moves beyond isolated interactions to determine broader societal patterns about "not just… *what* gets taken up, but *how*" over time. Lastly, scale involves how different texts and relationships are constructed as they move through different times and spaces.

All of these tools attend to inequities as people make meaning together across widely varying and overlapping contexts. The transliteracies framework provides a way to analyze "the mechanisms that both drive and constrain people's opportunities to participate in the world, particularly the way power, ideologies, and histories manifest in everyday activity" (p. 73). The researchers offer a set of analytical

questions to accompany each of the tools in the transliteracies framework, and they also "invite others to refine these tools and contribute others" (p. 77). These tools were used in my analysis, and are explained in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7. In this study, I employ the transliteracies framework to better understand the mobilities and immobilities that emerge when high school students engage in dialogue with audiences outside their classrooms during online schooling in a pandemic.

Transliteracies Events, Practices, and Texts

Heath's (1982) definition of literacy events as "occasions in which written language is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes and strategies" (p. 50) has had a lasting impact on literacy scholarship. Methodologically, the literacy event is a useful unit of analysis for literacy researchers. Epistemologically, the literacy event counters deficit views of the literacy of marginalized populations by highlighting the ways in which their "ways with words" (Heath, 1983) are not always welcomed in school. The continued relevance of the concept of literacy events has inspired the broadening of Heath's focus on print to incorporate an expanded definition of texts. In the original article, Heath included a critique of the imposed division between oral and written language that was shared by others at that time and more recently (Bakhtin, 1981; Bloome et al., 2008; Gee, 1989). Literacy events in research have also been updated to incorporate technological changes that have affected communication and literacy learning (Bhatt & de Roock, 2013; Pandya, 2019). Pandya's (2019) expanded definition of a literacy

event is “the communicative space in which… a written or digital text is central to human interaction” (p. 11). These individual research efforts contribute to and also make the case for a more cohesive and collective reimagining of the idea of literacy events. The transliteracies framework (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) can help address this need.

A challenge in defining transliteracies events is keeping them unbounded epistemologically, while bounding them methodologically. In other words, how can we support a more expansive view of literacy events and also define them well enough to study them? If we remove the qualifier of “written” (and refrain from substituting another specific mode in its place), Heath’s definition of literacy events would become, “occasions in which language is integral to the nature of participants’ interactions and their interpretive processes and strategies,” which seems to imply that almost everything is a literacy event. Stornaiuolo et al.’s (2017) “activity orientation in transliteracies [that] positions researchers… to examine the simultaneously goal-directed and emergent nature of activity” (p. 74) can refocus literacy events in helpful ways. The transliteracies framework is also aligned with theories of dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981; 1986) and audience (Lunsford & Ede, 2009) that emphasize all language and literacy as interaction that invokes the past, present, and future.

Using Heath’s original definition (1982), Pandya’s (2019) expanded definition, and the transliteracies framework (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017), I define *transliteracies events* as communicative spaces in which people’s actions, agency, and

intentions are mobilized and immobilized. The idea of communicative space implies that people are engaged in joint activity, though they may bring different goals or understandings to that activity (Davis et al., 2000). These communicative spaces include a variety of texts and contexts that are both explicit and implicit, planned and unplanned, broad and local, and immediate and enduring. This expanded view can then be used to illuminate the mobilities and immobilities (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) that support and constrain what counts as literacy, what people can do with literacy, and who counts as literate.

Transliteracies events can best be understood as multiple and layered, with smaller scale events overlapping and occurring within larger ones. In this study, the Zoom classroom meetings were each multimodal transliteracies events in themselves, made up of a variety of other overlapping transliteracies events. For example, within a class period students would sometimes watch a short video and then work on a related assignment, each its own transliteracies event. Students were also simultaneously in different physical spaces, often home and work, and engaged in multiple transliteracies events and practices there and elsewhere, maybe talking to a sibling about lunch while texting a friend about something else.

Literacy researchers have emphasized that *text* includes other forms of communication beyond the written word (Bakhtin, 1981;1986; Bloome et al., 2008; Gee, 1989; Halliday, 1994; Kress, 2000; Schleppegrell, 2004), an ever-expanding array of hybrid and multimodal compositions. The potential of multimodal learning is about more than just teaching students a wider range of text and tech, and can be

understood as offering a new stance on what literacy is (Street, 2013) and what practices it involves (Lewis & Fabos, 2005), especially in regard to engaging linguistically diverse students in dialogical learning that moves beyond traditional text forms that perpetuate a "banking concept of education" (Freire, 1970/2007). In alignment with the transliteracies framework, I am trying to resist dichotomous framings of literacy that have consistently contrasted print-based literacy with digital, oral, and visual literacy (Low & Rapp, 2021). In this dissertation I use the term "composing" more frequently than speaking or writing to represent the multiple, evolving, and overlapping ways that students utilize their literacy practices.

New Literacy Studies, and Street's (1984) view of literacy as ideological and political specifically, influenced the development of the transliteracies framework. In later work Street (2000) emphasized the importance of literacy practices, in addition to literacy events, as a way to analyze "what is happening in social contexts around the meanings and uses of literacy" (p. 17). Street critiqued the ways in which practices had been reduced to cultural generalities, technological proficiencies, or skills-based competencies. Street's (1984) original definition of literacy practices was the "social practices and conceptions of reading and writing" (p. 1). However, Street's notion of literacy practices as social activity includes room for their continual evolution. He wrote,

"...one cannot predict beforehand what will give meaning to a literacy event

> and what will link a set of literacy events to literacy practices. Literacy practices refer to this broader cultural conception of particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in cultural contexts" (p. 22).

Shifting from literacy practices to *transliteracies practices* aligns with Street's desire to broaden traditional notions of what literacy is and how it is valued. He saw literacy "as a field for investigating processes of hegemony, power relations, practices, and competing discourses" (p. 25). Stornaiuolo et al. (2017) write that the *trans-* prefix in transliteracies shows the ways in which people's enactments of literacy always take place across modes, contexts, and time. Over two decades ago, Street (2000) asked "whether [NLS theorists and practitioners were] ready to seize the moment… to develop positive proposals for interventions in curriculum, measurement criteria and teacher education" (p. 29). In this study of an online high school English classroom curriculum, using a transliteracies lens helps me to explore the mobilities and immobilities of the events, practices, and texts that are related to students' classroom communication projects.

Classroom Communication Projects

I created the new term *classroom communication projects* to represent pedagogy which involves students' dialogue with outside-classroom audiences. By outside-classroom audiences, I mean anyone who is not the teacher or other students. This pedagogical approach is not necessarily new and has occurred in individual assignments and also as part of approaches such as project-based learning, critical

literacy projects, and youth participatory action research. However, the outside-classroom communications themselves are not often the focus of these aforementioned approaches, which instead focus on student engagement, curricular content, and/or social change; hence the need for a new term. Studying the *communications* foregrounds students' composing practices, and using the transliteracies lens (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) allows us to see these as the primary critical practice. In other words, "what counts" as critical is determined by the student, not the teacher or project topic, and emerges through dialogue.

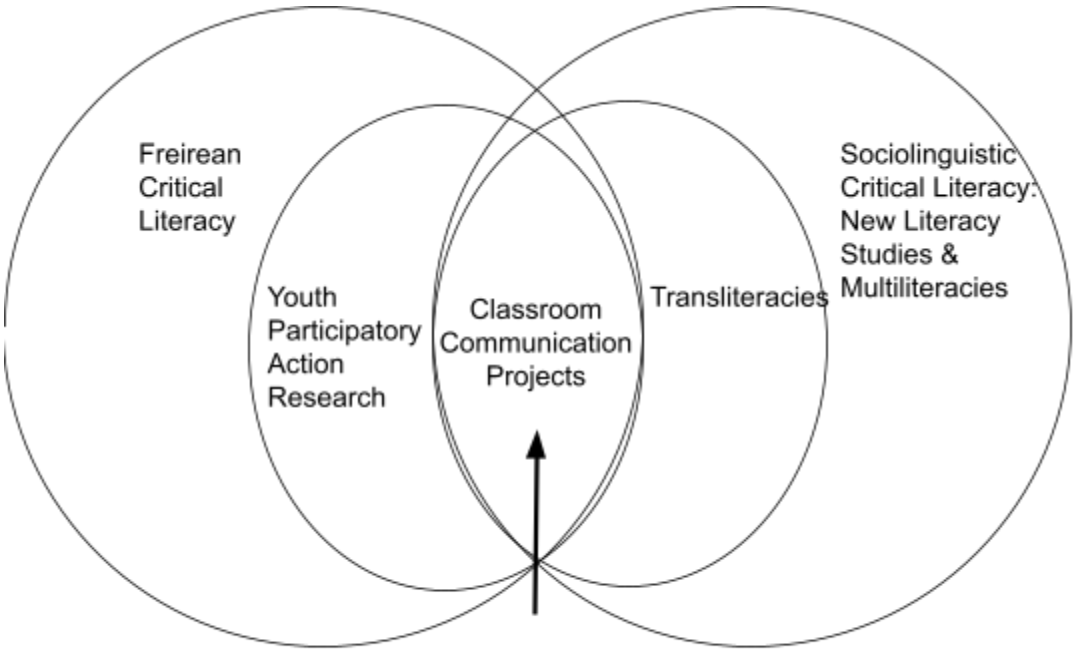
In this study, the transliteracies framework is applied to students' outside-classroom dialogue in classroom communication projects in order to demonstrate what students learn about literacy, themselves, and their project topics through transliteracies events, practices, and texts. The Bakhtinian notion of ideological becoming weaves together identity and learning as a person develops their belief systems within their lived contexts (Freedman & Ball, 2004). Literacy plays an integral role in this development (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Gee, 1989; Lemke, 1995/2005), and the outside-classroom dialogue in this study has the potential to expand and constrain students' agency (Moje & Lewis, 2007) and roles (Bloome et al., 2008) in the "figured worlds" (Holland et al., 1998) they inhabit. The transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) framework emphasizes literacy as contextual, political, and dynamic, calling attention to both the mobilities and immobilities that support and restrict literacy development. This lens applied to YPAR can help to illuminate past and persistent problems and possibilities within critical projects.

Research Questions

This study fills a gap by exploring high school students' participation and compositions in YPAR through the lens of transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017). Given the need for further research found in the literature, I carried out this qualitative study of a classroom communication project that consisted of three iterative phases: planning, dialogue, and reflection. I worked with one teacher to implement the project in her linguistically diverse ninth grade English classroom, which was online for the first four months of the study and hybrid for the last month and a half due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The students were guided by the teacher and me in brainstorming and choosing a societal issue on which to focus their class project. The class (sixth period) chose the topic of racism, and worked in groups and individually on a variety of classroom communication projects. The students' planning process, their dialogue with outside-classroom audiences, and their reflections will be detailed later in this dissertation in order to demonstrate what they learned about racism, literacy, and themselves through the classroom communication projects.

Figure 1

Classroom Communication Projects: Theories and Research Question



RQ: What transliterate mobilities and immobilities emerge when high school students engage in dialogue with audiences outside their classrooms during online schooling in a pandemic?

Using transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) with YPAR to examine students' outside-classroom dialogue in classroom communication projects can show at a "micro" level what students learn about language through their participation. This has not usually been the focus of YPAR research. Emergence, a transliteracies tool, provides a way to study how the dialogue that unfolds in the online classroom and between students and their audiences creates a pedagogical space for literacy learning. The other transliteracies tools (uptake, resonance, and scale) provide ways to study the situated and ideological nature of students' events, texts, and practices.

The first draft of my research questions were organized in sequence, asking what students learned in each of the three project phases (planning, dialogue, and reflection). However, it quickly became clear that the students' transliteracies

practices and views could not be conveyed in such a linear way, so I revised my questions to explore students' participation across the unfolding projects thematically rather than chronologically. The questions move from a detailed exploration of the students' transliteracies practices to a broader inquiry of how students viewed (and shaped) the projects. To incorporate another significant perspective, I also added questions regarding the teacher's pedagogical goals and views of the projects. Both of these questions address the larger question of the ways in which students' transliteracies practices are simultaneously mobilized and immobilized in classroom communication projects.

RQ: What transliterate mobilities and immobilities emerge when high school students engage in dialogue with audiences outside their classrooms during online schooling in a pandemic?

> RQ1: What **transliteracies practices** did students draw upon and develop in the classroom communication projects? How did these practices illuminate **students' views** of the classroom communication projects?
>
> RQ2: What **transliteracies practices** was the teacher trying to teach through the classroom communication projects? What were **her views** of the classroom communication projects?

In the next chapter I will discuss the methods that I used to answer these questions.

CHAPTER 4: METHODS

My conceptual framework guided my methods, in that I examined how the students' and teacher's participation in and views of emergent transliteracies events involved both mobilities and immobilities. Because I was working alongside the teacher and students, using their ideas and classroom content as a starting point for the outside-classroom communications, their projects could not be predicted and required me to be a "transliteracies [researcher]... taking an inquiry stance on practice, tracing contingent relationships as they emerge[d] in activity, without determining those relationships in advance" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017, p. 76). I sought to understand how the contexts created by the outside-classroom dialogue enabled students to seize opportunities to communicate and represent (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) themselves, as well as how those same contexts constrained students' participation, in accordance with critical sociocultural theory (Moje & Lewis, 2007) and a transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) perspective of simultaneous mobility and immobility. As I will describe in this chapter and in accordance with my research questions, I focused my data collection and analysis on both the students' and the teacher's perspectives.

Timeline, Site, and Participants

The study took place from January to June in 2021 (the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year) in an online ninth grade English classroom based in Northern California during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the School Accountability

Report Card from that school year, the public, comprehensive high school had an enrollment of 1071 students, with 83% Hispanic/Latino students, 8% white students, 5% Asian students, and 1% or less in other demographic categories. 70% of students were listed as socioeconomically disadvantaged, 31% were English learners, and 22% were students with disabilities. The test scores and dropout rates from 2018-2019 (the last typical school year before COVID-19) showed that 24% of students met or exceeded the state standard for English Language Arts/Literacy (half the school district average of 48%), and the dropout rate was 24% (twice the school district average of 12%).

The school was chosen as the site in order to investigate the phenomena of students' outside-classroom dialogue in a familiar and common educational context. It was also chosen because it was where I taught English and English Language Development for seven years and served as an administrator for one year. My primary reason for choosing this site is because I felt an ethical responsibility to help students at this school to access an agentive, student-centered pedagogy that highlights their dynamic and developing literacy practices. I would characterize the school as a complex and beautiful site of struggle.

My prior connections to the school helped me gain access to the site. I have maintained relationships with many of my former colleagues, including the principal and the teacher whose class I studied. The ninth grade English class was chosen because the teacher Sophia Dinelli[1], my good friend, is experienced, is continuing her

[1] This and all other names in this dissertation are pseudonyms that were selected by the participants themselves when possible.

own graduate education, and expressed interest in collaborating with me. Sophia and I first met over twenty years ago at the group interview for our credential program, went through the program together, and both were hired as new teachers at the school. At the school we worked in the same department for seven years. Our paths and practices were aligned for a decade, and in the last decade have moved in different directions. Sophia continued to teach while expanding into leadership roles at the school, and I worked as an administrator at that site and another before returning to graduate school. Sophia identified as a white woman and a monolingual English speaker. (My own positionality will be discussed later in this chapter.) Both of us had some experience expanding students' learning beyond the classroom and were excited to explore the possibilities further in this study.

An additional reason that this class was chosen is that I have past experience teaching the same literature, content, and grade level at the same school, also with many students who are bilingual, defined by Grosjean (2012) as using at least two languages in everyday life with ease. As a result, I have an understanding of the course material and curricular goals, as well as the typical classroom and school contexts in which this learning takes place. While these basics grounded my understanding of some aspects of what was happening, the class was also its own unique context, especially during this unusual time of online learning that was still new. The "site" of an online classroom is complex, as it simultaneously entails multiple and overlapping, visible and invisible, virtual and physical spaces.

For the duration of the study, I collected data from Sophia's two ninth grade classes, fourth and sixth periods, before narrowing my analysis to sixth period. The fourth period class chose the topic of mental health and collaborated as a whole class to create a slide deck that was intended to offer their peers information and resources. Three student representatives presented the slides on Zoom to three other high school classes. Because that data from fourth period primarily focused on those three students and only one class project, I did not choose to analyze it for this dissertation. Instead I focused on the sixth period class because there were more opportunities for varied participation and projects. Sophia was also doing classroom communication projects in her two tenth grade English classes, but I did not visit those classes or collect data from them, instead focusing on ninth grade because I was more familiar with teaching that grade myself.

Sixth period met on Zoom on Tuesday and Friday afternoons for about an hour, sometimes for more or less time depending on the class agenda that day. Students were assigned asynchronous work to complete on Wednesdays. This schedule of meeting three times a week was adapted for Zoom from the school's block schedule prior to online learning. Over the semester, I attended thirty-six sixth period Zoom class sessions (and was absent three times). The first twenty-five classes were held online for everyone (with the teacher Zooming in from her home), and the final eleven were hybrid, with most students still online but some attending class in person. In that latter hybrid format, Sophia taught "Zoomers and roomers" simultaneously from her classroom. I continued to collect data through Zoom.

I was a participant-observer in this study, primarily observing for the first month in order to understand what was already occurring in terms of content, student learning, and student interactions. After that first month, I shifted into more of a participant phase, collaborating with the teacher to implement the classroom communication project. Sophia and I talked together about curricular plans before and after class, I joined students in breakout rooms to discuss their projects, and I tried to help engage students in class discussions, usually by posting questions, suggestions, and encouragement in the Zoom chat while Sophia was teaching. When the students began reading *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) and hybrid instruction began a month and a half before the end of the school year, I shifted back into observation mode, and looked for any lingering effects, reflections, or changes. As the teacher, Sophia made all the final decisions about curriculum and assessment, though she was frequently eager to include me and my suggestions. I was likely more involved and included in her classroom and planning process because of our friendship. Sophia commented many times that she enjoyed having me in class and reflecting with me about her teaching.

Thirty students were on the roster for sixth period, but fewer actually attended the class regularly. In the twenty-five Zoom-only sessions, the average attendance for January and February was eighteen students. In March it was seventeen students, and in April it was fourteen students. This was when the classroom communication project primarily took place, and attendance online decreased during that time period from about 60% to 47%. From 4/27/21 when the school shifted to a hybrid format

until the last day of school on 6/4/21 (for the final eleven classes), the attendance online averaged twelve students, but it was not always clear how many students were also attending in person (in order for me to tally the total class attendance). On the first three days of hybrid instruction I noted three, six, and two students present respectively in the physical classroom, but for the remaining class sessions they were not shown on camera. During this last part of the semester, the curricular focus shifted from the projects to reading the class novel *The House on Mango Street*. I had originally hoped to do another round of classroom communication projects using the novel as a springboard, but there was not enough time. Throughout the semester it was generally the same group of students who attended classes regularly, and of these students, only about half of those participated in class discussions by posting in the Zoom chat or unmuting themselves.

Fourteen students filled out a demographic survey that I provided at the end of the semester that included an open question about how they would identify themselves. Six identified as female, three identified as male, and the remainder did not provide a gender identity. Six identified as Mexican or Mexican American, and an additional four identified as Hispanic or Latina/Latinx. Three students identified as white, and one student identified as "3/4 Thai 1/4 irish." Seven students were fourteen years old, and seven students were fifteen. Twelve of the fourteen students were bilingual (with eleven speaking Spanish and English, and one speaking Thai and English with some Spanish and Vietnamese), and two of the fourteen students who responded were monolingual English speakers. The demographic survey included the

opportunity for students to choose their own pseudonyms. Many more details about the timeline, site, and participants will be interwoven with my findings in the three chapters that follow this one.

Data Collection

During the six months of the study, I used ethnographic methods modified for the online classroom, taking descriptive and reflective field notes (Cresswell, 2012) during every classroom observation, and also writing analytic memos (Saldaña, 2013). These observations were focused on what was happening generally in the classroom and how the projects were unfolding, and also on how the students were participating in the classroom (who was participating and when, how frequently, in what modes, and for which purposes). I saved the audio and video recordings and transcripts of the Zoom class sessions and breakout rooms, took screenshots of moments that caught my attention, and collected multimodal student work, emails, and relevant public documents and websites. I recorded three semi-structured interviews with the teacher at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester, and one with the guest speaker Micaela after her visit to the class, all on Zoom (see Appendix A for interview questions).

After the school year ended, I created an initial data log to organize all of the data, including some inconsequential and preliminary emails to the teacher and principal to set up the study in both classes, and then determined that I needed a revised data log that was more focused. I used my revised data log (see Table 1 below

for an excerpt of the January portion) to organize only the data that was relevant to the sixth period class during the period of instruction, with the exception of two of the three teacher interviews that occurred before and after the semester. This was still a large amount of data.

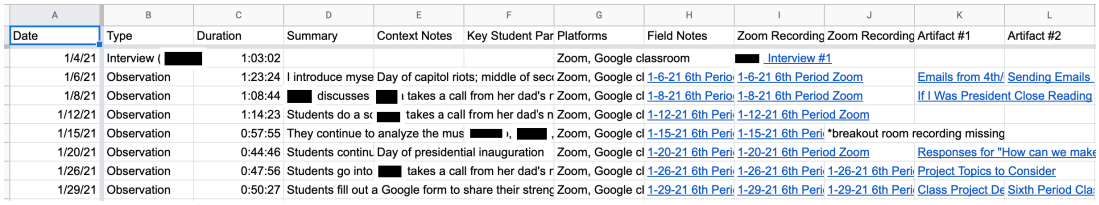
I organized the data chronologically by date and by type (classroom observation or interview). Each entry for each day also included the duration of my data collection (determined by the length of the Zoom recording). I read through my field notes again and watched selected classroom recordings in order to create a summary of what happened each day, which was included in the data log. Returning to my field notes also allowed me to include in the log contextual notes about what was happening in the world or in our lives (in the log excerpt below, this included the capitol riots, second wave of the pandemic, and Sophia fielding calls from her dad's nursing home during class when he had COVID-19). Reviewing and summarizing the field notes also allowed me to see which students had participated frequently or significantly in terms of shaping the emerging projects, and I noted these key student participants in the data log. (Four of these students emerged as focal students and are described in much more detail in Chapter 5.)

The log included the various technological platforms through which learning occurred, which was Zoom and Google classroom every day, but also sometimes other platforms such as Jamboard, Google forms, and email. The last several columns of the data log contained links to scanned copies of my handwritten field notes, Zoom recordings of the classroom and breakout rooms when possible, and any related

artifacts, which were predominantly multimodal student work, classroom and public documents, emails, and screenshots.

Table 1

Data Log Excerpt (January)



Date	Type	Duration	Summary	Context Notes	Key Student Par	Platforms	Field Notes	Zoom Recording	Zoom Recording	Artifact #1	Artifact #2
1/4/21	Interview ([redacted]	1:03:02				Zoom, Google classroom		[redacted] Interview #1			
1/6/21	Observation	1:23:24	I introduce myse	Day of capitol riots; middle of seci		Zoom, Google cl	1-6-21 6th Perio	1-6-21 6th Period Zoom		Emails from 4th/	Sending Emails
1/8/21	Observation	1:08:44	[redacted] discusses [redacted] takes a call from her dad's r			Zoom, Google cl	1-8-21 6th Perio	1-8-21 6th Period Zoom		If I Was President	Close Reading
1/12/21	Observation	1:14:23	Students do a s	[redacted] takes a call from her dad's n		Zoom, Google cl	1-12-21 6th Peri	1-12-21 6th Period Zoom			
1/15/21	Observation	0:57:55	They continue to analyze the mus [redacted] [redacted]			Zoom, Google cl	1-15-21 6th Peri	1-15-21 6th Peri	*breakout room recording missing		
1/20/21	Observation	0:44:46	Students continu	Day of presidential inauguration		Zoom, Google cl	1-20-21 6th Peri	1-20-21 6th Period Zoom		Responses for "How can we make	
1/26/21	Observation	0:47:56	Students go into [redacted] takes a call from her dad's r			Zoom, Google cl	1-26-21 6th Peri	1-26-21 6th Peri	1-26-21 6th Peri	Project Topics to Consider	
1/29/21	Observation	0:50:27	Students fill out a Google form to share their streng			Zoom, Google cl	1-29-21 6th Peri	1-29-21 6th Peri	1-29-21 6th Peri	Class Project De	Sixth Period Cla

The intersecting contexts of the study, which occurred during a pandemic and involved online schooling for an already marginalized student population, made it difficult to get the consent required to do a full IRB protocol, so I was not able to access school records or interview individual students and their families. Instead I obtained an IRB exemption and gathered data by observing usual class activities and student work. This included students' communications with their outside-classroom audiences and also frequent Google form reflections (see examples in Appendix B) and discussions about their projects in Zoom breakout rooms. In order to address my research questions about students' transliteracies practices and views (RQ1) as well as the teacher's (RQ2), my primary data sources became my field notes and analytic memos to describe what happened in the classroom communication projects (the focus of Chapter 5), four transliteracies events that occurred within the classroom communication projects and illuminated students' practices and views (the focus of Chapter 6), and the three teacher interviews that demonstrated the teacher's intentions and views (the focus of Chapter 7).

Multimodal Data Analysis

The collection and organization of the wide range of data just described enabled me to follow the emergent activity (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) in order to analyze it, as I will describe in this section. More specifically, I utilized Multimodal Data Analysis (Low & Pandya, 2019) across the phases, platforms, and modes of this study 1) to foreground the idea of crystallization, 2) to bring together the different analytical tools that were needed, and 3) to emphasize different positionalities and perspectives that affected what happened in the projects and how the students' emergent transliteracies practices were mobilized, immobilized, and viewed.

I engaged in multimodal data analysis because the projects took place across communicative platforms, channels, and modes that were all embedded in the online classroom environment. It was also chosen as an analytic tool because multimodal analysis that is thorough, reflexive, and unbounded can be helpful in disrupting deficit perspectives of marginalized students' literacy practices (Low & Pandya, 2019). In order to interpret the students' practices, texts, and views within the transliteracies events as well as the teacher's, I brought together multiple forms of analysis. Low and Pandya described how multimodal researchers often utilize this blended approach in an effort to strengthen the validity of their research. However, in order to avoid the potential of defaulting to a reductionist and positivist stance, Low and Pandya offered four recommendations for multimodal data analysis: thinking of data analysis as "crystallization" rather than "triangulation," foregrounding the researcher's positionality, analyzing one's data with colleagues, and engaging participants in the

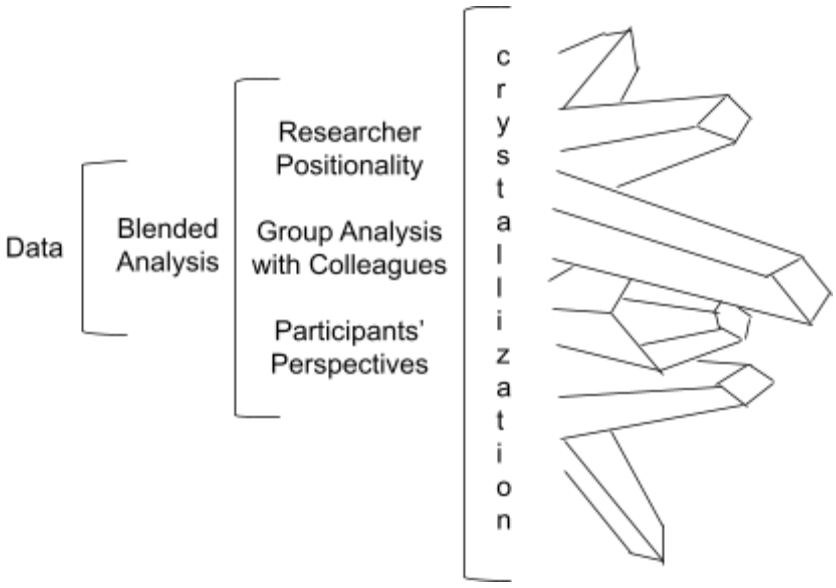
analysis of their own data. In the subsections that follow, I will first describe how the concept of crystallization guided my analysis, and then how my approach related to (and sometimes fell short of) Low and Pandya's other recommendations.

Crystallization

I understand crystallization as the overarching lens that is made practical through blended multimodal analysis supplemented by Low and Pandya's other three recommendations (engaging participants in the analysis of their own data, foregrounding the researcher's positionality, and analyzing one's data with colleagues). Richardson (1994, as cited in Low & Pandya, 2019) wrote that crystallization involves "an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach" and results in a "deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding" (p. 522). Crystallization fosters exploration in literacy research, calls attention to the partial view of the researcher (which is even more explicit in the Zoom classroom), and aligns with the transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) perspective of both literacy and research as emergent. Findings are crystallized, but not finite.

Figure 2

Multimodal Data Analysis Informed by Low and Pandya (2019) and Richardson (1994)



The data that I collected during the study (the first layer of the Multimodal Data Analysis process shown in Figure 2) was described in the last section. In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss the next two layers in Figure 2, my blended analysis and the interplay of my own perspectives and positionality with that of others involved in the study. Crystallization, the final layer, represents my findings and will be discussed in the three subsequent chapters.

Blended Analysis

The data analysis was done in two phases that 1) occurred during the study and focused on the class broadly, and that 2) occurred after the study and focused on the four transliteracies events and the three teacher interviews specifically. Each phase necessitated different analytical tools to allow me to address different aspects of my research questions. First I explored what was going on in the class during the communication projects using an ethnographic approach that was modified for the

online classroom, and then I analyzed the transliteracies events and teacher interviews using open coding (Saldaña, 2013) across multiple modes of communication and platforms. In the following subsections I will describe each of these forms and phases of my analysis.

Zoom Ethnography

Since the pandemic, there has been a growing interest in the challenges and opportunities of conducting qualitative research on digital platforms. Before the pandemic, Archibald et al.'s (2019) landmark study found that both researchers and the nurses they interviewed preferred Zoom interviews to face-to-face interviews or phone calls because they were convenient and did not sacrifice rapport. However, Walsh et al. (2023) painted a more complex picture of what happened when ethnographic studies were forced online during the pandemic. On the one hand, for "a research team about to embark on a lengthy period of ethnographic fieldwork… 'staying at home' was the antithesis of 'being there' in the field as [they] had planned" (Walsh et al., 2023, p. 244) and could not replace in-person interactions. On the other hand, they also found comparable opportunities for trusting relationships to be built through online dialogue, and even enhanced opportunities for breaking down power dynamics and humanizing all involved in the online context (see Appendix C for an example of such humanization in this study). However, these studies did not take place in classrooms, where students have generally reported much less engagement in online learning (Serhan, 2020). The black Zoom boxes in this study

seemed to represent students' "absent presence" (Gergen, 2002), yet I was also continually surprised by what the students "showed" me. In this study, the limitations of my view were always present alongside my growing sense of the participants.

Because it was an ethnography, the first phase of data analysis occurred during the study itself. My reflections were bracketed in my observational field notes. I also wrote analytic memos during my data collection and after. I paid particular attention to instances of students' outside-classroom dialogue and the preparation and reflection that accompanied them. I was also influenced by the idea of ethnography as capturing stories that involve "turning points, flashbacks, successes, beginnings, showdowns, disasters, failures, births, arguments, hardships, life reversals, and deaths" (Cheney, 2001, as cited in Narayan, 2012, p. 11). I thought about how these mapped on to the unfolding of the classroom communication projects. For example, a major turning point for the whole class occurred in March when a student Xavier expressed doubt that the class projects could make a difference. His conversation with Sophia resulted in the additional option of individual family projects, which was taken up by other students. (This will be discussed much more in later chapters.)

A transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) emphasis on the "paradox of mobility" (p. 70) influenced my analysis in that I paid attention to the momentum of the projects: sometimes students seemed engaged and active, and other times they seemed detached or stuck. Additionally, I looked for moments that stood out to me and that showed variety in terms of the following: who participated and how, differing stances or opinions, multiple modes of projects, and the range of students'

audiences (close/distant, public/private, general/specific). These ethnographic findings are described in Chapter 5, and also helped contextualize what emerged in the next phase of my analysis: the identification of four transliteracies events that were then analyzed through multimodal data analysis.

Transliteracies Events

In order to address the question of the transliteracies practices that the students were drawing upon and developing in the classroom communication projects, as well as their views (RQ1), I identified four significant transliteracies events. I then analyzed the transliteracies events by creating and coding multimodal transcripts (see Appendix D), and using the transliteracies inquiry tools (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017).

The first step in identifying the events was reviewing previous analytic memos that had noted important classroom moments. I also read through all of my field notes summaries in the data log. I looked for ideas and plans that the students were sharing in regard to communicating with outside-classroom audiences, efforts to actually communicate with these outside-audiences, and reflections about the communications. The dates and data that were chosen are not the only relevant and important transliteracies events, but they stood out to me for the reasons listed in the description in Table 2 below. I also chose them because of the ways in which Sophia had indicated (in conversations after class or in the interviews) that these events stood out to her too. After I selected these events, I could see how they related to Narayan's (2012) ideas of ethnography, and have included those connections in the table as well.

Table 2

Transliteracies Events

Date	Description of class	Connection to Narayan's (2012) idea of ethnography as stories of…
2/2/21	Students shifted from selecting and discussing the topic of racism to making plans for their projects. There was a sense of momentum and increased participation on this day.	beginning
2/23/21	When their guest speaker Micaela did not arrive as expected, the students discussed their plans to welcome her. They disagreed about some of these details.	failure, argument
3/2/21	Micaela visited the class and gave a presentation about racism broadly and locally before taking questions from the students. When asked what they can do about racism, she talked about the importance of self love.	success
3/16/21	A student Xavier expressed doubt that the projects could make a difference, and the teacher Sophia brought up Micaela's point about self love. This led to an additional project option, self love or family interview projects.	turning point

Once I had chosen these dates, I read those field notes again and watched the video recordings of each class period in its entirety. I then identified a key excerpt of each classroom session, usually around ten minutes, to create a multimodal transcript for closer analysis.

I wrote the following in an analytic memo during my data collection on 2/14/21:

> I can tell that I will need to develop my own kind of multimodal transcript to track the various streams of dialogue which are occurring simultaneously in multiple modes… It's fascinating that the online learning I have observed thus far can swing dramatically between two extremes. First there is the monologic situation in which the teacher has the only voice that can be heard and face that is seen, while the students remain literally muted. At other times I can count at least five streams of dialogue, some of which come together and some of which remain distinct. In the latter, some students are talking, some are posting in the chat to everyone, some are posting in the chat privately to the teacher, and some are contributing to the Jamboard. Some students are doing several at the same time, and I am certain they are all also participating in multiple dialogues at home, maybe talking to their parents and texting their friends while they are in class.

In order to analyze this complex and sometimes obscured dialogue, I pulled apart the various layers and modes (using audio and Zoom transcripts, recordings, and other digital artifacts), and then reconstructed them into multimodal transcripts, beginning with the spoken dialogue. I put the spoken dialogue in a table and then added columns for the chat and the Jamboard contributions so that the classroom conversations could be read laterally (and in the simultaneous and overlapping manner in which they occurred). I added dashes to represent five-second pauses in the spoken dialogue. I

attempted to replicate the timing of all of our contributions to the dialogue in each mode in the multimodal transcript.

The next step of my analysis of students' practices and views within the four transliteracies events involved multiple rounds of open coding (Saldaña, 2013) of the multimodal transcripts to generate categories and emerging themes. I wrote analytic memos and created tables to organize patterns that I was seeing in the data. I initially found 34 codes for students' transliteracies practices that could be organized into 6 categories. Continual analysis, review, and revision ultimately resulted in 17 codes in 5 categories. I created a codebook (see Appendix E) for the codes that represented students' transliteracies practices, which were nested into categories that represented students' purposes. Chapter 6 contains much more information about these codes and categories, my analysis and findings, including definitions and examples of students' transliteracies practices, their prevalence across events and modes, and how students' views were embedded in and enacted by their practices. This also includes an analysis of my findings using the transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) tools of emergence, uptake, resonance, and scale.

Teacher Zoom Interviews

In order to address the question of what transliteracies practices the teacher was trying to teach in the classroom communication projects, as well as her views (RQ2), I analyzed the three interviews that I conducted before, during, and after the projects (see Table 3 below).

Table 3

Teacher Interviews

Date	Description	Data Sources
1-4-21	Sophia Interview #1: I interviewed the teacher before the projects began.	Zoom recording (1 hour, 3 minutes) Zoom transcript (21 pages)
3-16-21	Sophia Interview #2: I interviewed the teacher a second time in the middle of the projects.	Zoom recording (1 hour, 23 minutes) Zoom transcript (24 pages)
6-9-21	Sophia Interview #3: I interviewed the teacher a third time after the projects and the semester had ended.	Zoom recording (1 hour, 44 minutes) Zoom transcript (39 pages)

I went through multiple rounds of iterative, open coding (Saldaña, 2013). For each of the three teacher interviews, I watched the video recordings, coded the transcripts, organized data into spreadsheets and categories, and wrote analytic memos. I initially saw patterns across the data related to the teacher's concerns, challenges, and perceived barriers related to the classroom communication projects. I then looked for the opposite, areas of excitement and hope, in order to balance my analysis and focus on teacher strengths. I understood these as "immobilities" and "immobilities" in alignment with my research questions, and began to trace their relationships to each other in various ways, re-reading and re-organizing my data along the way. I noticed parallels between the teacher's feelings and views and her perceptions of the students' feelings and views. I also tried grouping the immobilities as they related to student learning, teaching, and interactions with outside-classroom audiences, before doing a more in-depth analysis of the mobilities and immobilities

within the various, layered contexts of the study: online learning in a pandemic, teaching and learning differently in classroom communication projects, interacting with outside-classroom audiences, and engaging with the social justice issues in the project topics. That allowed me to better understand how Sophia's views and goals shaped the teaching and learning, shifted over the course of the semester, and related to a "paradox of mobility" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017, p. 70) in the projects.

Using what I had learned from this initial analysis process, as well as from analyzing the four transliteracies events, I returned to the three interviews for another round of coding that was more focused on what transliteracies practices Sophia was trying to teach, and how these related to her views of the projects. I ended up with 12 codes in 5 categories, which related to my other research question regardings students' transliteracies practices and views. These findings are shared in Chapter 7 of this dissertation, and include an analysis using the transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) tools of emergence, uptake, resonance, and scale.

This section of the methods chapter described the three components of blended data analysis I undertook: engaging in a Zoom ethnography, exploring transliteracies events through the creation and coding of multimodal transcripts, and the iterative analysis of the teacher interviews. The latter two incorporated transliteracies inquiry tools to better understand mobilities and immobilities from the students' and teacher's perspectives respectively. What came out of these three streams of blended analysis is presented in my three findings chapters (Chapters 5, 6, and 7). Low and Pandya (2019) argued that multimodal data analysis should go

beyond blended analysis and attend to multiple positionalities and perspectives, including that of the researcher, which is the focus of the next section.

Emphasizing Researcher Positionality

My positionality as a researcher includes the fact that I identify as a white woman whose first language is English, demographics which match those of the majority of US teachers. Even though I am using theories and methods that focus on multilingualism as a strength rather than a deficit (and am constantly working on improving my own intermediate Spanish proficiency), I remain aware of the ways in which my language and identity is privileged in schools and society, in ways that affect what I see and may not see.

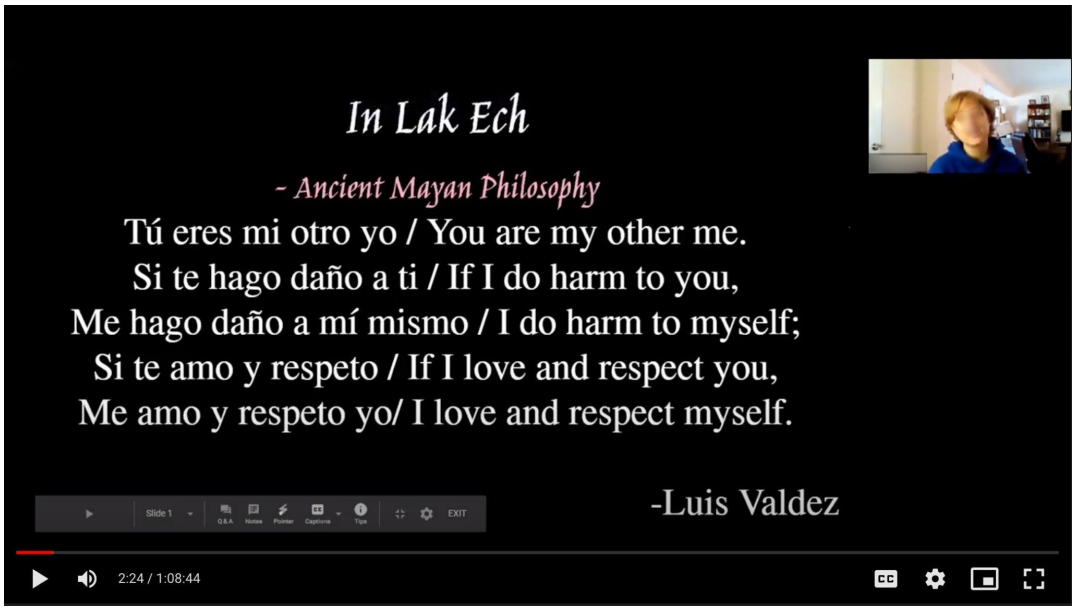
It is especially important to note my and Sophia's whiteness and lack of bilingualism in the context of the project topic of racism that was chosen by the predominantly Latinx students. As the adults in the Zoom room, we had power and privilege. As white women in the Zoom room, we had power and privilege. We retained this power and privilege during the discussions about racism, even though almost all the students had more personal experience and knowledge about it than we did.

Sophia began each class by screen sharing "In Lak Ech," a Mayan-inspired portion of a poem by Luis Valdez (1971) which she had learned about in an Ethnic Studies professional development course. She and I were the only ones who recited "In Lak Ech" in English and Spanish at the start of every class, though she invited the

students to join us every time (see Figure 3). During the study, I saw this recitation as a meditation and a commitment to honoring students, their languages and cultures. I even literally saw the poem displayed at a shopping center near the school (see Appendix F). However, after the study ended and I played back the classroom recordings, I discovered that Sophia and I were always a second or two out of synch with each other, resulting in a more garbled version of our best intentions. I wondered if the students and their families who heard this in their homes at the start of every class cringed, shook their heads, appreciated what we were trying to do, or some combination of all three.

Figure 3

Screenshot of Sophia starting class with part of Valdez's (1971) Poem "Pensamiento Serpentino"



Though I tried to engage with students differently than a teacher would and asked them to call me by my first name, they still seemed to see me as an additional

teacher in their classroom, or sometimes as "Ms. Dinelli's friend." We explained that I was a university researcher, but my roles as teacher and friend seemed most salient to the students. It was true that these roles fit: it was always my goal to support and encourage the teacher and the students, in general and in regard to the classroom communication projects specifically.

Group Analysis with Colleagues

Because dialogue is an important part of this study, I welcomed Low and Pandya's (2019) recommendation to engage in analysis with colleagues. I interpreted "colleagues" in a broad sense, and tried to create opportunities for different cycles of group analysis. The three interviews I did with Sophia and the one interview with the guest speaker Micaela were part of this analysis in regard to the whole class. They both offered insights about their own and the students' participation in the classroom communication projects.

Before I determined which specific data to analyze for this dissertation, I shared and discussed some of my other data (students' projects and breakout room transcripts) with different groups of graduate students in education programs at two different universities in informal smaller groups and in larger classes, as well as with a translator. Throughout these various conversations about the data, I took notes and wrote analytic memos as part of my continual and emergent data analysis. My colleagues' previous ideas informed the way that I approached the data that is the focus of this dissertation, but unfortunately I was unable to organize group analysis

sessions in the same way for the interviews and transliteracies events due to time constraints. Engaging in more specific group analysis with colleagues would have strengthened my analysis.

Foregrounding Participants' Perspectives

The participants' perspectives contributed to my data analysis in this study, and they also constitute findings in terms of how the students experienced and viewed the outside-classroom communications. These perspectives were foregrounded as much as possible given the limits of my study, which were mostly related to the Zoom context and IRB requirements. I focused on what the students said in class and wrote in their reflections about the classroom communication projects. I asked them to reflect on the multimodal texts they created. However, this fell short of engaging them in a comprehensive analysis of their own texts and participation, which would have more closely aligned with Low and Pandya's (2019) recommendation.

Similarly, I presented some findings to the students at the end of the semester that were based on themes that I saw in their reflective essays (Appendix G). This was more of a member check than a YPAR methodology, because I did the initial analysis and then asked for their feedback rather than working alongside them throughout the study as co-researchers. In terms of YPAR, this study uses a YPAR epistemology and pedagogy, but less of a YPAR methodology (Caraballo et al., 2017).

This methods chapter provided information about the timeline, site, and participants in my study, as well as my data collection and analysis. I collected and organized a wide range of data. I then used Multimodal Data Analysis (Low & Pandya, 2019), which supplements blended analysis by attending to researcher positionality, group analysis with colleagues, and participants' perspectives. These cycles of revisiting the data in dialogue with others helped me to affirm and extend my findings, and also reminded me that all views are partial and influenced by our own identities and imaginations, which is consistent with the idea of crystallization (Low & Pandya, 2019). As a transliteracies researcher, I "[traced] contingent relationships as they [emerged] in activity, without determining those relationships in advance" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017, p. 76). In this way, the limitations of this study are acknowledged and even emphasized. We do not know everything about the texts, the contexts in which they were created, the composers involved, or their histories. The online classroom had additional limitations in the absence of the visual: expressions, interactions, movements, and physical space were not part of the analysis. I would have liked more time to reflect with the students, to hear more from them about their texts, ideas, and experiences.

The ways in which the analysis unfolded and the data it involved are interwoven with the findings that will be described in the next three chapters. The blended analysis in this study involved Zoom ethnography to understand what emerged in the classroom communication projects (the focus of Chapter 5), the multimodal analysis of four transliteracies events to explore students' transliteracies

practices and views (the focus of Chapter 6), and three Zoom interviews to illuminate the teacher's intentions and views (the focus of Chapter 7).

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS: CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION PROJECTS

The last chapter described my methods, and more specifically that I used blended data analysis that involved several approaches. The first of these, ethnographic data collection and analysis, was used to understand what emerged in the classroom communication projects more broadly: the contexts, participants, and events. This chapter describes those findings and provides background for the more detailed analysis of students' practices and views that will follow in the next chapter.

Personal, Local, National, and Global Contexts

As previously described, this study took place from January to June in 2021, a turbulent time that in many ways is still ongoing. Winter of 2020-2021 was the peak of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. The zip code of the school was in the news for its disproportionately high COVID rates. Sophia's father was in a nursing home and tested positive for COVID-19 in January. Sophia, a single mother of two, had her kids at home doing online school much of the time she was teaching. In another city over one hundred miles away, I was homeschooling my two younger children (who watched nature videos during my class observations), and my husband was teaching online high school from our bedroom. My oldest child, one year younger than the students in the class I was studying, was alone in his bedroom watching Youtube videos most of the time instead of attending his own Zoom middle school classes. Both Sophia and I were concerned with the physical and mental health

of our loved ones, and the students probably were too. We knew that some of them were supervising younger relatives or helping out in family businesses.

On the first day of my observations on 1/6/21, rioters attacked the U.S. capitol to protest the 2020 presidential election results. President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris (the first woman, the first Black person, and the first person of Asian descent to serve in that role) were sworn in later that month in a high security, COVID-safe inauguration ceremony. Throughout the semester, there were continuing reports of anti-Asian violence and police killings of people of color: on 3/29/21 thirteen-year-old Adam Toledo was killed by police in Chicago; on 4/11/21 Daunte Wright was killed during a traffic stop in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota, ten miles away from where Derek Chauvin was on trial for the killing of George Floyd. These events showed up in different ways in the students' discussions and projects.

There were also some signs of positive changes in the world and in our lives. Chauvin was found guilty of murder and manslaughter. COVID vaccines became available for adults in February, and then three months later for twelve to eighteen-year-olds. More schools began to re-open, and the school moved from entirely online to a hybrid model on 4/27/21, with most students remaining on Zoom, but some in the classroom with Sophia. My family bought a house and prepared for a big move. I published my first academic article, and visited relatives I had not seen in two years. Sophia, who was working on her administrative credential, got a job as a summer school administrator. Then the vice principal job opened up at the school,

and Sophia applied and got the job. The semester of the study was her last as a classroom teacher.

Classroom Context

In contrast to all of this external chaos, the Zoom classroom was generally quiet. Most students did not turn their cameras on, either because they were too shy or because their videos lagged on spotty internet connections. Sophia began every class by smiling into the camera and greeting each student by name. Often students responded to her greeting verbally or in the chat. This created a feeling of community, albeit a fragile one. As described in the methods chapter, I charted the attendance throughout the class sessions, which usually peaked about halfway through each class before beginning to decline as some students left the Zoom. About two-thirds of the students were attending regularly.

After welcoming students, the next part of Sophia's routine was to recite In Lak Ech in English and Spanish. Each time she invited everyone to join her, but I was the only one who ever took her up on this offer. After that, Sophia would screen-share and explain the daily agenda, which varied but usually involved classroom discussion paired with an online written assignment such as a journal entry, reflection form, or notes. The duration of the twice-weekly Zoom sessions varied depending on what students were doing, but averaged about an hour each. There was a third asynchronous class session with additional assignments that Sophia would explain during class. The students were often together as a whole class, but Sophia would

sometimes put them into breakout rooms. The students expressed that they did not like the breakout rooms because no one spoke to each other.

Many of the students' comments (verbally or in the chat) that I observed before the projects began were greetings, general conversation, or procedural questions. There were more substantive comments and questions about the content once the projects began. Sophia responded with delight to any and all student contributions, and continued to ask students for more participation. Because of her enthusiastic responses and desire for students to feel connected to her class, the classroom dialogue was not all business - she shared information about her family, talked about other things going on, and encouraged students to do the same.

Verbal comments from students were rare, and Sophia shared with me that many students told her the previous semester that they were afraid to speak up in class. I noticed that, even in breakout rooms, students who unmuted to speak with me quickly muted again as soon as they could. They expressed embarrassment over the other noise in their home, and I related to this, not wanting my own family members in the background to disturb the class. The public chat was a way that more students could participate without the pressure of speaking out loud, but it took time to type one's comments, so there was sometimes a lag between one's desire to contribute and the contribution reaching the rest of the class. Lastly, it seemed that many students felt most comfortable sending private chat messages to the teacher. Because Sophia was simultaneously leading the whole class on Zoom, her verbal responses to those who had messaged her interrupted the flow of the whole class dialogue and were

sometimes confusing to the rest of the group. These different streams of dialogue would converge and diverge throughout the class sessions, as Sophia tried to address and encourage all of her students.

As the projects got underway, there was more participation and more palpable energy in the Zoom classroom. It was becoming, as Sophia had hoped it would be, "kind of a bright spot," and "[they] were taking a really shitty year and making something out of it." In sixth period, four students stood out most throughout the semester because of their participation, their influence on the other students, and their influence on the course of the classroom communication projects. In other words, these four students created mobilities within a seemingly immobile context, both of which were central to my research questions and analysis. As described in the previous methods chapter, I followed the emergent activity of the students as a transliteracies researcher (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017), and these key participants played central and varied roles in this activity (throughout the study and in the four transliteracies events specifically). These students will be described individually in the next section.

Key Participants

The most consistent student "voices" in sixth period were those of Mr. Happy and Agent E, both fifteen years old. These were also the two students who chose pseudonyms that were the most unique among their classmates. Another student Xavier (fourteen years old) did not always attend class, but had the most powerful

impact on the class and the projects through the ideas that he shared and the ideas that he challenged. Similarly, Samira (also fourteen) was not often in class, but deepened and energized both conversations and actions with her presence when she did attend. Samira rejected the idea of a pseudonym, preferring to use her real name and represent herself (I compromised with a variation of her name). I will share more about these dynamic individuals in the sections that follow.

Mr. Happy

Of all the students, Mr. Happy captured my attention the most from the beginning to the end of the study for several reasons. He maintained a constant flow of dialogue in the Zoom chat box throughout each class period, addressed to his peers, Sophia, and me. He struck me as an extremely engaged student, though his contributions did not always stay on topic and, as Sophia suggested in an interview, may even have been challenging to manage in an in-person classroom. However, in the quiet Zoom classroom, his humor and participation were welcomed, delighting his teacher and encouraging his more reticent classmates to participate too. Because he was so present, I was surprised to learn from Sophia that Mr. Happy was in charge of his three-year-old sister during the day. In his introductory email to me, Mr. Happy described his sister as "wild. Very wild."

Mr. Happy sparked my curiosity with his ability to defy categorization. He took a leadership role in the project, such as sending email messages to invite potential guest speakers to discuss the class's chosen topic of racism, but he did not

turn in many assignments and, as a result, did not ultimately pass the class. His self-identifications were unique: he identified as white, though he spoke Spanish as his first language and reported that his parents were both from El Salvador. When I asked the students to choose their own pseudonyms, the student chose Mr. Happy. This moniker was already part of his identity as a Youtuber, and may have been chosen to seize respect and define himself. The use of happy might have been meant literally or ironically. Mr. Happy is also the name of a short video starring Chance the Rapper. More than any other student, Mr. Happy mobilized students' participation (and his own) through continual public dialogue in the chat. He also enacted a transliteracies stance of blurring boundaries: between in-school and outside-school content and worlds, between leading and downplaying his own engagement, and between racial categories.

Agent E

The other student who participated the most was Agent E, a white student who seemed so different than Mr. Happy to me. As a result, I was surprised to learn from Sophia that they were friends. Agent E chose his pseudonym because it was his video gaming name. The name invokes both agency and mystery, which were perhaps appealing to this student who told me in his introductory email that "[his] mind works a lot different than the other kids" due to ADHD. In the same message, Agent E wrote that he had "a mom but no dad" and that he "can figure out how to solve problems that even some adults have trouble fingering out." Agent E stood out as both

confident and a little bit different in his frequent contributions to class discussions. He spoke more slowly than his peers, and seemed to prefer the ease of unmuting to typing in the chat. Sophia told me that Agent E's aunt sat with him to help with online schooling, and he brought her up sometimes in the classroom discussions.

Agent E was earnest in his support of the teacher and of the class project. He referenced songs and sayings to support the idea that the class could indeed make a difference. He seemed to enjoy the class sessions, laughing or making jokes often. Though Mr. Happy responded to Agent E and supported him and his ideas, the other students did not always know how to respond to him. Agent E originated the idea of making a playlist for the class project, and Mr. Happy joined him in this endeavor. This unlikely pairing ultimately resulted in an anti-racist playlist that included everything from Reba McEntire and Michael Jackson to anti-bullying Minecraft videos and rap music containing a parental advisory. Agent E mobilized a sense of optimism for the potential of the projects to make a difference, and also the re-invention of his own, more empowered identity.

Xavier

Xavier identified as a "latinx teen from cali," and was the only student in the class who used the term "Latinx." Xavier was not always in class, but when he was there, his voice was powerful. He unmuted often, usually to share an alternative opinion to what was being discussed. He offered examples and also critiques of ideas and plans that were suggested by the other students and the teacher. He expressed

confidence in his own knowledge, and in those moments (which will be described later) it seemed as if everyone was paying closer attention and waiting to see what he would say next. Following one of these conversations, Mr. Happy joked in the chat, "Xavier for president."

It was evident that Xavier was a leader in the class. He grappled with the issues that were brought up and, in doing so, revealed their complexity. More than any other student, he deepened and changed how the projects unfolded. More specifically, his skepticism that the class could do anything to help fight against racism led to the creation of more personal, family-oriented projects. Xavier mobilized the presence of an important truth in the classroom communication projects: that making change, especially regarding racism, was very difficult. He created space for the students to have their own thoughts and feelings about the projects (from their own positionalities) rather than accepting the sanitized, simplified goals and stances of school.

Samira

Like Xavier, Samira's ideas and language set her apart from the other students. She sounded more like a college student studying and enacting her own version of critical pedagogy than a high school student with spotty attendance. When asked how she identified, she wrote, "¾ Thai, ¼ Irish, I go by She/They, I dont believe in religion, im Pansexual." More than any other student, Samira spoke about her own experiences with racism, expressing a more nuanced understanding of

structural racism and whiteness. Much of what she said in class conversations drew attention to her own identity: she described herself as "a gigantic five-year-old," and "a huge clown." She also said that she did not appreciate when people told her that she looked white, and would respond to them,

> I am still my race. I still look like my mother… Just because I am white passing doesn't mean that I get to live fully with the privilege of being white and just because I'm a child doesn't mean I know less than you.

Samira also provided examples of actions she had already taken outside of school to combat racism on her own: approaching people in person or trolling them online. (The former made Sophia nervous, and she told Samira that she did not want Samira to put herself in a potentially dangerous situation.) Samira expressed enthusiasm for getting involved in the projects, and for talking to little kids about racism in particular, though she did not ultimately attend frequently or complete a project. I heard from Sophia that Samira's attendance was affected by her job at a relative's nail salon. Nevertheless, Samira's limited involvement was potent: she mobilized an activist stance, and also opportunities for students to share their own personal or familial experiences of racism. Samira's participation in the class projects, as well as that of the other students described in this section, will be explained in more detail in the next section.

Classroom Communication Projects

Throughout the data collection and analysis, certain class sessions stood out to me more than the others because they involved unusual or compelling moments in regard to students' engagement with each other, the projects, and the topic of racism itself. I sometimes noted these instances in my field notes and wrote analytical memos about them. In my interviews with the teacher, I learned more about which moments in class stood out to her, some of which matched mine. I compiled an evolving list of these classroom events to analyze in more depth in order to better understand students' transliteracies practices and views of the classroom communication projects.

As described in my methods, I was influenced by Narayan's (2012) idea (inspired by writing advice from Cheney) to understand ethnography as stories that involve "turning points, flashbacks, successes, beginnings, showdowns, disasters, failures, births, arguments, hardships, life reversals, and deaths" (p. 11). I continued to narrow my focus, and distilled my analysis down to four distinct classroom events that occurred over a six-week period. Each of these "ethnographic snapshots" (Cruz, 2011, p. 550) was a little over ten minutes long, each occurred within a class session, and each represented one or more of the elements that Narayan emphasized. The remainder of this chapter will describe what happened in each of these transliteracies events. This overview will hopefully be helpful 1) in situating the more detailed, inductive analysis of students' practices and views that will follow in the next chapter, and 2) in foreshadowing some of the findings and themes that emerged.

Event 1: Racism as "Just a Part of Life"

Even though Event 1 took place a month into the study (on 2/2/21), it felt like the actual start of the projects to me, and also related to Narayan's (2012) emphasis on beginnings. At the end of my sixth period observations, I wrote in my field notes, "Today I felt momentum in both classes!" The previous weeks had been spent analyzing a music video by Las Cafeteras (2017) called "If I Was President," and using it as a springboard to discuss what societal issues were important to the students. This led to a student vote on the project topic of racism. The week before Event 1, students had begun brainstorming about racism on a Jamboard (Figure 4).

Figure 4

First Page of Sixth Period's Jamboard

Students had previously worked on page 1 in breakout rooms, which were mostly quiet, so there had not been much discussion about their contributions. Students had

begun to propose actions, some of which involved creating their own multimodal texts. They offered different characterizations of racism itself, along with examples they had experienced or heard about. The students' ideas show varying levels of seriousness about their topic, and varying levels of confidence that they could do anything about racism. These contributions to the first page of the Jamboard demonstrate some of their purposes (and accompanying transliteracies practices) that will be discussed in the next chapter, and are included here because they provided a starting point for Event 1.

At the beginning of Event 1 (which occurred about fifteen minutes into class after the usual introductory routines), Sophia had students refer to the previous Jamboard pages as a way to think more specifically about what they might do for a project. She added two new pages (p. 3 and p. 4) and asked for students' ideas. After a period of silence, Xavier initiated the student dialogue by commenting that 1) people of color were also perpetrators of racism and 2) he did not care for the class topic of racism because the students would not be able to do anything about it. Most of us seemed unsure of how to respond because Xavier's comments challenged the logic and premise of the projects themselves. Mr. Happy immediately supported Xavier with the comment in the chat that "of course everyone can be racist. It can't be stopped," while Samira offered a more nuanced view. She shared that the fact that racism was so pervasive (historically and systemically) was what led to people saying, "'I don't really care… it's bad, but it's just a part of life.'" Samira also referenced her own experience with racism.

The next couple of comments I made to the class attempted to shift the conversation back to what students could do. (At that time, I thought of my response as helpful, but I now see it as questionable in ways that will be discussed later in this dissertation.) Samira responded with the idea of working with kids as a promising way of preventing racism from spreading to the next generation, and other students began posting notes on the Jamboard (Figure 5).

Xavier commented that kids were the problem more than the solution (in terms of behaviors he had witnessed), and that he blamed their parents. He also shared that his own mother was unique because she "always taught [him] everybody's equal no matter what, it doesn't matter the skin color." This idea of the generations educating each other about racism, in either or both directions, was present throughout the classroom communication projects.

The students' conversation then shifted to the lack of representation of people of color in toys, video games, cartoons, songs, and movies. They gave a wide range of examples, from Barbie to the Rush Hour movie franchise. The pace of student contributions across all three modes (verbal, chat, and Jamboard) increased, and a few more students became publicly engaged in the dialogue. (Others sent private chat messages to Sophia.) Students were making the real-life and textual connections that were most meaningful and relevant to their own lives, transliteracies practices that seldom involved traditional texts and that will be discussed in the next chapter. Not just the problems but the students' proposed solutions also involved utilizing or composing new texts (such as directing people to anti-racist websites or creating a

playlist), though some of these were more text-driven products (such as writing a children's book or developing a slide presentation) that could more easily be graded and fit into school, another consideration that was present throughout the study.

Agent E suggested some songs that would be helpful because of their positive messages, saying, "I think they should play a lot more songs like 'Freaks' and 'Headphones' because 'Freaks' says, 'I know we're all different in color and race, but I see no difference between you and me,' and they're both just about bullying." Agent E's comments hint at one way that he is connecting to the topic of racism as a white student who has learning differences: likening racism to bullying. This is one example of the many different ways that everyone involved, including us adults, was positioned differently in relationship to the topic of racism, and that these differences affected our views of the classroom communication projects in important ways that may have inadvertently been glossed over during the projects. This example also shows some of the different ways that students were characterizing racism (offensive behavior from individuals or a historical system) and its solutions (more representation or "[seeing] no difference").

Near the end of Event 1, Xavier mentioned the racism that was present in some Disney movies, which sparked interest and examples from Sophia (who shared that she had seen a racist Disney movie as a child that would never be re-released) and other students. Samira then asked about Walt Disney's connection to racist organizations. Sophia said that she did not know about that, and refocused the class

on their project plans. Event 1 ended, though the class continued discussing ideas and adding them to the Jamboard.

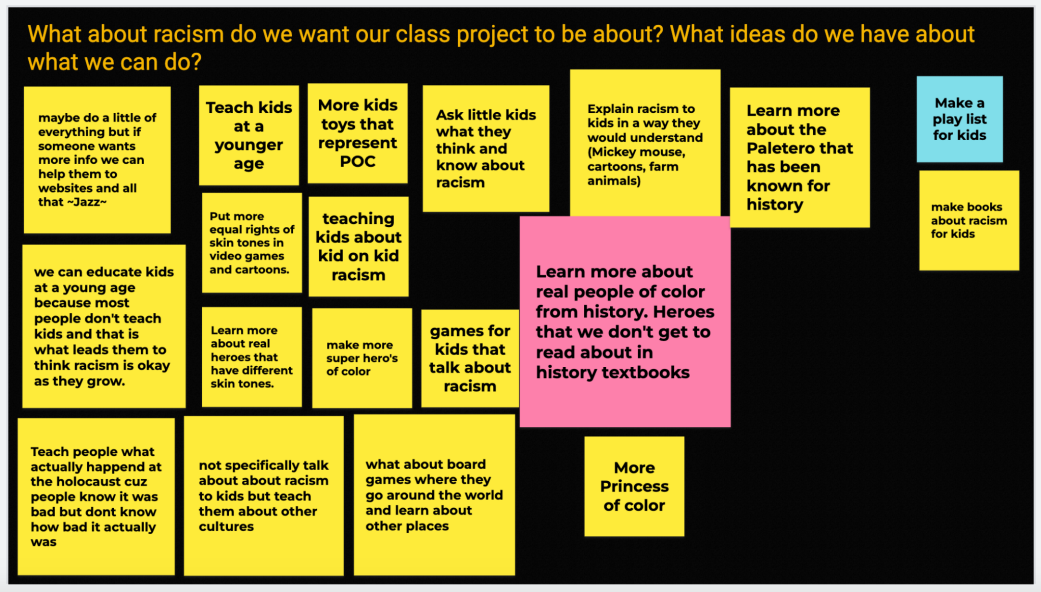
Though the classroom momentum continued as students got more specific about their project idea, the topic of Disney dwindled until later that class period when it emerged again in two contradictory ways. Samira had done her own online research and asked Sophia to verify whether or not the movie she had seen as a child was *Song of the South* (it was), and Mickey Mouse had been added to the Jamboard (Figure 5) as a way to help teach kids about racism. Though there was agreement about the problematic nature of many Disney films, the questioning of Disney as an institution was not encouraged and by the end of class its primary symbol was seen as a solution to racism rather than part of the problem. This brings up one of the complexities of this project and other critical endeavors that take place in classrooms, the ways in which they blur the lines between countering and reproducing inequities. Another consideration is the ways in which teachers and peers encourage some threads of critical inquiry while (consciously or unconsciously) closing off others. In hindsight, an investigation into racism related to Disney seemed like something that interested the students and might have led to a project, but neither of the adults nor any of the students supported it as much as some of the other ideas.

Through these texts and examples, students were sharing the ways in which racism was "just a part of life" for young people like themselves. As mentioned, during Event 1 students got started on Page 3 of the Jamboard (Figure 5). The five

notes in the upper left corner were done during the event, with the remainder occurring later in that class.

Figure 5

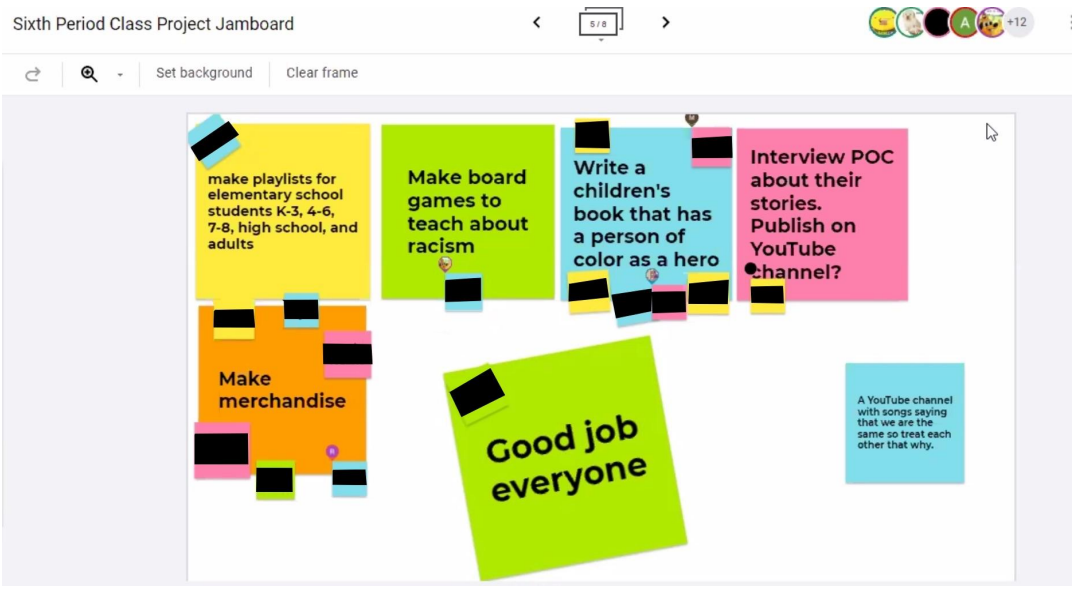
Third Page of Sixth Period's Jamboard



During the next class three days later, students worked on Jamboard page 2 (resources they needed) and page 4 (what they needed to know to do the projects). They also started a new Jamboard page 5 (Figure 6) to finalize project topics and groups. Despite his misgivings, Xavier signed up for two different ideas: making merchandise and writing a children's book. Agent E signed up to make a music playlist. Samira did not sign up for anything (she was not present, which I found disappointing). Mr. Happy did not sign up for anything (yet), but posted a note that said, "Good job everyone."

Figure 6

Fifth Page of Sixth Period's Jamboard



Event 2: "What Are We Trying to Give the Vibe of?"

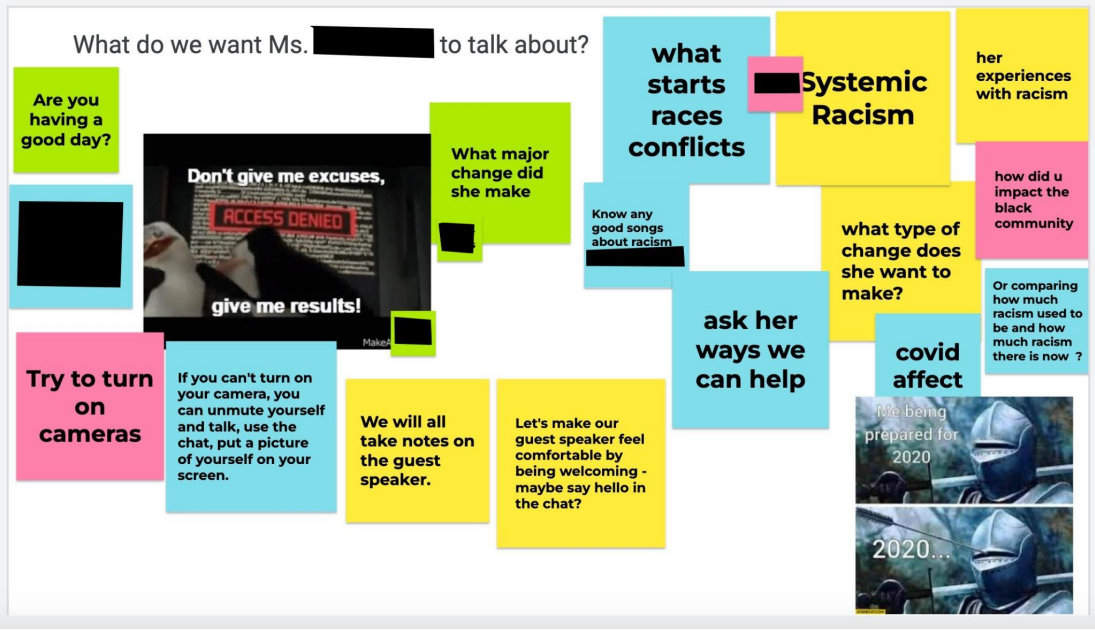
Event 2 took place three weeks later, and represented both failures and arguments in Narayan's (2012) terms. The three weeks between the two events had been spent looking for resources and information about racism in order to help students begin to work on their projects. They had attempted to contact a young activist Grace who had led BLM demonstrations locally the previous summer, but she did not respond to them (the first failure). Following that, the students read an article in the newspaper about a Chicana lawyer and school board member Micaela who was deeply involved in equity issues at the county level. The students wrote a message inviting Micaela to visit their class, and one student Yesenia sent it from her school email. Event 2 took place at the start of class on 2/23/21, with all of us eagerly anticipating Micaela's visit, but she did not show up in the Zoom classroom (another

failure). There was a collective feeling of disappointment, but also a feeling of urgency to better prepare for the upcoming visit. These preparations involved differences of opinion about how to best communicate with Micaela.

The event began five minutes into class with Sophia screen-sharing a new page of the Jamboard (p. 7), on which Sophia and the students had posted ideas about how to greet Micaela and what to talk about (Figure 7). Sophia encouraged Mr. Happy (who had agreed to welcome Micaela to class) to turn on his camera, and Agent E also turned on his camera. Xavier unmuted and sounded surprised, saying, "Are we - wait, she's coming in right now, right now?!" Sophia, Agent E, and Xavier all spoke out loud at the same time, a rare interruption in this Zoom classroom.

Figure 7

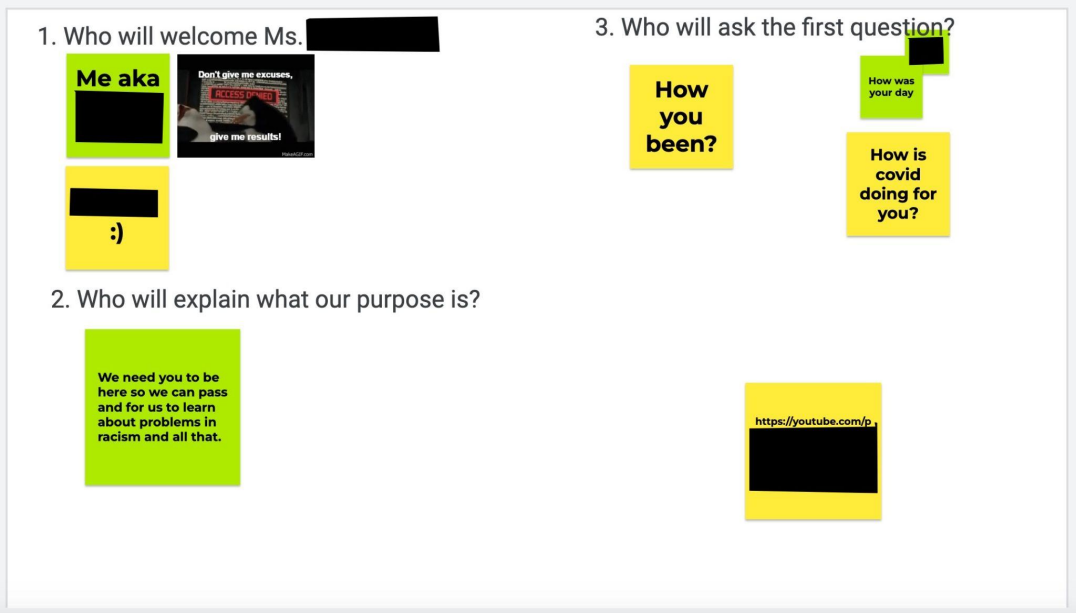
Seventh Page of Sixth Period's Jamboard



This mixture of excitement and worry (a student in the other class I was observing called it "good scared") was an ongoing aspect of students' communication with outside-classroom audiences. In Event 2 the need to be prepared for the real person, a stranger, who was coming into their classroom created two different threads of conversation that became the focus: whether or not to use a meme to put their guest at ease (Agent E's idea), and how to balance planning with improvisation in speaking with her. Samira asked her peers, "What are we trying to give the vibe of?" Both of these conversations began as students were waiting for Micaela, but after five minutes Sophia asked Yesenia to check her email again. Yesenia and Sophia deduced that the class had forgotten to send Micaela the Zoom link. Sophia later reflected to me that this omission was "serendipitous" because of the discussions that happened instead. A new Jamboard page (Figure 8) was added to further students' preparations for Micaela's visit. The students' discussions and disagreements were related to the transliteracies practices of considering the audience and will be analyzed further in the next chapter.

Figure 8

Eighth Page of Sixth Period's Jamboard



After this event, class lagged a little, with some students still eagerly anticipating the visitor but others feeling let down. They drafted an apology email message to Micaela with a request to reschedule, which Yesenia sent. Agent E said, "I feel like we learned a very valuable lesson today," but Mr. Happy posted in the chat, "This was a waste of effort." Sophia offered the students the chance to work on their projects in groups or to read an article on racism, and it was unclear how many students did either. Xavier unmuted to say, "I'm not learning nothing!" right before Sophia ended the class session for the day.

Event 3: "Self Love"

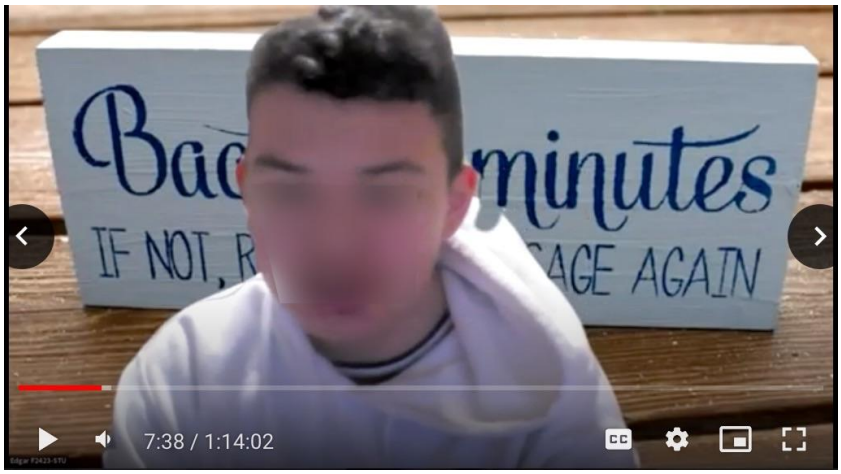
Micaela was able to visit the next time the class met on Zoom, one week later on 3/2/21 (the usual Zoom class on Friday was asynchronous for scheduling reasons),

which represented a success (Narayan, 2012). (It turned out that she was also responsible for missing the original meeting because she had the date wrong.) When she entered the Zoom classroom, Mr. Happy wrote “she here?” (in the chat) before she responded with “i’m here!” Sophia then asked Mr. Happy if he was ready to get started. He unmuted himself and shared his video, the first and only time he did this during the five months of the study (Figure 9). This was also the only time we heard his voice, since the chat was his preferred mode of participation. Mr. Happy said,

> Welcome to our classroom. I don’t know about these guys, I’m pretty sure they’re the smarter ones. I’m just here, I’m your host, I’m here to welcome you to this classroom. I know Agent E is a smart one, I don’t know about the rest ‘cause I don’t work with them. That’s Sarah, she’s Ms. Dinelli’s friend. So welcome to our classroom and I hope you enjoy.

Figure 9

Mr. Happy Welcoming Micaela to Class



Micaela smiled broadly and thanked Mr. Happy profusely before beginning a twenty-five minute presentation and sharing slides about racism in their local Latinx community and more generally. Event 3 began as Micaela was wrapping up her presentation and inviting students' questions and comments. Students had not said anything during her passionate talk that was interspersed with Spanish phrases, but Mr. Happy had posted a few comments in the chat. Though the students had not participated much in visible or audible ways, there was still an energy in the Zoom room and a sense that they were listening.

Agent E, who also had his camera on, asked Micaela the first question, saying, "Hello, I'm making a playlist for everyone about racism, so do you have any good songs?" Micaela was enthusiastic about his question, which led to her discussion of songs by artists such as Nina Simone (such as "Strange Fruit") and Los Tigres del Norte (such as "Chicano"). Micaela utilized her Spotify account to find and post the song titles for students in the chat. I wrote in my field notes, "This question is awesome, which surprises me!" because I was not expecting the rich discussion that ensued. Mr. Happy volunteered to share the students' playlist with Micaela when it was finished.

An important moment followed when Luna unmuted to ask, "Do you know ways we could help our community about this topic about racism?" In response, Micaela said, "You know, I feel like the best advice that I've gotten from people lately is about self love, and it's about being super proud of where you're from and who you are and making sure that people know that." She gave the example of

teaching people how to correctly pronounce her name (which she had done for me when we were waiting together in a breakout room before class). After that, Yesenia posted a message in the chat asking more about how the students could make change, and Micaela talked about her governmental responsibility to represent the students, and their different languages and cultures. She argued for more representation for others too, saying that we needed more people like her and different from her, from places like Eritrea and Cambodia and Vietnam. Event 3 ended shortly after these comments, as Micaela had another meeting.

Though none of the students had responded earlier when Micaela had asked them if any of them also identified as Chicano or Chicana, the flood of comments in the chat (from thirteen different students) after she left indicated that her words and experiences had resonated with them. Luna wrote, "I think it was awesome to have a person with a kind heart to present to us." Yesenia added, "[now] that we learned more stuff we can do the stuff we wanted to do like the books." Abigail said Micaela was "inspiring," and Benito said, "She's smart." Benjamin said, "She had good information" and Luna concluded the comments by writing, "She made me just want to listen to her all day her voice is calming." It was clear that Micaela's visit had offered something meaningful to the students. They mostly listened, but they also asked questions, and through their dialogue we all were able to continue to develop and deepen our understandings of racism and anti-racist stances and actions. Class concluded after the student wrote a collective thank you email message to Micaela.

For the two weeks following her visit, students took notes and did more research on what Micaela had shared. They also were involved in other activities during class time, such as a schoolwide mental health webinar and beginning to discuss logistics for hybrid instruction which was scheduled to begin in April.

Event 4: "I Think This Is Pointless"

Event 4 took place two weeks later on 3/16/21, and represented a turning point (Narayan, 2012) for the classroom communication projects. The first forty-five minutes before Event 4 were spent talking about systemic racism and continuing to connect these ideas back to Micaela's presentation. At the start of the event, Sophia was revisiting page 5 of the Jamboard (Figure 6) so that students could continue making progress on their projects in their groups. As Sophia was setting up breakout rooms for the groups and offering students the chance to switch projects if their interests had changed, Xavier made a comment that stood out. He said, "I find this pointless." When Sophia asked him if there was a project he would prefer to do instead, Xavier said, "I don't think my voice could have an impact on this world."

Though Xavier had often contested the projects in ways that deepened students' critical thinking about racism, this time his comments also opened up new, and perhaps more meaningful, opportunities for projects that were more personal and relevant. After his initial comments, Sophia responded by bringing up Micaela's point (with Yesenia's help) about the importance of self love. Xavier had been absent for Micaela's visit, but Sophia paraphrased her words for him, saying, "Be proud of who

you are. Be proud of your heritage. Be proud of your ancestors. Be proud of your culture." Xavier said that he *was* proud, especially of his mother and grandmother, but maintained his position that the projects were pointless. Sophia and I both then encouraged Xavier to do a project that would honor his mother and his grandmother, and he began to ask questions about what he might do. Sophia offered him many ideas (video, book, poster, essay, or speech) that he could do individually and privately with his family. Xavier said, "I'm good at speeches," and then began to discuss how he might make a speech to his family to show them his appreciation. This led to the idea of doing a family tree project, which seemed to interest Benito.

Near the end of the event, Sophia said, "Once again, Xavier, you have given us another idea." She added a new sticky note to page 5 of the Jamboard that said "Self-Love/Family Appreciation Projects." By the end of the class period, five students had changed over to that project (Figure 10). These projects were different than what we all had originally envisioned because they were private and individualized, and these aspects seemed to appeal to students (especially sheltering in place during a pandemic). Because these projects were still part of school, they still had to contain a product that could be shared with the teacher and graded. The difficulty of addressing these dual purposes (composing for their audiences and composing for a grade) was an ongoing theme of the classroom communication projects that was never resolved, and that will be discussed further in later chapters.

Figure 10

Fifth Page of Sixth Period's Jamboard with New Topic: Self-Love/Family Appreciation Projects

After the Four Events

For the next several weeks, students worked on their projects, often in breakout rooms, and often slowly and quietly. Agent E, Mr. Happy, and another student Isabel kept working on the playlist, while Luna and Lupita worked on the children's book, which was about a student who was a Korean immigrant. They told me that their protagonist's challenges were based on their family members' experiences as immigrants from Mexico. Ten other students worked on individual self-love/family appreciation projects, not including Xavier whose attendance became more erratic. These projects took on different and sometimes multiple forms: interviewing family members, and creating slide presentations about their experiences or about racism in general. The students who interviewed their parents reported that

the experience was powerful and made them appreciate what their parents had endured. Two students made slides designed to teach their families about racism, and they reported mixed reviews of their attempts (one student said his presentation caused arguing in his family). A white student Lilly who had missed over a month of school due to mental health issues showed back up in class and surprised me with a completed merchandise project that involved surveying her friends and family about racism, and then designing a sweatshirt (and subsequent photo shoot) based on their ideas.

In mid-April some of the students shared their projects in class. After sharing some songs on the playlist with the other students, Mr. Happy said that he was going to try to call a local radio station to share it with them, but he was on hold for too long and hung up. (This occurred during class time and was another example of a "good scared" feeling in the class.) Sophia was trying to get students to finish the projects before school shifted to hybrid instruction. Samira's attendance remained inconsistent. Sophia also began to emphasize a final written essay as the culminating step of the classroom communication projects, saying that the students would not be able to pass the class without it. One student said he wanted to share his final essay with Micaela, but I do not think he sent it to her.

Hybrid instruction was a strange shift at the end of April, with Sophia and some students in the physical classroom (only a few, as it turned out), and me and the rest of the students still online and in our homes. Sophia tried to address both groups, but more of the work was offline with shorter Zoom sessions. The class continued to

focus on racism, but by reading, analyzing, and writing about chapters of the novel *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984). Sophia had students write and talk about their identities, connecting this to a TED Talk she showed them by actress America Ferrera (2019). Students discussed racism and representation, and whether or not anything had changed in recent years.

At the end of May, I presented to students some ideas (see Appendix G) about their learning that I gleaned from their reflective essays. These preliminary findings represented a range of experiences: that students 1) learned more about racism, 2) thought the projects were fun, 3) learned in alternative ways, 4) appreciated working with other students, 5) appreciated learning communication skills, 6) felt like they could have worked harder on their projects, 7) communicated with their families about racism, and 8) learned to take better care of themselves. I also shared some questions I still had about how they were learning in the projects. I then asked the students for any comments or questions they had about the findings. They seemed to enjoy hearing my analysis and affirmed these findings enthusiastically, mostly with comments in the chat.

There was only one week of class in June. On the last day of class, Sophia asked the students to share what they were grateful for. Their responses were very moving. Agent E volunteered to go first and shared that he was grateful that he and his family were still alive, and also that he was grateful to fight against racism. Many others expressed gratitude for family, health, safety, and housing. Benito said, “I’m grateful for all the scientists that helped create the vaccine so people could go outside

without worrying about getting COVID." Xavier shared he was grateful for the opportunity to work with his family at their taco shop. Mr. Happy called on me to share what I was grateful for: I said I was proud of all of us for making it through a difficult year, and grateful to both the students and Sophia for sharing their ideas with me. Then I called on Mr. Happy, who goofed around by leaving the Zoom briefly before returning and writing in the chat that he was grateful for "the Earth, a lot of things to do." Sophia shared that she was grateful for the students who were in her classroom and on Zoom. Sophia told the students that I had recently published my first article, and they cheered me on. Mr. Happy and Benito asked to see my article, and Mr. Happy gave me his email address so I could send it to him. The students talked about the COVID-19 vaccine, going fishing, wildfire season, next year, and summer school before signing off for the year.

This chapter described the personal, local, national, and global contexts in which the study took place, between January and June in 2021. The online classroom and key participants (Mr. Happy, Agent E, Xavier, and Samira) were described in order to give the reader a sense of what the classroom was like. Four events, chosen because of the ways in which they represented pivotal moments in the projects, were the focus in order to provide more information about what happened in the classroom communication projects and why it was important. In Event 1 students were engaged in dialogue that grappled with why racism occurred, identified examples all around them, and questioned what could be done, all of which were contextualized in students' everyday lives. Event 2 illuminated the excitement, challenge, and learning

opportunities of communicating with outside-classroom audiences: their guest did not show up, and the students had differing views regarding future plans to communicate with her. When Micaela did arrive in Event 3, the students took on new roles to communicate with her, and were impacted by what she shared about racism, her life, and ideas for their projects. In Event 4 Micaela's idea of self love alongside an exploration of Xavier's doubt led to a new, alternative focus for the projects. These four events were the data sources for the more detailed, inductive analysis and findings provided in the next chapter, which is designed to demonstrate more about students' transliteracies practices and views of the projects.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS:

STUDENTS' TRANSLITERACIES PRACTICES AND VIEWS

The last chapter described findings from my ethnography, the first part of my blended data analysis. In my methods chapter I described how the next part of the analysis involved the creation and coding of multimodal transcripts of the four transliteracies events, which led to the findings that are the focus of this chapter. In order to determine which transliteracies practices students were drawing upon and developing in the classroom communication projects, I analyzed the four classroom events described in the previous chapter using an inductive, iterative coding process. These events occurred over a six-week period, each a little over ten minutes long and involving multimodal classroom dialogue (speaking orally on Zoom, typing in the Zoom chat, posting on the Jamboard, listening to a presentation with slides, etc.). These events took place at different phases of the projects, as summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Transliteracies Event Summaries

Event 1 (2-2-21)	Event 2 (2-23-21)	Event 3 (3-2-21)	Event 4 (3-16-21)
Students shifted from selecting and discussing the topic of racism to making plans for	When their guest speaker Micaela did not arrive as expected, the students discussed their	Micaela visited the class and gave a presentation about racism broadly and	A student Xavier expressed doubt that the projects could make a

their projects. There was a sense of momentum and increased participation on this day.	plans to welcome her. They disagreed about some of these details.	locally before taking questions from the students. When asked what they can do about racism, she talked about the importance of self love.	difference, and the teacher Sophia brought up Micaela's point about self love. This led to an additional project option, self love or family interview projects.

My rationale for shifting from literacy events and practices to transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) events and practices was explained as part of my theoretical framework in Chapter 3. Essentially, all literacy events and practices are hybridized across modes and texts, and imbued with ideology. Some of the transliteracies practices that are described in this chapter might seem traditional (summarizing and considering the audience, for example, are not new), but analyzing these and the other practices through the lens of transliteracies helped me to understand students' emergent activity and views, and how these were mobilized and immobilized. At the end of this chapter I use the transliteracies tools to further explain these findings.

Across the four transliteracies events, I found that students were utilizing 18 transliteracies practices that could be grouped into 5 categories according to their primary purpose: Communicating Effectively, Taking Action, Building a Case, Thinking Critically, and Taking a Stand.

Table 5

Transliteracies Purposes and Practices

Communicating Effectively	Taking Action	Building a Case	Thinking Critically	Taking a Stand
-Considering the Audience -Summarizing -Characterizing	-Defining Self -Composing Their Own Texts -Proposing an Action	-Connecting to Other Texts -Giving Examples -Quoting -Citing Sources	-Explaining -Analyzing -Questioning -Determining Effects	-Contesting -Affirming -Reframing -Clarifying

In the sections that follow, I will define and describe each of these broader purposes and more specific practices, along with their prevalence and examples of how students were enacting them. This includes which events sparked which transliteracies practices, for whom, and in which modes of communication. Students' views of the topic, their communications, the projects, and themselves, were embedded in and enacted by their transliteracies practices, and will also be described.

Table 6

Frequency of Transliteracies Purposes and Practices across Events

Purpose	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3	Event 4	Total
Communicating Effectively	7	42	1	5	55
Taking Action	14	21	4	12	51
Building a Case	25	18	1	2	46
Thinking	25	6	5	7	43

Purpose	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3	Event 4	Total
Communicating Effectively	7	42	1	5	55
Critically					
Taking a Stand	12	9	4	15	40
Total	83	96	15	41	235

The numbers in Table 6 above represent instances of the transliteracies practices within each purpose. Each practice was only counted once and not duplicated within each purpose, though some practices were duplicated across the purposes. This was done to be able to compare what students were doing with their participation, and specifically to see which purposes were more common. As shown, practices that involved Communicating Effectively were most common across the four events, occurring 55 times. Practices that involved Taking Action were almost as common, occurring 51 times, followed by practices aimed at Building a Case (46), Thinking Critically (43), and Taking a Stand (40). Starting with the most common purpose, the following sections will explain more about the purpose, practices, and student views that it included.

Communicating Effectively

The students' purpose of Communicating Effectively included the practices of considering the audience, summarizing, and characterizing. As shown in Table 7, considering the audience was by far the most prevalent, followed by summarizing and

characterizing. The sections that follow will describe each of these practices in more detail with examples of students' practices and views.

Table 7

Frequency of Transliteracies Practices for Communicating Effectively

Purpose	Practice	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3	Event 4	Total for each code
Communicating Effectively	Considering the Audience	0	42	1	4	47
	Summarizing	5	0	0	1	6
	Characterizing	2	0	0	0	2
	Total for category for each event	7	42	1	5	55

Considering the Audience

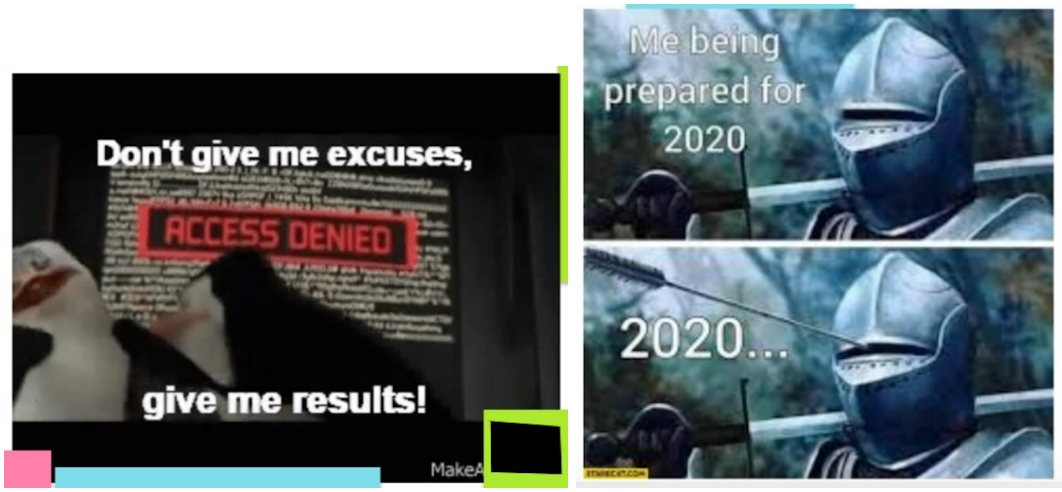
Considering the Audience was a transliteracies practice that the students demonstrated in which they discussed how to tailor their communications to their specific audiences. This practice was most prevalent in Event 2 when they were planning for Micaela's visit to their class, and also occurred in Event 4 when Xavier was figuring out the most appropriate way to talk with his family for his project. Students engaged in this practice mostly by unmuting themselves and speaking out loud, with only a few contributions in the chat (from Mr. Happy and Luna) or on the Jamboard during the events. Agent E and Xavier participated the most, with Samira also contributing to the discussion. This transliteracies practice brought up students'

views on the use of humor, the role of planning, and the inappropriateness of using a schooled mode of communication with a personal audience.

In Event 2, students were concerned with how to plan for Micaela's visit so that she would feel comfortable, and these conversations involved two disagreements about how to set the right tone. Agent E had taken to heart the earlier class discussions about making Micaela feel welcome, and he focused on the idea of using a humorous meme to break the ice, mentioning it multiple times even though his classmates did not respond to the idea. Both he and Mr. Happy had added memes to the Jamboard (Figure 11) with this purpose in mind (Agent E posted the animated meme with penguins fighting and the words "Don't give me excuses, give me results!" and Mr. Happy posted the 2020 meme with the armored knight being stabbed in the eye). Agent E asked his classmates if they could enlarge the penguin meme and show it to Micaela right away because "everyone could use a good laugh." Sophia gently questioned this idea, but Agent E would not be deterred, though he did continue to ask his classmates what they thought.

Figure 11

Memes on Seventh Page of Jamboard



Finally Samira spoke up, saying, “I mean, what are we trying to give the vibe of? Are we trying to be professional or are we trying to be funny, with a little bit of seriousness?” Another unidentified student chimed in that the meme was “random” and Agent E explained, “I’m thinking so that she feels more welcome.” Ultimately the penguin meme was included in the next Jamboard page (page 8 and Figure 8 in the previous chapter) that was used to fine-tune students’ plans to welcome Micaela. However, it was not used when Micaela actually visited a week and a half later (Event 3). The discussion about the meme showed that Agent E was at a different stage than his classmates of being able to consider the audiences in more nuanced ways, and also that most of us were more hesitant to challenge Agent E’s ideas directly, likely because of his learning differences. Though the other students agreed with the idea that humor could be helpful in making a visitor comfortable, they did not view it as appropriate given the topic of racism and purpose of Micaela’s visit.

The other disagreement in Event 2 was more complex, and involved how much and what kind of preparation was needed. Xavier was concerned that the class

was not ready for the visitor. He interrupted Sophia to ask, “So how are we gonna start this, like what are we gonna say?” When Sophia referenced page 7 of the Jamboard to address his question, Xavier did not think it was enough, that they would be “winging it.” He said there should be a “main group of people that are going to say what is supposed to be said.” Samira responded in the chat with “Im down.” When his classmates and both Sophia and I supported his idea to get more detailed about the preparations, Xavier withdrew, saying, “I mean, apparently I’m overthinking this, so y’all can do whatever y’all want.”

The idea of “winging it” or “overthinking it” was taken up by both Agent E and Samira, who brought up that overpreparing had its downsides too. Agent E talked about how “just kind of going off what you have written down” could make the interaction “awkward,” and Samira said it could feel like “just talking to a wall… and getting hit with too much information… with no flavoring.” Samira suggested a more balanced approach, saying she was “a prepare-and-then-wing-it-halfway type of person.” Xavier was not satisfied, wanting to discuss “what we’re going to tell her” and “how we’re gonna address her,” which led to Sophia creating the new Jamboard page 8. At the end of the event, both Agent E and another student Luna shared questions that they were planning on asking Micaela (Agent E’s was about music for the playlist, and Luna’s was about ways that the students could help fight racism).

This discussion about how much to prepare what would be said to the visitor involved sophisticated understandings and different views of how students wanted to represent themselves. They wanted to appear confident, which could be achieved

through having a detailed plan. However, having too detailed of a plan, such as a script for what would be said, could paradoxically undermine how competent they appeared. They understood that this challenge did not have one right answer, so they grappled with it together.

In Event 4, Xavier decided that he would speak to his mother and grandmother for his project, but this idea raised important questions about how to do this in ways that fit his audience, and also fit into school. Xavier said, "a way of connecting with my family or my mom and my grandma would be talking to them," but he did not want to share their stories with others outside the family. Sophia began suggesting alternative forms that this project could take that fulfilled three criteria: "communicating to them that [he] listened," "[maintaining] confidentiality," and providing her with a textual product that could be graded. For the last one, Sophia suggested a video, book, poster, essay, speech or slides. Xavier did not view these options as appropriate for his audience, saying, "I don't really think they would take it to heart if I show them a slide or something. I think they would brush it off." He did, however, then state, "I'm good at speeches" and began to plan some sort of private recorded speech that could be shared with Sophia later.

This exchange brings up that students were actually needing to consider two audiences: the people they were communicating with and the ever-present teacher and school audience. In the example of Xavier speaking with his family, the needs of these two different audiences did not align, and the press of the school audience and purpose had a detrimental effect on the communication, making it more artificial

(showing slides or giving a speech to one's mom) rather than authentic (speaking more conversationally with her or using another form of communication). What will be discussed further in this dissertation are the ways in which these challenges are connected to different views of legitimacy in these projects. For Xavier, the project was more legitimate if he could communicate with his mom and grandma in ways that were tailored to them, but for Sophia the projects required a product that could be graded in order to be legitimate. My own original ideas of legitimate projects (as a YPAR researcher) involved students communicating publicly (not privately) with more distant, new audiences (not friends and family).

Summarizing and Characterizing

Another way that students were communicating effectively was by Summarizing and Characterizing. Both summarizing and characterizing were important transliteracies practices that occurred in limited ways during the events themselves, but that were prolific in the students' use of the Jamboard. The transliteracies practice of summarizing seemed to support the view that students could do something about racism. The transliteracies practice of characterizing brought up different views on what racism actually was.

Summarizing was a transliteracies practice that the students demonstrated in which they distilled an idea or plan to a shorter main point. There were examples in Event 1, which mostly involved summarizing the class's oral discussion (ideas about racism itself and about potential projects) into Jamboard notes. Two people posted

summaries of what had been said about the importance of working with kids, “Teach kids at a younger age” and “we can educate kids at a young age because most people don’t teach kids and that is what leads them to think racism is okay as they grow.” The Jamboard contributions were unattributed. Only one instance of summarizing occurred in another mode, when Agent E summarized the songs he was sharing, saying, “They’re both just about bullying and that just be yourself.” As students’ ideas became more specific, summaries of these occurred in the Jamboard as well. Students wrote, “More kids toys that represent POC” and “Put more equal rights of skin tones in video games and cartoons.” These brief summaries of the discussion supported the view that the students or others could take action against racism. However, the teacher and I encouraged this view by asking some students to post a note to the Jamboard rather than others. We did not legitimize the more skeptical views that will be discussed later by asking for Jamboard notes or summaries that reflected those views.

Characterizing was a transliteracies practice that the students demonstrated in which they described what something was like. As with summarizing, this practice happened more in Event 1 during students’ brainstorming of project ideas related to racism. Samira offered some ideas verbally to characterize racism and anti-racism, that racism was “a touchy subject that people don’t want to talk about” and that progress would involve sharing the idea that “all skin colors are beautiful.” The other instances of students’ characterizing racism came from the Jamboard, most of which were done before Event 1. These characterizations revealed a range of views of

racism: from awkward ("Racism is very cringe") to serious (with people of color "getting mentally hurt" and "dealing with the most"), and from an individual issue ("many people are uneducated") to a systemic one (the need to "[fix] the justice system").

Surprisingly, racism was rarely tied to Latinx students' experiences specifically. More often, racism against Black people or a response like BLM was discussed, or there was a broader discussion of the experiences of people of color. The students who worked on a children's book made a Korean immigrant their protagonist, though they said they were inspired by their family's experiences of immigrating from Mexico. It was unclear the extent to which students thought the issue of racism applied to them (they did and they did not, perhaps because most lived in segregated neighborhoods among other Latinx people in their everyday lives), or the extent to which they desired to share their more personal experiences of racism with the class on Zoom and with the white teacher and white researcher who were facilitating the projects. As Samira had said, racism was "just a part of life," and other students seemed to agree with this characterization of racism as "so common" (Jamboard, p. 1) and hard to change.

Based on these characterizations, students' views of what would be needed to make change also varied. Some of the Jamboard contributions invoke a colorblind approach ("we are all the same, we are all humans," p. 1), while others promote a multicultural approach ("not specifically talk about about racism to kids but teach

them about other cultures," p. 3) or a more anti-racist approach (changing "policies [that] are very abusive", p. 1).

This section described how students were considering the audience, summarizing, and characterizing in order to communicate effectively about their projects. The transliteracies practice of considering the audience involved students' views on the appropriateness of humor in context, the advantages and disadvantages of preparing for a dialogue with a guest, and the modes of communication that would be the best fit for communicating with one's family. The transliteracies practice of summarizing supported the view that students could enact ideas to contest racism, but we do not know if a wider range of perspectives might have been shared if we had encouraged them. The transliteracies practice of characterizing revealed different understandings of racism and of solutions to racism, and students did not frequently share their own connections to the topic. These communication practices and views also relate to other purposes, such as thinking critically and taking action, the latter of which is the focus of the next section.

Taking Action

The students' purpose of Taking Action included the practices of defining self, composing their own texts, and proposing an action. As shown in Table 8, defining self was most common, but composing their own texts was almost as common. Proposing an action (that was not specifically related to composing a text) was

slightly less common. The sections that follow will describe each of these practices and student views in more detail with examples.

Table 8

Frequency of Transliteracies Practices for Taking Action

Purpose	Practice	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3	Event 4	Total for each code
Taking Action	Defining Self	3	11	1	6	21
	Composing Their Own Texts	0	9	3	6	18
	Proposing an Action	11	1	0	0	12
	Total for category for each event	14	21	4	12	51

Defining Self

Defining Self was a transliteracies practice that the students demonstrated in which they shared information about who they were or who they were becoming (independently or as members of their families and communities). This practice occurred across the events, but was less common during Micaela's visit in Event 3. Xavier and Samira were the students who engaged in this practice the most, and they did so by unmuting themselves and speaking out loud. This transliteracies practice brought up students' views of themselves as knowledgeable, unique, and marginalized.

In Event 1, Samira said, “I’ve definitely experienced some racism.” Her comment was unique because she drew attention to her own experiences (as Asian) in ways that the other students (as Latinx) often did not. As mentioned previously, their discussions of racism usually involved the experiences of Black or Asian people, or people of color more broadly. In that same event, Samira described herself as a “gigantic five-year-old” in talking about how she could relate to kids and their toys. I wrote in my field notes that day the many and varied ways in which Samira described herself within the classroom dialogue, as “looking like [her] mother” and “a big clown” and “eighty pounds.” I thought she sounded like a college student, and also that she wanted to shock us by talking about how she was not afraid to confront racists and stand up for herself. Her definitions of herself show that she saw herself as both strong and vulnerable. In Event 2, Samira volunteered to be one of the students who greeted Micaela (though she did not ultimately end up doing this), writing “Im down” in the chat and later saying “I can go first, I’m pretty conversational.” As mentioned previously, Samira also asked questions related to the students’ communication with their audience. When she was asking her peers if they wanted to come off as “professional” or “funny,” she was asking how they wanted to represent themselves collectively.

Like Samira, Xavier defined himself as knowledgeable and unique. In Event 1 he distinguished the way his mother had raised him from the way that other kids were raised, saying “My mom always taught me everybody’s equal no matter what.” Later in Event 2 he positioned himself both as someone who was “overthinking” how to

welcome Micaela and as someone who did not care (by saying "y'all can do whatever y'all want"). In the last event, Xavier defined himself by saying, "I'm proud of who I am, who my family is, where we come from, where we came from, where we are now." However, he also said that he didn't "think anybody would listen to [him], or someone with [his] color." Xavier also defined himself by contesting many aspects of the project, which will be discussed as a transliteracies practice in a later section.

Representation mattered to both Samira and Xavier, and was connected to their pride in their families and cultures. They viewed themselves as "conversational" and "good with speeches" respectively. Though these two students were not always present in class, their voices were powerful and their self-definitions also helped to define the projects themselves. Representation was also an issue that mattered to their teacher in ways that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Composing Their Own Texts and Proposing an Action

Students discussed how they could enact their project goals through texts and actions, which were related. The transliteracies practice of Proposing an Action involved students' ideas about what could be done to help fight against racism. These ideas were sometimes broad and did not mention students' creation of new texts explicitly (though they did not disqualify them), but at other times these ideas were more focused on Composing Their Own Texts to fight against racism. Both of these forms of taking action took place most often in all of the events except Micaela's visit (Event 3). Event 1 contained the proposal of more general actions, while Events 2 and

4 involved more students' ideas for texts they could create. Ideas for both were shared by multiple students across the three modes of unmuting, using the chat, and posting to the Jamboard. The Jamboard contained many other ideas related to both of these practices. Many of these occurred outside of the events, but offer more examples of students' desire to take action and view that they could make a difference, especially by creating multimodal texts.

In Event 1, students proposed actions such as "[doing] a little of everything… [by helping people] to websites" and "[teaching] kids at a younger age" (unattributed, Jamboard). It was not always clear whether the students thought that these actions were something they could contribute to or if these actions should be done by others, or some combination of the two. Samira unmuted to say, "What about toys, getting more POC people of color toys?" Later in class she talked about how cartoons and movies should include "more people of color who are the main character instead of being the sidekick." On the Jamboard someone also suggested that students could go to marches to "show [their school's] support for the movement."

Though students did not talk as explicitly in Event 1 about the texts that they would need to create to achieve these goals, they had already begun to brainstorm what texts would be needed in the Jamboard. They posted notes about "posting a picture or texts that say All skin tones are equal" and "[making] posters with names of websites talking about racism and how bad it is." As students narrowed their plans in Events 2 and 4, they became more focused on creating and remixing multimodal texts to connect with their audiences about their topic. There was discussion in Event

2 about their class email that Yesenia had sent, as well as using the meme in the ways that were previously discussed. The playlist that Agent E and Mr. Happy were working on was their own composition made up of other compositions. In Event 4, Xavier talked about giving a speech to his family as a way to take action, and Benito considered creating a family tree. The project ideas that the students ultimately settled on (page 5 of the Jamboard and figure 10 in the previous chapter) show the range of texts students wanted to compose: the playlist, board games, a children's book, interviews that would be shared on Youtube, merchandise, and "self-love/family appreciation projects" that ending up involving dialogue with family members and then the creation of slides. Students seemed to view a range of modes and mediums as helpful in their own explorations and actions related to racism.

Students took action by defining themselves and creating multimodal texts. This section explained how the former was done in explicit ways as students were talking about themselves and their families, but this self-definition was always emerging throughout the class projects and the other transliteracies practice in ways that were less obvious. Defining the self also revealed students' views of themselves as knowledgeable, unique, and marginalized. The transliteracies practices of composing their own multimodal texts and proposing an action involved students drawing from the many examples and texts in their lives. Students viewed their own texts as valuable and relevant resources that could help them take meaningful action. These practices were related to the students' purpose of Building a Case, the focus of the next section.

Building a Case

As students talked about composing their own texts, they drew from other texts and examples in their lives. The students' purpose of Building a Case included the practices of connecting to other texts, giving examples, quoting, and citing sources. As shown in Table 9, connecting to other texts was most prevalent, followed by giving examples, quoting, and citing sources. The sections that follow will describe each of these practices and student views in more detail with examples.

Table 9

Frequency of Transliteracies Practices for Building a Case

Purpose	Practice	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3	Event 4	Total for each code
Building a Case	Connecting to Other Texts	7	15	1	0	23
	Giving Examples	10	0	0	1	11
	Quoting	5	3	0	1	9
	Citing Sources	3	0	0	0	3
	Total for category for each event	25	18	1	2	46

Connecting to Other (Multimodal) Texts

Connecting to other texts was a transliteracies practice that the students demonstrated in which they provided an example from another text that was related to the idea under discussion. This practice was most prevalent when the students were

brainstorming in Event 1, and when they were planning for the classroom visitor in Event 2. Students engaged in this practice across the classroom modes of participation by unmuting, posting in the chat, or contributing to the Jamboard. Some of the usual students (Agent E, Mr. Happy, and Xavier) participated most, but so did several other students (Isabel, Yesenia, and Luis). All of the texts that the students referenced went beyond print texts, with the exception of an email message. This transliteracies practice brought up students' views of the relevance and legitimacy of the texts and examples they encountered in their everyday lives, and their views that the representation of people of color was often lacking in these.

In suggesting project ideas to fight against racism in Event 1, students thought they could "help [people] to websites" (Jamboard), and that "a lot more songs like 'Freaks' and 'Headphones'" (Agent E, unmuting) should be played. When the topic of lack of representation for people of color came up, there was a suggestion on the Jamboard to "put more equal rights of skin tones in video games and cartoons." Mr. Happy posted in the chat that there should be another "Rush Hour," a movie that is unique because both leading roles are played by men of color (Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker). Websites, songs, movies, video games, and cartoons were texts that the students viewed as useful to make change. This was likely because of their ongoing relevance, and also the students' feelings of competence in navigating these texts. Importantly, the students' comments show that they viewed these texts as helpful, but also saw them as part of the problem, specifically in regard to their lack of representation. Xavier (unmuting) went further in highlighting the racism within such

texts. He pointed out that “in the past [Disney] had really racist things come up in their cartoons.” Isabel (chat) added an example of “the siamese cats in arestro cats.” In this way, the students were using textual evidence to support their developing project ideas. They were using these text models to develop their own texts, which were discussed in the previous section and used to take action.

I previously discussed Agent E’s focus on memes in Event 2 as students were planning for Micaela’s visit. Though the class questioned the fit for their audience and purpose, Agent E maintained the relevance of a meme as a legitimate text. He connected to the second meme by saying, “I know I’m getting prepared for 2021 by getting a bunch of Nerf guns.” He also shared that he had shown his aunt the site that contained the memes. Agent E made multiple other comments that showed his view that memes were helpful.

Events 3 and 4 contained fewer instances of students connecting to other texts. However, Agent E did ask Micaela during her visit for her recommendations of songs for an anti-racist playlist, which led to the discussion described in the previous chapter. Students used a range of texts to substantiate their ideas about racism and their plans for classroom projects and communications. They viewed these everyday multimodal texts with familiarity, and thought they were both useful and problematic. Students saw the problematic aspects as a rationale for their own new texts. The next transliteracies practice students demonstrated, giving examples, complemented the practice of connecting to other texts that was described in this section.

Giving (and Asking for) Examples

Giving examples was a transliteracies practice that the students demonstrated in which they provided an example from their lives or the world that was related to the idea under discussion. This practice worked in tandem with previous practice of making textual connections, as the students moved fluidly between drawing from texts and examples from their lives or the world in their conversations. Giving examples was most prevalent when the students were brainstorming in Event 1. Students engaged in this practice by unmuting and posting in the chat, rather than by contributing to the Jamboard. Some of the usual students (Xavier, Mr. Happy, and Samira) participated most. The students referenced adults and children they knew, famous people, and toys. In Event 1, students offered examples, and in Event 3 there were two instances of students asking Micaela to share her own examples. Similarly to the previous section, this transliteracies practice brought up students' views of the relevance of everyday examples, and the way in which people of color were rendered invisible.

In Event 1, students gave both general and specific examples to support what they were saying about racism and what might be done. Both Xavier and Mr. Happy shared the example of kids not caring or "[saying] a lot of things that shouldn't even be said" (Xavier, unmuting). Then the discussion moved to the specific topic of children's toys. Samira (unmuting) gave an example of the lack of representation by saying that "toys are mainly white, like Barbie." Her next comments gave more examples of why this was problematic. She (unmuting) said, "kids tend to try to

replicate their toys" and that kids would say, "'Look at my toy. Look at how cute it is.'" Samira was saying that kids would value whiteness as a result of their toys, and want to be like them (white). Mr. Happy added in the chat, "I want a Mike Tyson toy," a choice of example that both supported Samira's point but neglected the ways in which a Mike Tyson toy might be considered a problematic choice to represent Black men.

Quoting and Citing Sources

Another way that students built a case was by quoting and citing sources. Quoting was a transliteracies practice in which students used words from others to support an idea, and citing sources involved attributing these contributions. These transliteracies practices occurred less frequently than connecting to other texts and giving examples. Quoting happened more than citing sources, and mostly in the first two events. Agent E and Samira were most involved in these practices, with minimal quoting from other students. These transliteracies practices brought up students' views about which voices and ideas mattered, and also their interpretations of what others would say about racism, their projects, or their communications.

Quoting occurred in two ways: one that involved looking back at something that had been said, and one that involved looking forward to something that might be said. In Event 1 Agent E quoted song lyrics to support the students' emerging ideas, saying, "'Freaks' says, 'I know we're all different in color and race, but I see no difference between you and me.'" Samira used others' words to explore the problem

of racism and possible solutions. She said that people would say, “Oh, I don’t really care. I’m just going to ignore it. It’s bad, but it’s just a part of life.” In Event 2 Agent E drew upon common sayings in his contributions to classroom discussions, saying things like “real life doesn’t always play fair” and “everyone could use a good laugh.” In Event 4, Yesenia recalled Micaela’s words for the class, invoking the idea of “self-love” as a way to contest racism.

Samira and Xavier also used quoting to predict what their audiences might say as a result of their class projects. In Event 1 Samira thought the projects might result in a positive change, “so when the kids grow up, they’re like, ‘I have basic knowledge of [racism]. Maybe I can help or maybe I don’t have to fully listen to what my parents think about this subject that they have no idea what is.’” In Event 2 when Xavier was worried they were not prepared enough for Micaela’s visit, he lamented, “We’re just gonna like randomly, like what if two people talk at once and they’re like, ‘Oh, sorry, you talk.’ ‘Oh no! Sorry!’”

The only instance of citing sources during the events occurred in Event 1 when Agent E offered to find the “authors” of the songs he had shared, which he posted in the chat. Quoting and citing sources were additional transliteracies practices used for the purpose of building a case, along with connecting to other texts and giving examples. The students’ views that were embedded in these practices involved the importance of everyday texts and representation, the elevation of certain voices, and the students’ potential impact on others.

Thinking Critically

The students' purpose of Thinking Critically included the practices of explaining, analyzing, questioning, and determining effects. As shown in Table 10, explaining and analyzing were most prevalent, followed by questioning and determining effects. The sections that follow will describe each of these practices and views in more detail with examples.

Table 10

Frequency of Transliteracies Practices for Thinking Critically

Purpose	Practice	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3	Event 4	Total for each code
Thinking Critically	Explaining	10	2	0	2	14
	Analyzing	10	1	0	1	12
	Questioning	2	3	5	0	10
	Determining Effects	3	0	0	4	7
	Total for category for each event	25	6	5	7	43

Explaining and Analyzing

Explaining and analyzing were two similar transliteracies practices that students demonstrated. Explaining meant that students were sharing what they thought about an idea, plan, or example. Analyzing went deeper and involved students including why they thought something had occurred or would occur. Both

explaining and analyzing were most prevalent when the students were brainstorming in Event 1. Students usually engaged in this practice by unmuting. Xavier and Samira participated the most, with some contributions from Agent E and Mr. Happy. These transliteracies practices brought up a variety of students views', especially related to why racism was so difficult to change across generations.

Xavier explained, "I don't feel like you could do anything about [racism]." Samira explained that "most [toys] are mainly white." Agent E's quotes from song lyrics and sayings were a way that he used other texts to explain his thinking. He said, "A really good part about 'Headphones' is it says, 'There's only one you, so here's what you've gotta do. Put on your headphones and let the love come through.'" Xavier also explained that "in [his] family you're not supposed to care about anybody's opinion on who or what you come from or how you look or dress."

Analysis went deeper, and was usually sparked by Xavier's skepticism, a practice which will be discussed later in this chapter. In response to Xavier, Samira offered an analysis of why it was so difficult to make progress against racism, that "Racism is something that spans hundreds and thousands and millions of years, just because most people have built up a tolerance for it where they just kind of ignore it because it's part of their daily schedule." Exploring the problem of racism in more depth engaged other students to consider and share solutions that they saw as promising in disrupting this "daily schedule" and that were aimed at the coming generations instead of the past ones. For this reason, students focused on reaching

kids, and on encouraging more representation of people of color in kids' worlds, through games, books, music, cartoons, merchandise, and movies.

Questioning and Determining Effects

Questioning and determining effects were two transliteracies practices that also involved students' critical thinking, though they both happened much less frequently than explaining or analyzing. Questioning was a transliteracies practice in which students asked others for more ideas or examples. It was most common when Micaela visited the classroom in Event 3. Some students that did not often participate chimed in with questions by unmuting or posting them in the chat. This transliteracies practice was a way that students demonstrated their interest in what Micaela had to say, and also how they showed their views that racism was complex. Determining effects was a transliteracies practice in which students shared the potential outcomes of plans or ideas. It was most common when students were brainstorming in Event 1, and revising their plans in Event 4, with Samira and Xavier contributing the most by unmuting. Determining effects complemented the analyzing that the students were doing that was described in the previous section. This transliteracies practice brought up different views about racism: that it would be hard to change, and also that working with younger generations was more promising than working with older ones.

Not surprisingly, the most common way that the students engaged with Micaela was by asking her questions. Agent E asked her about songs for his playlist, and Luna and Yesenia asked her ways that students could help to fight against racism.

They had discussed and planned these questions beforehand in Event 2. In the earlier event when students were brainstorming, their questions deepened the dialogue. Benjamin posted in the chat, "how would toys make a difference?" and Samira asked, "Wasn't Walt Disney a neo-Nazi?" Benjamin's question encouraged the students to talk more about why representation was important, and what kind of representation mattered too. However, Samira's comment about Walt Disney was not encouraged by the teacher, and that thread of conversation dwindled even though it was interesting to the students, who followed up with examples that were described in the previous section.

Determining effects involved students predicting what happened as a result of racism, and what could happen differently as a result of their actions. Xavier wrote in the chat that an effect of racism that he had seen was that people were offended. This was a characterization of racism itself as well as an outcome. Samira pushed the idea that students could work with kids so that the next generation could make a positive difference. In Event 4, Xavier once again raised the question of whether or not the class projects could have any effects at all, saying, "I don't think my voice could have an impact on this world." His position will be discussed more in the next section in regard to the transliteracies practice of contesting, but it is also important here to show that at least one student did not think the projects could help fight against racism.

Most of the practices that were aimed at thinking critically (explaining, analyzing, questioning, and determining effects) were enacted by the students who

felt comfortable unmuting themselves, which was not everyone in the Zoom classroom. It was harder to engage in depth through the chat or Jamboard, because it was hard to convey complex ideas in writing on the fly and to share them quickly enough to keep up with the discussion. As a result, most of the students listened to the few students who were willing to unmute and show their critical thinking. Other students offered explanations or analysis through reflective assignments, but these were only seen by their teacher. Through their critical thinking, the students showed their views that racism was complex and entrenched and that it was up to the younger generations to make change, and that community experts could provide valuable insights.

Taking a Stand

The students' purpose of Taking a Stand included the practices of contesting, affirming, reframing, and clarifying. As shown in Table 11, contesting and affirming were most prevalent, followed by reframing and clarifying. However, reframing and clarifying were softer versions of contesting, so these three transliteracies practices are discussed together in the next section, along with related views held by the students.

Table 11

Frequency of Transliteracies Practices for Taking a Stand

Purpose	Practice	Event 1	Event 2	Event 3	Event 4	Total for each code

Taking a Stand	Contesting	8	4	0	7	19
	Affirming	2	5	4	6	17
	Reframing	1	0	0	2	3
	Clarifying	1	0	0	0	1
	Total for category for each event	12	9	4	15	40

Contesting, Reframing, and Clarifying

Contesting was a transliteracies practice in which students expressed disagreement with an idea, example, or plan. Reframing and clarifying were much milder forms of disagreeing, with reframing involving adjusting the premise or focus of an idea, example, or plan, and clarifying involving ensuring that an idea was clearly understood. These practices occurred most in Event 1 and 4 when students were discussing project ideas, but also occurred when students were planning for Micaela's visit in Event 2. Xavier stood out for being the student who was most often engaged in these practices, but Mr. Happy also contested the ideas and plans that were discussed, as did Samira and Agent E. Most of the contesting, reframing, and clarifying was done by unmuting themselves, though Mr. Happy made his comments in the chat. These transliteracies practices showed students views' that racism could not be changed, that people would not care about the issue, and that the teacher and I did not understand the students' perspectives as fully as we thought.

In Event 1, Xavier began the classroom conversation by contesting the focus of the projects, saying, “I didn’t really like this subject.” Though he was the most vocal about the fact that he would have preferred a different topic, other students echoed his sentiments in other reflective assignments throughout the course of the projects. Mr. Happy wrote in the chat, “[Racism] can’t be stopped” and “I don’t think kids are gonna care.” In the last event six weeks later, Xavier’s position had not changed. He said, “I find this pointless” and “I don’t think my voice could have an impact on this world.”

As mentioned, Xavier’s skepticism inspired deeper analysis by Samira. It also led to Samira clarifying her ideas. She agreed that racism was pervasive, and she talked about how that had come about over a long period of time. Sophia asked Samira a follow-up question by saying, “And people have become complacent?” Samira then corrected Sophia’s rephrasing, saying, “People have been normalized to it.” Though Samira herself had just said that people didn’t care, which aligned with the idea of complacency, the distinction between people being complacent and people being normalized was important enough for her to clarify. She was shifting the focus from what people feel and experience to why this happens, and in doing so, shifting the blame away from the people themselves (for being “complacent”) to the larger structures that have made them that way (by “[normalizing]” them).

Similarly, Xavier engaged in reframing in the first and last event that was intended to question assumptions made by me and by the teacher. When the students were initially silent in Event 1, I put in the chat, “How does racism affect people we

know?" Xavier's reply was that "Racism affects everybody, not just people of color." His response rejected my invitation to share how people of color he knew had been victims of racism. He read (accurately) into my question that "people we know" was meant to represent people of color, and distinguished himself from me (a white researcher) and the question by arguing that "racism [affected] everyone" because everyone, including people of color, could be racist. Xavier did not offer examples, but his positioning of people of color as potential racists gave them power, even though the power was negative, in a way that my original question did not.

In Event 4, Xavier continued to reframe the conversation after Sophia had begun discussing project alternatives with him. When she used Micaela's words to suggest that he should be proud of his family and culture, his response gave the message that he did not need to hear those words from her. He responded, "Oh, I'm proud of who I am, who my family is, where we come from, where we came from, where we are now." Xavier ensured that Sophia and the rest of us understood that lack of pride was not the reason that he found the projects "pointless," but rather that the barriers were outside of him, his family, and culture. Exploring the idea of a project that allowed him to engage with family rather than the outside world seemed more appealing to him for these reasons.

Students' contesting went beyond the choice of project topic. As the brainstorming in Event 1 continued, Mr. Happy became more focused on cartoons and wrote "Screw the toys" in the chat. As previously discussed, Xavier began contesting Disney movies, which other students picked up on with their own

examples and questions. In Event 2, Xavier contested the class's preparation for Micaela's visit, saying it was not enough. Lastly in Event 4, Xavier contested the idea of showing his family members slides as his project. The last two examples related to the ways in which students were considering their audiences, which has been discussed previously in this chapter.

Affirming

Affirming was a transliteracies practice in which students expressed agreement with an idea, example, or plan. These practices occurred across the events. These instances were typically simpler and briefer than students' contesting practices. Mr. Happy affirmed as much as he had contested, but Agent E affirmed the most. There were also instances of affirming from other students, including Xavier. This practice took place by unmuting or posting in the chat. Affirming showed that students reacted positively with support for the ideas that were shared.

In Event 1, Mr. Happy simultaneously affirmed and contested when he agreed with Xavier that racism could not be stopped. He was initially excited about the idea of more representation in toys and wrote "hell yeah" in the chat. In Event 2, Samira affirmed Agent E's idea that too much preparation for Micaela would make the interaction awkward, but took a moderate position, saying, "I agree with Agent E, but at the same time I'm a prepare-and-then-wing-it-halfway type of person." In the second event, Agent E affirmed his own idea to show Micaela the meme by saying, "of course, I think the most welcoming thing we could really do is welcoming her

with a meme." He also affirmed most things that Sophia said, and almost acted like she was speaking to him on Zoom rather than the whole class. He did the same thing when Micaela asked in Event 3 if the class would be okay listening to the older songs that she was recommending. Agent E unmuted to say, "Yeah, I'm okay. My aunt does that too." Agent E seemed to enjoy being part of the class community, and used affirming to solidify that position. He also seemed to be the opposite of Xavier in terms of his belief in the students' ability to make a difference. In Event 3, Luna thanked Micaela for her response about how the students could help. In Event 4, students made brief affirming comments about the revised project ideas. Benito wrote "that's cool!" in the chat regarding the idea of making a family tree. This section described how the students engaged in the transliteracies practices of contesting, reframing, clarifying, and affirming in order to take a stand. Contesting, reframing, and clarifying showed that students viewed racism as daunting in ways that the teacher and I did not understand. Affirming showed students' desire to support each other and to take action, despite the challenges.

Thus far this chapter has described the transliteracies practices that students used for the purposes of communicating effectively, taking action, building a case, thinking critically, and taking a stand. These practices and purposes were often layered and overlapping in transliteracies events that were similarly layered and overlapping (different threads of dialogue taking place across modes, a meaningful exchange within a broader class discussion). The students' transliteracies practices

did not just illuminate what they were doing, but also their views of the projects, the topic, their communications, and themselves.

Mobilities and Immobilities: Real Audiences, Real Life, and Real Talk about Racism

In the subsections that follow, the transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) inquiry tools of emergence, uptake, resonance, and scale are used to connect the students' practices and views to mobilities and immobilities within the classroom communication projects.

Emergence

The transliteracies tool of emergence involves activity in which "affect, feeling, surprise, interruption, and movement are seen and given analytic space in the moment-to-moment unfoldings of human action" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017, p. 78). Emergence was found in the "good scared" feeling that both students and teacher had when they were anticipating and engaging in communication with their outside-classroom audiences. The students met Micaela, and they also had new conversations with their own friends and families. There was increased momentum and participation when students were connecting to everyday texts and examples from their lives in order to brainstorm what they might do for their projects. They were knowledgeable about toys, video games, movies, and songs and saw this knowledge as useful and relevant to their discussions of racism.

Perhaps what was most surprising was the power of one student Xavier's voice in shaping the classroom communication projects in unexpected ways. Xavier's skepticism that the projects could make a difference was initially seen by us as an obstacle, but was actually a lever that broadened the project possibilities. Expressing these views and rejecting the projects were instrumental in deepening discussions about racism and power, and also led to the option of more personal and private family projects that many students ultimately preferred.

Uptake

The transliteracies tool of uptake foregrounds people's interactions and relationships in terms of how meanings are made and assigned value. In this study uptake involved students' within-classroom and outside-classroom interactions. The students' brainstorming sessions showed the ways in which racism was viewed through the lens of representation (or lack of representation) in the multimodal texts and material objects that they encountered in their everyday lives. This current of dialogue was encouraged, built upon, and codified on the Jamboard. It led to project ideas aimed at broadening representation: merchandise, children's books, games, and playlists. Some ideas (such as exploring Disney's history of racism) did not gain as much traction and faded away.

The students' outside-classroom communications sparked conversations and debate around the idea of welcoming audiences. The students were concerned about what they should say and how they should say it (how much humor and what sort, the

balance between "winging it" and "overthinking it," etc.). As a result, they delved more deeply into how to tailor their language, approach, and modes of communication. They were concerned with how they would look and how their audiences would feel. Engaging with others beyond school honored a broader range of voices, and voices that were more connected to the students' identities.

Xavier's skepticism that the projects could make a difference was taken up by all of us in different ways and from our different positionalities as we grappled with what to do next. Simultaneously, the idea of self love was taken up through students' communication with Micaela, and together skepticism and self love led to the development of family projects. Many students took the opportunity to move away from earlier ideas and toward projects that instead had them interacting with and honoring their families.

Resonance

Resonance is the transliteracies tool that links individual interactions to broader societal patterns. Different characterizations of racism resonated in this study, as individual and systemic, as something that could be ameliorated with approaches that ranged from colorblindness to multiculturalism to social justice projects to self love to resistance, even of the classroom communication projects themselves. Another idea that resonated was that different generations needed to educate each other about racism: at times students saw the younger generations as the educators of the older generations, and at other times these roles were reversed.

Resonance also draws attention to "mainstream and subaltern perspectives and beliefs… and what becomes privileged in interaction" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017, p. 82). It surprised us that it sometimes seemed unclear how the youth in this study saw racism as connected to their own lives. The whole class dialogue focused more on the Black Lives Matter movement and anti-Asian violence than it did on racism against Latinx people. However, the shift to family projects and self love revealed that the students were thinking about racism in their own lives, families, and communities. It may have been that they did not see these personal connections and experiences as acceptable in school (and defaulted to what was more resonant in the media), or they may not have felt comfortable sharing publicly in the Zoom classroom. The idea that youth might be hesitant to divulge their personal experiences (for valid reasons) as part of a class project complicates oft-cited concerns about whether or not youth are "bought in" to projects.

Scale

As the fourth transliteracies tool, scale traces the construction of different texts and relationships as they move through different times and spaces. Students' communications with outside-classroom audiences created their own varied contexts, and were also simultaneously graded classwork in the school context. These contexts did not co-exist seamlessly, which Xavier drew attention to when he recognized the absurdity of showing slides to his mom and grandma.

As previously mentioned, discussions of racism in the classroom veered toward what was resonating in the media, and often related to BLM, anti-Asian racism, and representation. When projects were further along and became personal with the involvement of students' families and friends, the discussions changed and became more complex and fraught.

Similarly, discussions of racism in classrooms such as the one in this study require a willingness from students to take a hopeful, can-do stance. Racism is daunting when we discuss it in the real world, but when it moves to the classroom it is less common to address the difficulties of making change. Xavier brought this view into the classroom and interrupted the assumed approach of positivity and hope in useful and interesting ways.

Of the findings just described in this chapter, three clusters of purpose, practices, and views stood out from the others: 1) the ways in which students considered their audiences, 2) the ways in which students drew from multimodal texts in their everyday lives, and 3) the ways in which a student contested the project itself. The first two emerged as important because of their prevalence and the level of engagement students demonstrated in relation to them. Contesting was less common but still stood out because of how it deepened and changed the projects more than any other practice.

Students viewed the projects as exciting because of the opportunity to communicate beyond their classrooms, as relevant to their everyday lives, and also as daunting because of the prevalence of racism. Questions of legitimacy and

representation emerged from these views. The teacher grappled with these questions and tensions in her own ways that will be described in the next chapter. This will include an exploration of the teacher's views of the classroom communication projects and also the transliteracies practices that she was hoping that the students would learn.

CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS: TEACHER'S INTENTIONS AND VIEWS

While the last chapter focused on the findings regarding the students' practices and views, this chapter turns to the teacher's intentions and views of the classroom communication projects. The last component of my blended data analysis involved open coding of the three teacher interviews I conducted on Zoom. I found both mobilities and immobilities in Sophia's views. She wanted to do the projects because of the paradigm shift they represented to her, in moving her students from teacher-centered worksheets and "lowered expectations" to hands-on, student-centered projects. However, she was also concerned about issues of control (over students' plans and topics), legitimacy (related to whether or not project work was as valid as traditional written assignments), and representation (regarding how the students, school, and teacher would look to their audiences). These emerged as part of the transliteracies practices she was trying to teach, and will be discussed in more depth at the end of this chapter using the transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) tools of emergence, uptake, resonance, and scale.

Sophia's MA coursework on equity, district professional development on Ethnic Studies, and project-based learning professional development all reinforced and aligned with the change she wanted to make in her classroom. Sophia also wanted to encourage more student participation during the challenging context of the pandemic and online learning, and she hoped the classroom communication projects would achieve this goal. With these contexts and goals in mind, Sophia was focused on both student engagement and student empowerment. Sophia emphasized some

transliteracies practices more than the others through the projects: 1) collaboration, 2) reflection and action, 3) communication, and 4) writing and school literacy practices.

Collaborating

Sophia explicitly mentioned collaboration multiple times as a main goal for students in the classroom communication projects. She said, "I really want to prioritize the collaboration and working together," and, "Collaboration is going to be a really big deal to me." She explained that she had been telling one of the Ethnic Studies coaches about the "Genius Hour" projects that she had tried the previous school year, in which students had an allotted time each week to research a topic of interest. Sophia had mixed feelings about those projects, on the one hand wanting to refine them and explore something similar with classroom communication projects and on the other hand wanting to move away from the "chaotic" environment in which "everybody really was doing something different." Sophia said,

> So I talked about that with [the coach] leading up to this, and she said, 'Doing a class project, you create class community. There's buy-in. Kids have to depend on each other, and they're more likely a lot of times to get their work done. You can talk about collaborating.' Well, I want us to learn about collaboration. Any class project you do, they're going to have to collaborate. They have to talk to each other.

The idea of increasing class community during online schooling in the pandemic resonated with Sophia, who was worried about her students' isolation and lack of

participation in the first semester. Sophia noted that her ninth graders had never even physically been on campus together. She said, “In this time of lack of connection, if collaboration can be what we’re focused on, even if it’s just collaborating with each other in the classroom, when they start school again in the fall they’re going to be tenth graders, and it would be nice to have them connected to people at school, to feel like they belong in that they were a community.” In all three interviews, Sophia mentioned that she wanted students to feel this sense of belonging and community.

Through an Ethnic Studies lens, collaboration created a feeling of community, but Sophia also saw collaboration as a skill. She wanted students to be flexible as the projects unfolded, imagining that she would tell them, “‘I want you to get used to working with this home group of yours, but then depending on whatever the project is, you may need to work with different people.” Sophia referred to a rubric for collaboration that she had gotten from a project-based learning institute, and planned to “have the kids kind of grade themselves on it before and then after the project and maybe during… ‘what evidence do I have that you’ve done these things?’”
She said that she would “help them figure out what role they could take” in the groups. Sophia was worried that some students would be afraid to do the projects, but she said that “hopefully there would be roles for more introverted students.” She reported that students had already told her that online learning was intimidating, that they had told her, “‘I wish I would have asked for help, but I was just too scared and… I was confused.” She hoped that the students would feel “passionately” and have “strong feelings” about the project topics that would help them to overcome

these fears. She was also worried that online learning made it easier for students to avoid working with others. She thought they might not attend class, and they might say, "'I don't want to deal with that. I don't like the people I'm working with. Yeah, I'm just not going to do it.'" She thought students might not want to collaborate, even though she thought it was important.

Sophia saw collaboration as connecting students to each other, creating buy-in, building skills and flexibility, and encouraging new student roles. Throughout the semester, her ideas about collaboration shifted as the projects unfolded. The second interview occurred on the same day as Event 4, the conversation with Xavier which led to the option of individual family projects instead of group projects. In the interview, she reflected,

> Collaboration is the big skill that I was after. It didn't matter what they were doing, it was, 'Are you working together?' So we'll see what happens with sixth period because maybe they won't be collaborating on things. We'll be doing individual things, but that's okay. Because, you know, we can figure that out.

Sophia's evolving thinking was a result of the continuing difficulty of getting students to work together, especially in breakout rooms. Students preferred to have discussions as a whole class. It was harder than anticipated to build community on Zoom, and Sophia was unsure about how it was going. She said, "I wanted to create a sense of community for students because of the pandemic and I don't know how successful I've been, and that's something that I'm going to ask the students for feedback on." At

the same time she said, “Letting students choose what they would like to do does bring people together, and it does make them, like, ‘Hey, look what we did together’… and I think that that's an important piece.”

Some days (including all of the events) did have more of a sense of class collaboration, even if it was missing on other days. The group projects in particular lagged or dissolved, which surprised us. Agent E and Mr. Happy collaborated on their playlist, but they mostly just added songs individually and quietly when they were in a breakout room together. The children’s book group needed adult facilitation to make progress in their breakout room. All the other students ended up doing individual projects. These did all involve collaboration, but it was collaboration with their family members and friends instead of their classmates. Many students reported that these were powerful, such as Abigail who interviewed both of her parents about their harrowing immigration journeys.

Sophia also moved from the idea of collaboration to networking in the final interviews. She said, “I felt like networking was happening in our class. You know, that the kids had connected with Micaela.” Sophia also realized that the topic of racism was so personal that working on individual projects seemed to be a better fit. She said, “I felt like it needed to be all of us together, but then that piece about self-love sort of turned it more internal I think for kids.” She continued that the shift to personal projects “maybe needed to happen because we were in a pandemic and it was time for that, I don't know.” Collaboration was more complex, and Sophia saw it differently by the end of the projects, especially when she had some time to reflect

after the end of the school year. When I asked her if she still thought the projects worked better for some students more than others, her views had changed. She said,

> I feel this would work well with all kinds of students because I think in a class project, everybody can find a place to be. And I think that's representative of communities, where everybody has a place in the community… like our Advanced Drama class… I'd find out a kid was in Advanced Drama and [I would think] 'I don't see you as an actor,' but then it dawned on me that in Advanced Drama there are kids who want to be actors and be up on the stage. There are kids who want to manage the stage. There are kids who want to do the makeup. And there are kids who want to make the costumes, there's kids who want to do the props, and there's a place in that stage production… for everyone, even the people who don't want to be out in front under the lights. And so I think these projects… work for all kids. I mean, I guess that there's probably a kid out there that maybe it wouldn't work for because we're all different people, but I can't help but think that in a community you find places for everyone. And that's what it is. That's what a classroom is. It's a community and we could find places for everyone.

The different ways that students had participated in the projects were all important, even if some were not as immediate or obvious in the online classroom. Some of the students' varied participation was not evident (and even invisible to us) until the very end of the semester, as they were completing their projects and their final essays.

Neither of us realized it at the time, but one theme that came up in all three interviews was of our own collaboration. At the first interview, Sophia said, “The easiest part is the dreaming part where you and I collaborate and we’re like, ‘Oh, we could do this. We could do that.’ And the excitement.” She also appreciated my presence when things were more challenging. At our first interview Sophia said, “I think it’ll be a good partnership because I think we’re both honest with each other, we’re comfortable with each other, because I can come crying to you, ‘This isn’t working, I’m freaking out, I don’t know what to do.’” At the end of the semester she said that it had helped her to feel less alone. She said,

> There were so many times where I was feeling really bad about myself. What's wrong with me? Why can't I get out of bed? Why am I ending Zoom and crawling back into bed and going to sleep, like what is wrong with me? And then when you're like, ‘G-d, Sophia, you're pouring out a lot of energy.’ I just didn't realize how much energy I was putting out there unconsciously, and then to have you recognize and acknowledge that, I went, ‘Oh, this is why I'm so tired.’

Because the study took place when we were all sheltering in place during the pandemic, I also felt less alone because of our collaboration, which was one of my only regular connections to people outside my family at that time.

Sophia had other reasons for appreciating our collaboration. Because the students guided the projects, we did not know what would happen next and what responses would be helpful. Having a second adult in the Zoom room sometimes

provided Sophia with an extra moment to think about what to do next. I also provided ideas and responded to students. Sophia said, “Having you there anchors me in a way that I'm not doing this by myself… in those pauses where you're putting something in the chat, you're helping to lead us in the direction that I want to go with them.” My presence as a researcher also validated the project work in a way that was important to Sophia. She said,

> Having somebody to bounce ideas off of, especially somebody who hasn’t been in a classroom for a long time, who’s been immersed in the theory because, without the theory, whatever I’m doing, I’m sort of flying by the seat of my pants… but if I can connect it to a theory or the research that you’ve done… all the reading… and ground it in clear evidence, then that’s going to make me feel better as a teacher, like, ‘Okay, there’s a reason I’m doing this.’

Sophia was excited about the projects, but she also wanted “clear evidence” that they counted as a legitimate literacy curriculum.

Our collaboration gave Sophia a sense of security, as well as provided another adult to help, offer emotional support, and ideas. She talked about our ability to collaborate being related to the fact that we had known each other so long. The students had only known each other for a semester in a virtual classroom, which impacted their desire to collaborate with each other in the ways that Sophia had initially envisioned. However, there were moments of whole class collaboration and community, as well as original collaborations occurring outside of school among

students' families and friends. The classroom communication projects strengthened connections and community in unexpected ways.

Reflecting and Acting

Sophia wanted the students to think critically within the projects. This involved having them ask questions, make their own decisions, generate their own ideas, and provide information. More than any of these, though, Sophia talked about the importance of having students reflect, and she planned and assigned multiple written reflections and Google forms throughout all of the stages of the projects. At our first interview Sophia said that she would tell the students, "'I'm going to ask you what you think about what you did.'" She said she would ask them to "tell [her] why [they] use these words." She also wanted them to ask questions of the people that they communicated with, and to "think for themselves and make decisions for themselves" and to do more "independent thinking." She was wondering "what they're going to pick" and wanted the students to know that "[they] have information that we need" and "we value what they already know." Her hope was that this would "ignite their curiosity" and give them "more responsibility" in the projects. She wanted them to feel that "school matters and they matter to school. We can't do this without them."

A barrier she saw was "the way [the students'] education has been the last ten years… they've been handed worksheets and told what to do." Sophia thought these "lowered expectations" would be a reason it would be "really difficult to motivate the kids to do the project." She went on to say,

> I think they see education as a kind of, I don't know, the necessary evil isn't quite the right phrase that I want, but it's something that they have to get through and it's not something necessarily useful to them… it might be a struggle for them to take ownership and really get involved.

She saw the projects as an opportunity for her classroom to "become less teacher-centered," but was not sure if that would be welcomed by the students. She was hoping that they would be curious and engaged.

Beyond reflecting, Sophia talked about how she wanted students to take action, by "[having] a voice" broadly and by specifically doing something to "make a difference." She wanted the students to decide on the topic, but thought about project possibilities such as "[planting] a little garden… at school" or "[doing] something about climate change" or helping a neighbor. Her aim was that students would "know they can speak up and say stuff and do things and that… they don't have to be silenced." She wanted students to feel as if they could change the world, and to feel hopeful. She wanted them to "feel that commitment to the class… to show up and be present."

A barrier to supporting students' actions was Sophia's pervasive concern that she would "have to say 'no'" to students' project ideas. She imagined that she would have to curtail students' ideas "because they're just not allowed," citing concerns about social distancing and doing projects without being on campus. She also talked about the danger of passing COVID to students and their family members, saying, "It doesn't do anybody good to be like, 'Oops, I caught COVID at school and now my

grandma's sick, I feel like I killed my grandma.'" She thought finding meaningful projects that could be done virtually would be difficult, but also said, "I don't want to limit them in that way… there's just so much unknown." Sophia's "limiting" of the students, as well as her removal of limits, presented itself in different ways in different classes, which will be described next.

I found out in the second interview that Sophia's predictions had come true in the tenth grade classes, where she had felt the need to intervene and "[put] the brakes on" students' ideas. In these two classes, the students had suggested topics and plans that made Sophia uncomfortable, and they were also the classes where she did not have my support. Sophia cited safety concerns as a reason that she had told one of the tenth grade classes that they could not go out into the community as part of their project on homelessness. She said at first the class was "super gung-ho," but became much less engaged after she intervened when they were making plans. She described what happened, saying,

> I said, 'Well, you know, what do we want to do with this information? Do we want to try to raise money for them? Because, you know,' I said, 'I'm not asking you to go out and find a home for a homeless person. That's not, it's not safe, you know. I'm not asking you to go out and interact with them.' Because they were saying things like, 'We could bring them things,' and I said, 'Well, given it's COVID and that we're approaching people who might be mentally ill. No, I'm going to be putting the brakes on that.'

Sophia then responded to the students' ideas to take direct action with the more indirect alternative of raising money for Catholic Charities, which would then be used by the organization to help homeless people. Sophia said that some students were relieved, but she also said that after the change there was "just dead silence over two class periods." She reported, "Several of the kids have said, 'Well, we're bored. We're done with this project now.'" Sophia's desire to protect her students interfered with their engagement in the project. She made the choice to direct the project's course in what she perceived was a safer direction. It did not seem as if space was made for more brainstorming that could have led to an alternative that was more appealing to the students. It is also notable that all of the outside-classroom communications only ever reached outside the classroom through digital means rather than physical ones. Though COVID and safety was definitely a factor, the teacher may also have wanted to reduce some uncertainty by containing and controlling the outside-classroom environments. In doing so, the outside-classroom spaces became more sanitized, and also easier to fit into the constraints of school.

In the other tenth grade classroom, the students' preferred project topic struck Sophia as politically rather than physically risky. The students wanted to work on the issue of whether or not they would be returning to in-person school. Sophia said, "They were really dedicated, [with] a lot of commentary." For many reasons, Sophia did not want the students to pursue this topic. She told me that she did not want the students to work on the topic of returning to school because it had become so controversial in the community. She said,

> It was getting really political, and I could feel when they talked about it, their anger, and their helplessness, and their loss of control around it. I felt like if we continued to explore things about getting back to school in person, my concern was that they were going to be sorely disappointed when they realized that there were a lot of politics for the public health department.

Sophia disqualified this project topic because she said it was impossible for the students to effect any sort of change. She went on to say,

> I was scared for the kids that that it would be yet another terrible blow of we can't go back to school, and maybe it would have been good for them to do the research, to talk to the people because I don't know if I could have gotten a director from our school district to come in and explain the situation to them. But I just felt like they would be so unmotivated after hearing that information, that I wasn't going to be able to get any work out of them, that it was going to be this really sad slap in the face of reality.

Instead, Sophia steered the students toward a topic they had also discussed that she saw as related (student motivation), though the students' interest dwindled and they turned in very little work. Sophia likened this new topic of motivation to cleaning up the environment or fighting against racism, saying that with all those topics, "I felt like they could have actually done something about those, even in a small way or have educated themselves about that." The second interview occurred right as schools in the city were preparing to re-open for hybrid schooling, which ended up happening five weeks later. Schools and districts during this school year and semester had been

actively seeking input from families about school re-opening, and it was happening, so the topic was timely and Sophia's view that input from the students would not make a difference is notable. Sophia's view of racism as a less political or less disappointing choice for a project than school re-opening also is worth noting. Her assessment of the viability of topics is informed by her positionality as a white woman, and was interpreted differently by her students, some of whom were skeptical, as discussed in the previous chapter. Her mostly Latinx students might have had a different view: fighting against racism could understandably seem less possible and a "really sad slap in the face of reality" compared to the issue of schools re-opening.

A little later into the second interview, Sophia revealed that she had found the topic of school re-opening personally upsetting, which was another reason she had steered students away from it. In talking about district committees that had met over the summer, she said, "I could not join them. It was just too upsetting. And I was really worried about my mental health around that." She had concerns both as a teacher and as a parent. She said,

> I attended a Zoom meeting yesterday for [my son] to go back to school. The level, they have a whole website at his elementary school dedicated to it, the level of complexity...I could barely tolerate being in the meeting and it was an hour that I was in there, you know?... I just didn't feel like I could deal with that particular topic. So that's why when… [the students] had also talked about student motivation… I thought, well, maybe if we research what goes

into motivation, that's a life skill… I just feel like this pandemic was just too, it was just too much for me, personally.

Sophia wondered in the interview if she could have handled this differently. She mentioned that she could have "[been] real with them and [said] this is too upsetting for [her]." At the time, instead of sharing her feelings with them, she discouraged the students by saying that the project was political and that they would not be able to do anything about the topic. The latter was a very different message than I heard her give in the other (ninth grade) classes, when she talked about how the students could always find some way to make a difference, however small it might be. Out of the four original topics in the classes, one was so upsetting to the teacher that she vetoed it. We do not know whether any of the students experienced similar distress related to that topic or any of the others. With topics of racism, homelessness, and mental health, it is likely that at least some students had difficult relationships to these topics. These students did not share whether this was the case, and they did not have the option of changing or vetoing the class topic. If they found themselves in this situation, the only options available to the students would have been doing the project anyway or choosing not to participate.

While Sophia imposed limits on the students' actions in the tenth grade classes, she removed some limits in the classes I was observing. Paradoxically, this was in response to limits that students like Xavier were expressing, in terms of the actions that could be taken to help fight racism. In Event 4, Sophia's conversation with Xavier led to the creation of "Self-Love/Family Appreciation" projects, a

different way to take action than either Sophia or I had originally envisioned. When I asked Sophia how she had thought to use Micaela's idea of "self-love" to respond to Xavier's questions about whether or not the projects would make a difference, she said that she had been surprised by what Micaela had told the students, that self-love was something that they could do to combat racism. She said,

> I thought, Oh my G-d, she is so right… know your history, know where you come from, and be proud of it…It goes back to whose knowledge is valuable, and I want them to see that their own knowledge, like Xavier's knowledge of his mom and his grandma's story, that's really valuable…That's what I wanted for him.

This interaction connects with Sophia's stance that highlighted students' knowledge and sought to amplify their voices. What was new was Sophia's recognition that it would be powerful to keep Micaela's voice present in the classroom. Sophia explained, "Even if I'm still the white lady in the front of the room, I can bring in other voices, other people who look like [the students]." Sophia valued having a more diverse range of perspectives represented in her classroom, and saw some of the limits of her own positionality, which was especially important in the context of sixth period's choice of racism as the project topic. This expansion of possibilities was one of Sophia's favorite parts of the projects. She said, "When those light bulb things happen like… today, my conversation with Xavier, I'm like, 'We're in the groove… we are in the groove now'… and so those are magical times."

Our interviews were a reflective space for Sophia to think about her own views and actions in the projects. There were moments in each interview with Sophia where the momentum picked up and she began to brainstorm ideas in rapid succession, just as her students had sometimes done. Where they had drawn from everyday examples and texts to connect to the idea of racism, Sophia brought examples from her own contexts that she saw as relevant to this new pedagogy: ideas from her MA class, professional development, conversations with colleagues, and newspaper articles. There is an excerpt of the first interview in Appendix H that shows how she moved across a variety of topics, ideas, and examples at one time: grad school conversations about the purpose of education, learning styles, special education testing, the achievement gap, whiteness, standardized tests, parent involvement, a newspaper article about using Native American traditions as part of the curriculum, culturally sustaining pedagogy, professional development in Ethnic Studies, valuing student knowledge, revising the standards, collaboration, a student's previous essay on poverty, democracy, and caring for each other as people.

The students and Sophia were each engaged in critical projects: the students were reflecting and acting to work on specific social justice issues, and Sophia was reflecting and acting with the goal of engaging and empowering her students. These were fraught, complex, and even contradictory endeavors that were shaped by power and positionality. Even when the teacher hoped to make her pedagogy student-centered, she controlled the opportunities that were available to students. She

also wanted the students to feel hopeful even though she sometimes felt more skeptical than hopeful herself.

Communicating Effectively

In the first interview, Sophia talked about how students would learn through communication with their audiences. She thought they would learn by considering their audiences, tailoring their communication to their audiences, and by getting feedback from them. She wanted students to "get in there and communicate with people and put [themselves] out there." She said, "I want them to gain skills like being able to email and talk on the phone to people and not be afraid of those things… I want them to do those things so that they gain confidence in themselves." Her aim was that students would "have really good communication, really appropriate communication," which involved "initially maybe going to formal" in terms of how they addressed their audiences. She also gave an example of talking with family and friends, saying, "In that case, a casual mode of communication is going to be appropriate." Sophia posed a question about communication that she could also explore with students: "Does it matter if the person is from the same culture as you?" These comments show that Sophia was expecting to teach effective communication using guidelines that were more static than dynamic, and more abstract than contextual.

Sophia had a lot of hopes for the students' communications with outside-classroom audiences, but she also talked quite a bit about her concerns about

this aspect of the project. She said, “I think that the hard thing is really going to be showing up and just, you know, making the phone call, sending the email.” Sophia said,

> I think that some of my kids are going to communicate with them the way they would with their friends because they just don’t know, but I’m hoping that we’ve talked enough about audience, and that we’ll continue talking about audience.

Sophia was concerned about the ways in which she, the students, and the school would be represented publicly in the projects. In the first interview, Sophia was concerned that communicating with the outside-classroom audiences might make them all look bad. She worried that negative stereotypes of the school could be perpetuated. She said, “I've been with the school for so long, and I care so much about this population of kids. I want them to look good in the community.” She also said, “If there's a blemish on my school's name, like, ‘Oh yeah, we tried to work with those kids and they… just didn't respond… I feel nervous about that and I feel really challenged about that.” The “population of kids” that were being referenced represent the largest majority of low-income and Latinx students in the city’s five high schools. The area surrounding the school is adjacent to the rest of the city but was unincorporated for many years, and only recently given official access to public services. It is unclear the ways in which “looking good” or avoiding being viewed as “a blemish” in the community might help to alleviate these disparities at a deeper

level, though it is also understandable that Sophia did not want to make the situation worse.

Sophia also felt that her own representation was at stake. She said,

> I feel like my reputation's on the line a little bit, for good or for bad, you know, but I still believe in it enough that I feel like it's worth putting it on the line, and it's worth doing that. But I think the challenging thing is losing face.

Sophia imagined that the students would be excited by the idea of communicating with audiences outside their classroom, but she also thought that some students would be "really nervous about communicating with other people." She said students would be "putting themselves on the line and… that fear of failure will be really present for them… part of it's the age, you don't want to embarrass yourself in front of anybody." That Sophia attributed students' anticipated concerns to their adolescence is notable because just a few minutes earlier she had stated that she felt the same way, concerned about her reputation and potential embarrassment. Sophia's comments also show her belief that students might not be good at communicating with outside-classroom audiences, and that the projects might fail. She said, "The challenging part is going to be are my students going to… step up?" Sophia imagined that these concerns might cause her to take over some aspects of the projects, but she also thought she should resist doing so:

> There's going to be a tendency for me to step in and not want them to fail, but the important thing is that they need to fail. They need to have space in order to fail so that they can learn, because it'll be really important that I'm not

> picking them up and dusting them off and fixing things for them. It's going to be important for them to do that themselves. And so I think that's going to be really tough.

Though Sophia was describing the ways in which failure could lead to learning, it is notable that student failure or success in the projects was characterized as a binary, with not much in between. She did complicate this imagined binary when she said that she hoped that, "As we have little successes that those will build." Sophia said that she hoped that students would "step up," but her prediction that she might want to "step in" (as she ended up doing in the tenth grade classes) originated from her views of the projects as risky and limited them as a result.

Sophia was worried that her students would not "step up," but she was also worried that they would "step up" too quickly to address their audiences without "thinking [it] through" and that there could be "consequences… of not addressing [their] audience appropriately." At the same time, she imagined that real feedback from the audiences could be a learning opportunity for students. She gave the example of someone potentially responding to the students by saying, "I missed your email…because you didn't put anything on the subject line and I didn't know what it was, so I deleted it." Sophia anticipated that students would not be as good at "those interpersonal skills, I guess, those soft skills that I think you and I are good at already." These skills that she imagined could be lacking in her students were represented by Sophia as both important (not having them may lead to "consequences") and less important (the label of "soft skills" positions them as

subordinate to the “hard skills” often related to content knowledge and technical abilities). The latter positioning of communicative skills as less important will be discussed in the next section in relation to the perceived legitimacy of the projects as a literacy learning pedagogy.

As the projects unfolded, there ended up being no negative consequences related to the students’ communications that I was aware of, but it is worth noting that the most obvious miscommunications across the projects were related to the communications of two adults, not students: Micaela did not show up on the day the students were expecting her because she had the date wrong in her calendar, and Sophia had never sent her the Zoom link. This was easily resolved with apologies on both sides, more communication to reschedule, and no residual consequences. At this point in the projects, both Sophia and her students seemed more confident in their communications.

At the second interview, when I asked Sophia what students were learning, she responded immediately,

> Audience, I think it's all coming down to audience. That's the common thing that I am seeing in all four of my classes. How do you address an audience? How do you talk to somebody? How do you write to somebody? What's the kind of language you use, depending on who you're talking to? I think that's the thing that they're learning about literacy, and I think that's actually really powerful because I feel like that will serve them the rest of their lives. It's one thing to learn grammar stuff, but it's a whole other thing to really think about

how do I want to talk to this person? How do I get my message through?

Her ideas of what students would be learning about communication had broadened from static and abstract to practices that "[depended] on who you're talking to." The students were also more engaged in the communications than Sophia had been anticipating. She talked about how a student who rarely came to one of her tenth grade classes was present on a day that the students were writing an email to someone they did not know. Sophia was surprised when the student

> all of a sudden unmuted himself and said, 'I don't think that sounds very professional.' So I said, 'Well, what would you suggest?' And he suggested something, and I said, 'Okay, let me put that in. What do you guys think about it now?' 'Yeah, that sounds much better. That sounds more professional, more respectful.'

Though the students did seem to care about the details of communication with people outside of their classroom, they sometimes missed the mark. Sophia talked about how Agent E wanted to greet Micaela by showing her a funny meme. Sophia said she chose to have the students discuss it instead of sharing her concerns. She said, "For them to come in and say, 'This sounds better,' and making those decisions…Having them make those decisions, I think that's the literacy that they're really learning." Sophia's comments show her belief that the students were learning together and continually developing their transliteracies practices in regard to tailoring their compositions to their specific audiences, contexts, and purposes. Sophia's willingness to let the students handle these potential missteps on their own

as part of their learning was more possible because she was becoming less concerned about how they were representing themselves in the community through the projects.

During the second interview, Sophia attributed this shift to the ways in which both the students and their audiences had surprised her: the audiences were kind, the students were good communicators, and these interactions seemed beneficial. She laughed when I asked her if she was still concerned about what others would think of them. She said,

> You know what? I don't care so much anymore. And part of that is because we have been very well, really, I feel like we've been really well-received by those outside audiences. Like Micaela was amazing, like amazing with the kids.

Sophia talked about how she had let Micaela and also the speaker from Catholic Charities know beforehand that the students were "running the show," so they would be prepared for potential mishaps and understand why Sophia would not be talking as much as they might have otherwise expected. This was a new way for Sophia to facilitate that was not "[stepping] in," but also not abandoning the students and speakers to work out their communications on their own. Setting up the interactions in this way seemed to support the students and their outside-classroom audiences, and it also made Sophia feel more comfortable and less concerned about what might happen.

Not only were the guest speakers kind to the students, but they were kind to Sophia in ways that may have helped her to move beyond her concerns about her own

representation. She said that Micaela reacted positively, saying, “Oh, that’s wonderful,” when she heard that the students would be taking charge, and that “the adults understood where I was going.” In contrast to what she was expecting, Sophia’s reputation as a teacher may have actually been enhanced by her willingness to hand over responsibilities to her students. She enjoyed working with the other adults and being seen in ways that aligned with her philosophical stance of the teacher she hoped to be.

Sophia also saw that students wanted to connect with their outside-classroom audiences. She said, “I think the students have really risen to the occasion in ways that I wasn't necessarily thinking that they would, and that's really been a lovely surprise.” The students were considering their audiences in sophisticated ways. Sophia talked about how one student in the fourth period class working on the topic of mental health talked about translating the slides for their presentation into Spanish so that more of their audience (other students at the school) could access it. Sophia said, “They're thinking of things that maybe I didn't think of, that I should have thought of.” She said that she liked

> when all of a sudden, magical things happen, and we're on the road like, okay, here we go. And the slide show that fourth period is doing, it's beautiful. It's really quite stunning, and so when they surprised me, you know, with what they can do, it's really, really cool.

Students' knowledge debunked Sophia's concern that they would not know how to communicate. Their engagement debunked her concern that they would not be used to this type of work and would resist it.

The positive interactions with the outside-classroom audiences inspired Sophia, who said that the projects "[speak] to the value of having those audiences on a regular basis." She went on to talk about the potential of having community members, other teachers, and parents as more of a presence in classrooms. She thought of this as a way to open up schools, which she characterized as "closed up places… white spaces and so closed to the outside world, especially to our Latino parents." She imagined that it would be powerful to have Latinx parents in the classroom when students were talking about race, even though she also thought that students might find it awkward.

Even though Sophia was discovering that her students did know how to communicate more effectively than she had originally realized, she thought that she would have to support them differently if the class was in-person rather than online. This was connected to her persistent belief that the projects were easier on Zoom because there were no classroom management issues. In the future, Sophia envisioned having to teach students more about how to communicate. She said,

> In order to put something like this in practice, there would have to be some steps taken. I think kids would have to have some skills as far as discussions. How do you respond to people? How do you listen?... Do the kind of stilted things that I've done before and teaching kids how to have higher level

> discussions where, ‘Okay, here's your sentence frames. So, Sarah's going to talk first. Do you want to respond to what Sarah said or do you want to say something different?’... really training them and having those awkward stilted discussions first, where they've kind of got the training wheels on, so they're not shouting over each other, you know, because that kind of stuff happens.

I was surprised to hear Sophia talking about the need for “stilted” activities to “[train]” students in discussion skills, given the ways in which we had seen students interacting with their audiences and the ways in which she described how her concerns about their representation had lessened. Then again, Sophia’s view that effective communication was a useful real life skill co-existed with her sense of responsibility as a high school English teacher. The latter moved her back toward more traditional ways of teaching and learning literacy, the focus of the next section.

Writing and School Literacy Practices

In the first interview, Sophia talked generally about students gaining reading and writing skills through the classroom communication projects. She said, “We’re going to write,” referring to an email that she was going to have them write to introduce themselves to me. She talked about explicitly showing the students the steps of writing the email. She also said, “I think we haven’t done a lot of reading, so I need to figure out how to stuff that in.” She saw these literacy skills as important and as academic. Sophia wanted to focus on reading and writing skills, though she did not go into much detail about what this meant early in the semester. Sometimes she

viewed the students' communications with their audiences as a valid type of school literacy learning, and sometimes she did not seem to think it was enough.

Sophia said the projects might be challenging because they represented "a shift in the way that [the students are] doing learning… that might not feel like learning to them." She thought they might say, "'Aren't we just going to read a book?'" She thought it "might be something hard for them to get used to… that [she'd] be asking them to do other things." As the semester unfolded, I did not see these concerns from the students, but I did see that at times the projects did "not feel like learning" to Sophia. She wanted to ensure that the projects included at least some recognizable English class skills and content so that students would become more competent in these areas.

In talking about her desire to move from a more teacher-centered classroom to a more student-centered one, Sophia was navigating which of her past practices she wanted to retain and which she wanted to change. She said,

> There's going to be times I have to do direct instruction, like here's how you write the email. But then I really want to be able to let go and say you guys are working in your groups today…but I'm not sure what that's going to look like if I don't know what they're going to pick and what they're going to do.

"[Letting] go" is challenging because of the constraints of school and also because projects seem fundamentally different than more traditional schoolwork. These differences brought up deeper pedagogical concerns for Sophia.

Sophia's comments during the first interview revealed some concerns that the

projects might not be legitimate teaching and learning. She had underlying doubts about the value of classroom communication projects as a literacy pedagogy, even though she still wanted to do them. She mentioned that, in the pandemic context, "most students are… giving a pass to teachers fumbling around, and so I feel like I have more permission to fumble around." She also expressed feeling more free to experiment in the online context, saying that she could blame the pandemic if the projects did not work out. Sophia sometimes seemed to be reaching to find a reason that she was undertaking the classroom communication projects.

As an experienced teacher, Sophia was uncomfortable with what she defined as "fumbling around" and "flying by the seat of her pants," phrases that do not conjure up images of confident and meaningful teaching. Sophia was initially uncomfortable with the idea that she would not know what exactly would happen and what she would be teaching. She was not sure of the projects' legitimacy, but also thought that might be okay because of the pandemic and online school context. She relied on me, my role, and my connection to perceived "evidence" to provide a sense of legitimacy that she did not necessarily feel herself.

All year Sophia had struggled to get students to complete work. At the second interview she said, "I just feel like the academic stuff is so difficult, it's just so difficult to do with them right now." When I asked her how much work students were completing compared to the previous semester, she responded that she thought they were doing the same amount of schoolwork or maybe a little bit more. She attributed this to the fact that the work this semester was generally easier, specifically in regard

to the Google reflection forms that accompanied the classroom communication projects instead of longer pieces of writing. Her distinguishing of "academic stuff" from the project work, and her assessment that the latter was easier, are connected to her continuing concerns about the legitimacy of the projects.

However, Sophia also expressed that she felt a little better because of the projects. Though she still reported feeling sad and tired sometimes, she said, "I think I would be a lot sadder actually if I wasn't doing this because this is kind of a bright spot… it's also a bright spot for me that I feel like I'm doing something important with the kids." She continued, "Otherwise I would be handing them worksheets and trying to drag them through novels and that would feel yucky to me." She felt better because the project work was more "important" than "[dragging the students] through novels," even though some of her other comments related to the project assignments contradict this statement. I described earlier how Sophia did not think the Google reflection forms that the students were doing as part of the projects were "academic" or challenging. Sophia said in her first interview that her students were used to "lowered expectations" in which teachers gave them worksheets and very little else. Sophia was trying to distinguish herself from being that sort of teacher through her connection to the project work.

However, in the second interview, Sophia maintained that some students seemed to prefer a more passive role and traditional approach. She returned to the idea of a deficit lens in regard to her students' previous schooling experiences. She

explained this lens, contested it, and reinforced it simultaneously. One example of this was in the following statement:

> Given the situation and our area of town, I think [the students] know that they went to the throwaway kids' middle school. I think they know that they're at the throwaway kids' high school. I think that… school has not been a place where they have felt successful. They don't have very many models of kids… who know how to do school… I want them to know that they actually can do school, like that they have something of value to give that audiences will listen to them.

During the second interview, Sophia repeated the idea that the students might prefer worksheets, saying,

> They haven't been given that freedom, and they don't know what to do with it. They'd almost rather have the worksheet, you know, and I see that because I'm getting pushback. 'Why are we doing these projects? This is, you know, it's not going to matter. It's easier to do the worksheet.'

I was surprised to hear this because I had not heard any student asking for worksheets, so I asked Sophia to tell me more about this. Her response was, "I think the pushback is mostly silence… I think the pushback I'm getting is inaction and a refusal to participate… I am suspecting that they would prefer to have a worksheet. They might not come out and say that." This comment demonstrates that Sophia assumed the students did not like the project work, rather than hearing that directly from them. It was also unclear how Sophia could distinguish between a lack of

participation that was due to the online context and a lack of participation that was due to "pushback" on the projects. Sophia said this was happening in the tenth grade classes, and that "[The tenth graders] also seem a lot more jaded than my freshman do." This comment was made before Sophia shared with me that she had "put the brakes on" the project plans in both of those classes, which is a more likely explanation for students' disengagement and pushback than their preference for worksheets. The difference matters because of why students' resistance occurred: Sophia was saying that students were resisting because they did not want agency in the form of a project, while students may have been resisting because they wanted agency that was denied them by the teacher.

At the same time, Sophia maintained that she wanted to give students the new opportunities that the projects provided. She said,

> I also want to empower them and make sure that they have a voice and that they know how to do things like this that are a little bit more creative and less structured because I think that's what they're going to encounter in real life.

Sophia was coming to view the projects as fitting into school better than she had thought they would. However, she still was grappling with other concerns related to fitting the projects into school: which assignments could accompany projects, how students would get graded in the projects, and the role that projects should play in the broader curriculum.

In addition to the Google reflection forms and other work the students were doing alongside the projects, Sophia talked about different options for adding an

essay assignment. She said,

> They can all write an essay about what they've done. They can all do the personal reflection. They could also write an argumentative essay about whether or not doing a class project is a good way to learn, so there can be a highly academic, standards-based final product, you know, along with whatever the project is that they're doing.

This was the beginning of Sophia developing the final and culminating assignment of the semester, a reflective essay. She was thinking of an essay as necessary because it represented "a highly academic, standards-based final product" that she did not see in the projects themselves. Sophia was showing that she did not think that the projects were enough on their own, that they did not challenge students in the ways that schools require, and they did not produce an outcome that was valued in school. A playlist or an interview with one's parents was not enough for school, she seemed to be saying, but the addition of an essay made the projects permissible and legitimate.

Grading the project work was messy and sometimes frustrating for Sophia. She gave the students project work logs in addition to the Google forms, but what they turned in was often minimal. Perhaps most vexing to her was that sometimes the students who were especially engaged in class discussions and brainstorming, or even contacting outside-audiences, were the students who did not complete the class assignments. She said she felt like saying to students, "It's great you're here, and I'm giving you credit for it, but that's not enough. I can't give you a passing grade if you don't do any of the writing pieces for it." Once again, participating in the projects was

only “enough” if it involved completing written assignments, even for students who stepped up as leaders. The issues brought up in the last two paragraphs are important because legitimizing the projects through written assignments comes at a cost: the choice of different modes, audiences, roles, and purposes in the projects provide more access for students, but this access is then limited by a regression to “what counts” as literacy in school. The varied ways in which students were willing to participate were not recognized when the projects were fit into the school context.

This mismatch between school and project practices and goals may have been one of the reasons that Sophia wavered in her view of how much she would want to focus on the projects in future implementations. She said,

> Letting students choose what they would like to do does bring people together… and I think that that's an important piece. But I also think that it can be done alongside a lot of other things too, so it's not as stressful.

Though she saw the value of the projects, the “stress” of them made her want to minimize them in her curriculum. She also said, “The class project can be something in the periphery. It doesn't have to be the focus of class… we could be reading a novel alongside this.” When Sophia was thinking about projects in the “periphery,” it seemed to be so that she could focus on “a lot of other things” that more closely resemble school. The fact that she mentioned reading a novel is notable because during the same interview she said that the project was “a bright spot” because she was not “trying to drag [students] through novels.” For Sophia, the return to in person teaching might also signal a return to more traditional teaching and a relegation of

projects to the sidelines.

However, the second interview also showed that Sophia's thinking had changed, that she did view the projects as valuable learning, despite the challenges that she had fitting them into school. Sophia characterized the projects as important and inspiring, described how students were learning about composing for various audiences, and shared that some aspects of the project work were celebrating students' identities and histories as people of color in new ways. Sophia said, "I feel like what they're ending up with is a lot more meaningful than a worksheet that I could have planned."

In the third interview, Sophia reflected upon how the projects fit (and did not fit) into school, both in terms of how she needed to evaluate individual students and also in terms of the broader structures of schooling. Sophia was focused on students passing the class, which hinged on them writing final reflective essays about the projects or about anything they had learned that semester. Xavier had not done a project, despite his engagement in class discussions. Sophia said she urged him to write the essay, saying, "Xavier, you are dropping these amazing comments and pieces of knowledge or changing my class, and then you disappear. Please write the essay so that I can pass you." Xavier did end up writing the essay and passing the class. Sophia reported that across the two classes I was observing, that ten to fifteen students (somewhere between 17-25% of all those students) passed English because of writing the essay, and had not completed a project.

Sophia had mixed feelings about these students who had not done projects but

who had written essays. On the one hand, she was frustrated, saying,

> I feel sad. I feel if they were in person in class with me, I could have gotten them to do it and they would have had some kind of a product that they were really proud of, that they could go back and look at, and I feel bad, you know, that that didn't happen.

This statement shows that Sophia regretted that students missed out on what could have been a meaningful experience, something they could be "proud of." However, Sophia herself also had structured the grading to de-emphasize the projects themselves in favor of the essays. She explained this contradiction by saying,

> The actual project itself was such an itty-bitty, tiny piece of their grade, and I wanted it that way because it wasn't about the project. It was about all of the steps to get us to the project. It was about reflecting on the project. It was about the experience rather than what exactly did you do.

Sophia's expressed stance is that the projects are about the process and the learning, rather than the finished product. However, the value that she assigns this process is undermined by another value system that is in tension, that of points and grades. The project grades and processes are part of the students' larger grades in the class, which are dependent on the essay. Because Sophia has emphasized the essay to the students verbally and because passing the class depends on it, it is not surprising that students understood that the projects were "an itty-bitty tiny piece" and that they needed to focus instead on the essay, a common culminating product in an English class.

On the other hand, Sophia saw that the project work had also permeated the

classroom in useful ways, whether or not students turned in projects. She said that a powerful moment for her was when she was helping Miguel with his final essay. Miguel had not been present much in either the online or in-person classroom, and had a lot of notes about discipline issues in previous classes. He attended two days in person and shared with Sophia that he had spent the semester helping his grandmother in her butcher shop. Sophia encouraged him to write his essay about what he learned helping in the shop. Miguel then surprised Sophia by telling her that he was going to share his essay with his grandmother. She said,

> I talked to him, we planned out an essay, and he said, 'I'm going to write this essay. I'm going to show it to my grandma.' And it was really cool…He [said] the rest of my family doesn't appreciate my grandma and what she does, and I thought that's a really important thing.

Miguel was able to turn his essay into a project of his own, by deciding to share it with an audience who would appreciate it. The ethos of the class and its focus on outside-classroom communications likely influenced him. Sophia was also influenced by this same ethos, as she broadened the essay topic to include any ways in which students had been learning, not just in school. The responses from her students were challenging Sophia to think about class content differently. Continuing to talk about the ways in which Miguel's essay had affected her, Sophia said,

> He cared about it, and I thought, how many students really care about writing an essay about whose fault is it that Juliet died? I understand being able to argue something, but aren't there more important things?

Sophia's reference to Shakespeare was a critique that students' caring about what they were learning and writing about was seldom seen as important in school. She said that her views of learning had changed.

> I think doing these projects helped me to see that everybody's learning. But it doesn't have to be filling out a worksheet, or taking a test or reading a whole bunch of books or writing essays that I decide on the topic. Yeah, everybody's learning. And so I think that gave me an appreciation for that.

Sophia could see learning happening in new ways, but was still affected by the constraints of school. She saw the projects as valuable because of the ways that course content across the subject areas could be more integrated, but schools are not set up this way. Sophia also discussed how the project teaching was different because the students and the topics and plans they proposed drove the curriculum, rather than the curricular standards. This was different for Sophia, but she enjoyed the challenge, saying,

> I don't know if there was one thing that was easy about it. I don't know that anything was necessarily easy about it, but I just enjoyed not being so constrained, not thinking about okay, which standard am I covering?

Sophia was referencing her own feelings of freedom in the projects. Throughout the semester she saw the projects as meaningful schoolwork, especially in regard to teaching students how to compose for varied audiences and also in honoring different aspects of students' identities. However, she had persistent concerns about whether or not the projects were legitimate as a school literacy learning pedagogy.

Thus far this chapter has described the transliteracies practices that the teacher intended to teach, including collaborating, reflecting and acting, communicating effectively, and writing and school literacy practices. Sophia's views of the projects, the topics, the students' communications, and herself were embedded in and emerged from these intentions.

Mobilities and Immobilities: Control, Representation, and Legitimacy

As in the previous chapter, the subsections that follow describe how the transliteracies (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017) tools of emergence, uptake, resonance, and scale are used to connect the teacher's intentions and views to mobilities and immobilities within the classroom communication projects.

Emergence

Recall that the transliteracies tool of emergence involves activity in which "affect, feeling, surprise, interruption, and movement are seen and given analytic space in the moment-to-moment unfoldings of human action" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017, p. 78). The "fumbling" and "flailing" that Sophia described for herself and the students was their learning, which took place in contexts and ways that could not be pre-planned. It was difficult to shift notions of teacher responsibility and control and to "let go." Not knowing what was going to happen in the projects made her uncomfortable because it was hard for her to plan lessons and to understand what learning goals students would be achieving. She also wanted to protect her students

and herself from political and physical risks. She saw herself as an experienced and effective teacher, and this new pedagogy was challenging in new ways, and unsettled ideas of good teaching that were deeply connected to her identity.

These tensions of implementing an emergent curriculum in the controlled context of school make sense. Teachers, especially secondary teachers, are supposed to use "backwards planning" to ensure that students are engaged in learning the essential content represented by the standards. Student-centered, dialogical activities and the ideas and plans that emerge from them are usually seen as a way to more effectively deliver content rather than as the content itself. The latter represents a paradigm shift about what learning and teaching is. Emergent curriculum has typically been associated with Early Childhood literacy pedagogy and has not been welcomed (or explored) in the secondary literacy classroom. Moments in this study, including students' brainstorming sessions, highlight the possibilities of emergence to create new mobilities for secondary literacy learning.

Uptake

The transliteracies tool of uptake focuses on how meanings are made and assigned value within people's interactions and relationships. Though Sophia worked hard to create an open environment for students to express their views and ideas, she was a gatekeeper (and to a lesser extent so was I) in terms of which projects and ideas moved forward and were valued, and which ones did not move forward and were not valued. In the tenth grade classes, ideas that were taken up by the students seemed too

risky for Sophia, who redirected them to topics and plans that no longer engaged the students in the same ways. The idea of the sophomores as "jaded" was taken up by Sophia as a rationalization for their subsequent response.

The students' and the teacher's ideas about representation changed throughout the course of this study. Initial fears of being misrepresented or judged gave way to joyful connections that were welcomed by all. With practice, the students and especially the teacher (who had more opportunities to interact with outside-classroom audiences across her four classes) gained confidence and pride through the classroom communication projects. The contradiction within representation related to whether or not the interactions were seen as uni-directional (with either the students or a guest presenting to the other) or dialogical. The shift throughout the study was from the former to the latter. In this shift, both dialogue partners were humanized, and mistakes by either (scheduling issues, grammatical errors, awkwardness) became less important than the substance of the dialogue and the relationships among the participants. The intense concern that Sophia had about how she, the students, and the school would be represented decreased dramatically and was replaced by excitement about the potential of connecting students with a wide range of outside-classroom audiences. Knowing of this potential obstacle and how it can be overcome is encouraging for teachers and educators who hope to engage students in classroom communication projects in the future.

Resonance

The transliteracies tool of resonance links individual interactions to broader societal patterns. The intensity of the context of the study (online schooling while sheltering in place during the second wave of a global pandemic amid racial and political unrest, and for students who were disproportionately impacted because of their race and social class) resonated across the country and world, as educators and students did the best they could in extremely challenging circumstances. Sophia and I felt these stressors as teachers and as parents.

Issues related to whether or not the classroom communication projects were a legitimate literacy pedagogy were more complex and less easily resolved than issues of representation. We all (researcher, teacher, and students) brought our own diverse and competing ideas of legitimacy to the projects. As the teacher and the person most responsible for shaping the curriculum, Sophia grappled with this issue more than the rest of us. The tension was between a new multimodal, emergent approach and the typical, text-driven, standards-based teaching and learning practices. Throughout the course of the study and in all three interviews, Sophia tried to resolve the tension between these two approaches. She felt pushed from both sides: the usual requirements of school and the added challenge of online teaching pressured her toward more traditional assignments, while her MA coursework and Ethnic Studies professional development inspired her to resist these limits and expand options for her students.

Ultimately, Sophia tried to hold both stances simultaneously: philosophically she valued students' transliteracies practices and their personalized projects, but practically she assigned value to the more traditional products of school (written project artifacts and the final essay). Often Sophia offered students what might be considered a hybrid approach: reflective writing assignments or project logs. It is difficult to conceptualize how to evaluate students' participation in projects, not just so that they can fit into school, but so that educators can better understand what all students are learning and how. This study showed that movement is possible but difficult across these tensions, and that practical, logistical, and meaningful alternatives to traditional ways of evaluating student learning are needed.

Scale

Lastly, scale is the transliteracies tool that traces the construction of different texts and relationships as they move through different times and spaces. The students' multimodal and multilingual compositions and outside-classroom communications were encouraged and were what made this pedagogy uniquely appealing to both teacher and students, but they were not ultimately valued as much as final essays written in English when it was time to determine students' final grades. Hearing and reading about students' private conversations with their parents about their immigration experiences moved both Sophia and me to tears, but these sacred moments did not easily fit into schooled logistics or content.

We wanted to support students; our dual goals involved their developing literacy and their empowerment and agency. For both of these goals, we had narrower conceptions of what these meant than we initially realized. We also were able to expand and "follow the students" in new ways. Students also brought their own histories of school (and "what counts" as permissible schoolwork and participation). Moving school work beyond the classroom brought up concerns for Sophia and the students about how they would look, but interacting with outside-audiences like Micaela became opportunities for new aspects of their identities to emerge that were sources of pride and meaning.

It was a chaotic time, and also a time free of some of the usual constraints of schooling, a good year for "experimentation" from Sophia's perspective. Her future plans to implement projects were uncertain. Sometimes she indicated that focusing on the projects would be much more difficult in an in-person classroom, and that it would be easier to move them to the "periphery." At other times, she imagined the potential of having more visitors in her classroom, as well as getting her students out into community spaces.

In this chapter, I described the teacher's focus on transliteracies practices that included collaboration, reflection and action, communication, and writing and school literacy practices. She hoped that through these practices she could foster connection and community, curiosity and empowerment, confidence, and competence. In attempting to shift to a new pedagogy, Sophia experienced tensions and contradictions. I utilized transliteracies tools in order to understand the interconnected

issues and immobilities that arose during the classroom communication projects, specifically related to control, representation, and legitimacy. Despite these limits, the teacher and the students in this study found mobile spaces, practices, and relationships that deepened, interrogated, and complicated the possibilities of such projects. In the next chapter I will discuss how what emerged in this study builds upon previous YPAR literature.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

The findings I have shared in previous chapters regarding the teacher and students' transliteracies practices and views address my broader research question of what mobilities and immobilities emerged when students were engaged in classroom communication projects during the pandemic in the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year. The contribution that this study makes to YPAR and critical literacy research and practice is 1) a deeper understanding of the importance of a pedagogical embrace of *emergence as a way to foreground youth epistemologies* 2) in the context of *persistent ideological barriers related to control and legitimacy* in school. These findings, unfortunately, represent their own "paradox of mobility" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017, p. 70), but digging into the contradictions and complexities of doing critical work in classroom contexts is needed as one avenue of resistance and progress.

In their review of YPAR literature, Caraballo et al. (2017) argued for an emphasis on YPAR as an epistemology (more than methodology or pedagogy) in order to allow for YPAR's evolution. As discussed previously, this study found mobilities and immobilities that could contribute to this evolution. In the remainder of this chapter I will discuss the implications of this study: how what happened relates to existing YPAR literature, specifically in relation to different ways that educators approach YPAR and different ways that students respond to YPAR, and what this means for YPAR implementation. Lastly, I will discuss the limitations of this study and offer detailed recommendations for future research and practice.

Self (and Community) Love as Legitimate Literacy Learning

In Caraballo et al.'s (2017) article, the researchers discuss four entry points for YPAR: academic learning and literacies, cultural and critical epistemological research, youth development and leadership, and youth organizing and civic engagement. In the YPAR projects that Caraballo et al. (2017) studied, "the work often morphed from its original conception" (p. 317). This sort of "morphing" occurred in this study, which began with an academic learning and literacies approach. "Academic literacy" in YPAR involves "[helping] students acquire the language and tools they need to function within the academy" (Morrell, 2008, p. 20). As part of their social justice work, students use language and modes that align with the school literacy curriculum: usually reports and presentations in formal English.

In this study Sophia emphasized a final essay and also "appropriate" ways of communicating with outside-classroom audiences. However, the students, in dialogue with Micaela, shifted the YPAR entry point to cultural and critical epistemological research when they began to focus on self love and their families instead of more distant and public audiences. This YPAR entry point has roots in Latinx/Chicanx Studies and involves "youth [taking] up cultural knowledge and heritage as epistemological frameworks… and cultural knowledge development and self-actualization become foregrounded as potential outcomes for action-based research" (Caraballo et al., 2017, p. 318). The students' family projects had elements of *testimonio* (Delgado Bernal et al., 2012), and one student Abigail explained that these projects could help by "[showing] racist people what POC have to go through

by not being accepted and it can show them their lives and testimony." This is very similar to Delgado Bernal et al.'s (2012) definition of testimonio as "an approach that incorporates political, social, historical, and cultural histories that accompany one's life experiences as a means to bring about change through consciousness-raising" (p. 364). The goals of YPAR projects like these are different in that the more intimate relating and identity development is the "outcome" and provides "a purpose that goes deeper than acquiring skills for college… a framework through which heritage and identity can be reclaimed" (Caraballo et al., 2017, p. 320). This contrasts YPAR outcomes that involve the creation of products with critical messages to be shared broadly. Both YPAR entry points, academic literacies and cultural epistemologies, were present in the study, and together they seemed to constitute their own "paradox of mobility" (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017, p. 70). The most meaningful moments of the family projects, students' conversations with parents about their lives, did not fit into the literacies, logics, and logistics of school.

A helpful illustration of YPAR that utilizes an entry point of cultural and critical epistemological research is the PAR project that Irizarry (2009) did with his high school class. Irizarry defined the project as culturally sustaining pedagogy because of the ways in which 1) students' fluid language practices were honored and 2) their efforts were focused on transforming education for collective rather than individual benefit. Similarly, Love's (2014) Hip-Hop-Based Education, in which hip hop is seen as both culture and literacy pedagogy, utilized a multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) lens to engage students in critical movie-making. It is not

coincidental that neither of these projects occurred in a typical literacy classroom, and instead took place in an elective class and after-school program respectively. Much of the YPAR projects profiled in the existing literature occur outside of school, and as a result, are liberated from the pressure to conform to a traditional literacy curriculum. Though the school district in this study supported Ethnic Studies professional development that Sophia embraced philosophically, it remained difficult to synchronize these new ways of doing literacy with accepted teaching and learning practices.

YPAR that defaults to an academic literacy perspective, inadvertently reinforces autonomous views of literacy (Street, 1984) that reproduce the marginalization of students of color, and this has been the main entry point for YPAR that takes place in standards-based literacy classrooms. White educators and researchers like me and Sophia may be more comfortable leading student projects from this YPAR angle rather than a culturally sustaining one, but YPAR understood as an epistemology (and not just a pedagogy) (Caraballo et al., 2017) requires that we center students' cultures, languages, and identities.

In this study, the emergence of students' ideas shifted the focus of the projects to better reflect their experiences, ideas, and identities. Recognizing and valuing what youth and their families know should perhaps be understood as a starting point for all YPAR, but how that unfolds is ultimately up to the youth themselves (in their own unique contexts) and could incorporate some of the other YPAR entry points, such as youth development and leadership, and youth organizing and civic engagement

(Caraballo et al., 2017). Self love was a powerful theme in this classroom and study, and was deepened when it co-existed with students' skepticism that their projects could make a difference.

Making Room for Skepticism (and Hope) in YPAR

Caraballo et al. (2017) recognized that the literature is missing a record of the "methodological, ethical, social, and political 'failures' in YPAR" (p. 317). As shown in this study, there is no agreement about how to determine what counts as a successful YPAR project. Beyond completion of an academic paper or presentation, YPAR success seems to have been measured by progress toward a social justice goal or by the students' engagement in the YPAR process.

There are not many examples of YPAR projects that did not achieve their goals, but Pandya (2019) offered a rare glimpse into what happened when a bilingual charter elementary school was closed despite students' video pleas to save their school. Pandya (2019) wrote, "Children got to see that saying their piece, and having a voice, did not guarantee that their desires would be fulfilled, and teachers had to teach in the resulting motional context" (p. 101-102). In this study, Sophia had concerns that her tenth grade students would be deflated if they could not influence the re-opening of school, so she changed their focus. Her intention was to protect her students from disappointment, but they became disengaged when they were not able to pursue an issue that was pressing to them. Sophia's own experience of the topic as upsetting was also a factor in her decision. It would have been interesting to see how

students could have played a role in their school re-opening, as it did ultimately happen and resulted in a disjointed and challenging final five weeks of hybrid instruction with most students still on Zoom. At the conclusion of Pandya's (2019) study, she reflected, "On the surface of things, our videos did not help save the school… Yet, we did engage in digital video making, and we did protest, and over time, we made so many powerful videos" (p. 106). This complicates the binary of success or failure in YPAR and shows the ways in which student action can be simultaneously immobilizing and mobilizing.

Noting the abundance of studies documenting YPAR success stories, Winn and Winn (2016) sought to examine tensions in two YPAR projects. They noted that a rationale and a challenge of their study was the "complexities and tensions of conducting YPAR with youth who are exposed routinely to a standardized curriculum with few opportunities to think, write, engage, challenge, and discuss critically socially and culturally relevant issues that impact their daily lives" (p. 112). Sophia had expressed these same concerns before embarking on the classroom communication projects, and thought students might prefer typical school work such as worksheets. These critiques of students' lack of learning opportunities should be themselves critiqued for the ways in which they relocate what has been missing in the curriculum to what is missing in the students themselves. I did not witness or hear about any students requesting their usual schoolwork instead of the projects. What I did observe, however, is that the students did not always take up the projects in the ways that we adults anticipated or desired.

According to Winn and Winn (2016), "YPAR is dependent on youth being invested and interested in the success of the project" (p. 116). This premise aligns with most YPAR literature, but Winn and Winn's first "enduring question" is problematic: "How do we get the youth engaged and get them to lead the process?" (p. 116). Instead I find that youth are already engaged and willing to lead, but sometimes reject the narrow and linear opportunities provided to them. In one of the the two projects, Lawrence Winn recounts what he told two groups of students who were researching policing and Black teachers respectively:

> OK. You guys are on it. Again, this is your project, and Monica, Lance, and I are here to help you. You all come up with questions, interview (protocols), observe, meet with people, learn about the issues, and come up with solutions or recommendations. And y'all have to present at the end (Winn & Winn, 2016, p. 119).

This could be seen as reducing a critical project to a series of steps that could potentially shift the focus away from broader issues and students' connections to them (Pandya, 2012). It is also focused on producing an academic product, which relates to the previous section.

Though one of Winn's students presented at a city meeting and the group gained both funding and confidence as a result, YPAR implementation like this might feel like an imposition to some students and less like "[their] project." On the other hand, some students might welcome a process to follow, rather than a lack of structure or procedures. Xavier wanted more of a concrete plan before Micaela visited

the class. Winn & Winn refer to this as "purposeful scaffolding [and] 'guided participation' in YPAR" (p. 128). I found that Sophia navigated both ways of facilitating projects, sometimes offering structure to students and sometimes changing plans to better accommodate students' interests and ideas. She did, however, expect some sort of an outcome that could be converted to a grade.

Another parallel between this study and Winn and Winn's (2016) study was that some of the students that contributed the most were not always present or conforming to school rules. Two leaders in their study were suspended during the projects for separate confrontations with other students and absent as a result. In this study three of the four focal students had spotty attendance or made frequent comments that could be construed as distracting from or opposing the classroom communication projects. This speaks to the possibility of engaging some of our most marginalized students in projects, but also demonstrates a challenge for teachers, who understandably want their classes to be represented positively outside of the classroom. Pandya (2019) wrote that "teachers might reasonably weigh the risks of their students talking to powerful community members versus the rewards of such a project" (p. 101). Winn and Winn (2016) referred to the challenges of engaging youth in new conversations with the police when the youth had walked out of an earlier meeting as an act of resistance to not being heard. Sophia's concerns about the tenth grade projects being politically or physically risky influenced her decision to "put the brakes on" students' plans. As a result, the ninth grade projects felt more like they were "owned by [the students]" (Winn & Winn, 2016, p. 120) than those in the tenth

grade classes. It is impossible to measure the extent to which these boundaries were needed, the extent to which they kept students safe, and the extent to which they limited students.

One student in Winn and Winn's (2016) study reminded me of Xavier in terms of his skepticism and in terms of his deep critiques of school and society. After reading some policy reports about equity, Pryor said, "School is not interesting. They don't teach us nothing." He also said that White teachers in particular "don't care" and want Black students to "act like them" (p. 126). Lawrence Winn recorded the following exchange with Pryor:

> PRYOR: We know the numbers, but there is nothing we can do about it. Every year it's the same thing - people tell us that we are going to jail.
>
> LAWRENCE: Should we just give up?
>
> PRYOR: It is what it is. We've been talking about stuff like this for years. Nothing has changed (p. 127).

Xavier deemed the class project in this study "pointless," and did not think it could do anything to combat racism. As the adults in the classroom, Sophia and I did not know how to respond because we wanted the students to feel hopeful, not powerless. Our instincts were to respond in the same way that Lawrence Winn did, by encouraging Xavier and the other students that some action could always be taken, however small. The fact that, unlike Winn and Pryor, Sophia and I were not of the same racial identity as the students may have made us more tentative. Sophia decided to bring in Micaela's voice, and explore the idea of self love with Xavier.

It is important to critique the idea of "buy in," especially in critical projects. We have gone astray as researchers and educators if we feel the need to manipulate our participants into feeling hopeful. Winn and Winn (2016) recognized that "Pryor made a valid point about inequities and social change" (p. 127). They also called for our continued work on behalf of youth despite these barriers, saying, "...there has to be a step after this; those of us with privilege and access to forums where youth voices can, indeed, be amplified must open doors, set tables, pull up chairs, and use our positionality to support youth in creating the levers of change they want to see in their communities and schools" (p. 127).

Irizarry's (2009) study brought the ideas of skepticism and self love together when he discussed how his students were initially reluctant to embark on research on Latinx students' experiences in school. Based on their history of schooling, the students did not believe that they would be heard. This was also something that Sophia referenced, and that Winn and Winn (2016) discussed. Irizarry wrote that "students were, understandably, reluctant to take the reins and create a curriculum that foregrounded their communities, histories, literatures, and languages" (p. 90). From Irizarry's perspective, a culturally sustaining curriculum perspective was needed to help repair the damage that had been done to the students, and the pedagogy itself became part of this repair. Irizarry (2009) wrote,

> This shift in engagement, from students with minimal investment in schooling (not to be confused with a lack of interest in education) to scholars with a passion for learning, was facilitated by an engagement with content that was

> connected to students' lives and interests, a core aspect of culturally sustaining approaches to teaching and learning (p. 91).

A culturally sustaining approach was discussed previously as a YPAR entry point, but can also help YPAR projects avoid deficit perspectives of students when they are not engaged in class projects. Sophia's conversation with Xavier was a way of addressing his skepticism without trying to change his mind or convince him to be more hopeful. Together self love and skepticism set other possibilities for projects in motion.

Power, Purpose, and Positionality

In McIntyre's (2000) original and still relevant definition of YPAR, students' commitment to taking action is one of three vital components. In this dissertation, I have discussed how students' topics and plans were at times controlled in the school YPAR context, and the requirement that students be committed to the projects might be seen as another instance of control: this time over students' mindsets. When the students had their own ideas about the project topic of racism, we usually tried to encourage a more hopeful outlook than all of the students necessarily felt. Sophia and I did this with what we thought were the students' best interests in mind, but we did not consider the ways in which this distracted from their opportunities to authentically express their ideas and views of the topic. Their knowledge was not fully recognized, and this study was similar to other YPAR studies that diminished alternatives that the students brought up that did not match our own ideas of a commitment to action.

One related complexity that this study revealed was that we as adults had different purposes for the projects than we wanted the students to have. Sophia's primary purposes were that she wanted the students to learn, and that she wanted them to feel empowered through the projects. She hoped that the students would be engaged through the primary purpose of making a difference in the fight against racism. (There was also the purpose of assigning and receiving grades that dominated the projects.) We do not know what the students saw as their primary purposes, or whether Sophia wanted to fight racism herself through the projects. Instead it seems that there are two different critical projects being offered: Sophia's project is empowering her students, and their project is fighting against racism. The idea of a teacher and researcher empowering students is prevalent in YPAR, but it contains an underlying deficit lens with the assumption that students can obtain power through their participation in school, and that they do not already have power in their own right. Xavier critiques this in his conversation with Sophia about self love when she says she wants him to feel proud. He corrects her, emphasizing that he already is proud of his family and culture, even though he is rejecting the idea that the class project will be helpful.

As the project developed, I began to have more questions about the appropriateness of adults, especially white adults, asking youth of color to work toward community problems that they did not create. My and Sophia's positionality as white women limited the ways in which we viewed the projects on racism and could lead the students. Sophia recognized this and invited Micaela's contribution

which underscored that the most important thing the youth should do is to love themselves. In other words, they should turn their efforts inward for their own nourishment and that of their cultures and families, rather than performing a version of social justice work that fit more easily into school. This was one consideration that led to my recommendation to expand the idea of critical work, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Limitations

This study was limited in multiple ways that have been previously discussed in my methods and findings chapters. It focused on one class of ninth graders and one teacher. Because of the online learning environment, the data was limited. There was often very little student participation and work completion, so not all students' experiences and views are represented in the data. The ways in which students participated were also limited. Only two or three times during the entire semester did I glimpse several students' faces, as most students kept their cameras off. Only a few students consistently unmuted themselves to speak out loud in the Zoom classroom, while most posted in the Zoom chat instead. Many students preferred to chat privately with Sophia, so their contributions are missing from my analysis.

The pandemic context, as well as other related upheaval, created a very unusual site for this study. The undercurrent of intersecting traumas impacted how the teacher, the students, and I experienced the classroom communication projects. In fact, the idea of a "site" in this study is complex and may be problematic, as students

shared the site of the online classroom but were simultaneously in other sites that affected their participation.

As a result of these limitations, the pace of the classroom was much slower than a typical classroom. I collected pieces of multimodal data wherever I could, but much of what was happening was not available to me. I interpreted meaning from these limited sources as a transliteracies researcher with my own context and positionality, but these interpretations represent an exploration and a starting point for future research and practice, rather than a definitive assessment of this pedagogy. In the next section, I offer some recommendations for next steps.

Recommendations for Research and Practice

The authors of the transliteracies framework suggested a "pedagogy of transliteracies" (Smith et al., 2018, p. 20) that influenced the development of this study. It included three moves for educators: planning for emergence, practicing relational reflexivity, and surfacing critical lenses. In this study, emergence was a critical aspect of the classroom communication projects, in conjunction with a cultural epistemology YPAR approach (Caraballo et al., 2017). In the subsections that follow, I will take inspiration from emergence and youth epistemologies to make suggestions for teacher practice and future scholarly research.

Recommendations for Teacher Practice

This study found that implementing classroom communication projects in school literacy classrooms has unique joys and challenges. Sophia was able to push back against some of these school constraints, and also expose tensions that required more time, attention, and navigation. The following learnings are offered as starting points for teachers who are doing this work.

Loosen Conceptions of YPAR

It is important to conceptualize YPAR as a nonlinear iterative process more than a linear process that emphasizes one culminating product. The more student-centered the YPAR project, the messier and more unpredictable the project is likely to be (from an adult perspective anyway). However, the messiness contains multiple, varied, and unexpected opportunities for learning. The rich discussions that the students had with each other when they were brainstorming project topics and ideas helped them to draw from and build upon their existing knowledge, transliteracies practices, and critical lenses. This classroom dialogue was valuable in its own right and not only as part of producing the final projects. In fact, much more time could have been spent exploring students' ideas. (This would have been much easier in an in-person classroom.) I wonder what might have happened if the projects had fanned out in some of those other directions, such as if the critique of Disney had gained just a bit more traction. Through my analysis, I saw my own and Sophia's attempts to keep the projects on track and make them manageable, which is

understandable. However, in doing so, we encouraged some ideas and ignored others without realizing it, probably due to our overarching goal of helping students to produce a project that they were proud of.

This YPAR project was not linear. The project plans changed course for the whole class and for individuals. The first activist they contacted did not respond, and Micaela's visit was initially delayed. Halfway through, students' interest in some project options dwindled, and most moved to the new self love family option that had not previously existed. If Sophia had required the students to stick to predetermined plans (theirs or hers), many students would have missed out on the chance to communicate with their families, which ended up being meaningful. In another twist, one of the students changed his final essay into a project of sorts, indicating that he wanted to show his grandmother what he learned about working alongside her in the family butcher shop.

Some of the students who were most involved in the projects never ultimately completed them, but their contributions and learning should not be discounted. Samira and Xavier deepened and changed the projects, and their participation should be valued. The students who were completing the children's book only did half of it and I do not believe it was ever shared with an outside-classroom audience, but they shared with Sophia and me that the tale of a new Korean student was inspired by their own families' immigration experiences. They spoke eloquently and emotionally in a breakout room, and these were powerful moments, even if the project did not move beyond the classroom as originally planned.

It strikes me that trusting students (however their projects unfold) sends a powerful message that they have what it takes to communicate meaningfully with outside-audiences. This stance counters deficit thinking about marginalized youths' literacies. The stance is more important than the product, and the journey is more important than the destination. An incomplete project is not a waste of time. Students were learning, and we hoped they felt valued through their participation in the projects.

Students' multimodal compositions should be honored just as much as their text-based ones. Even with technological advances, classwork and student assignments do not adequately reflect the multitude of transliteracies practices that students utilize. The type of literacy that counts in school is outdated, yet it is difficult to make change when oral interviews and Youtube playlists are not easily quantified in gradebooks. Logistically, educators do not have experience evaluating these multimodal compositions. Philosophically, many may worry that these modes are not as legitimate as written essays, and that they have a responsibility to prepare students in the more traditional modes of schooling. Both of these issues need to be grappled with in order to open up more access to literacy learning, especially for bilingual students and other students who have been harmed by the enduring devotion to a narrowly defined academic literacy in school.

Students' communications (with both public and private audiences) are opportunities for literacy learning. When I asked Sophia what she thought students had learned through the project, she emphasized the dynamic and sophisticated ways

in which they were composing with their audiences in mind. This occurred throughout the projects, when they were planning, engaging in, and reflecting upon their outside-classroom communications.

When students were reaching out to the first activist, they disagreed with Sophia's advice to address her with "Ms.," arguing that the honorific would not be well-received by the twenty-year-old. They made a convincing case that called into question the static rules we teach, and instead took into account their own (more relevant) generational norms. Similarly, we had read her posts on Instagram, and Sophia and I thought we were being current by inviting the students to message her there. The students informed us that email would be a better option to stand out because Instagram messages were rife with messages from bots. They worked collectively to compose an email that conveyed their hope to speak with her. Though they were disappointed that she did not ultimately respond, they were learning through their attempt to contact her, and this served as practice for reaching out to Micaela next.

The classroom conversations about how to welcome Micaela (whether or not to use the meme to break the ice and how much to plan for the visit) really mattered to the students because of the novelty and importance of having someone new come speak with them about their topic. The interaction that the students had with Micaela affected the students deeply, even though most did not speak to her directly. Their comments after her visit showed they were listening, and that they were impacted by having a local Chicana leader come speak with them about racism. It validated their

experiences and also provided something that was missing in the classroom: an adult who had firsthand experience of racism (unlike Sophia and me). Micaela's visit was part of the students' research phase, and shows the importance of outside-classroom communications that occur throughout the projects, not just as part of the culminating products. In fact, part of the power of the conversation with Micaela was that it did not have a specific product or outcome attached to it. The students and Micaela together directed the emergent dialogue in more organic ways. Sharing song recommendations became the unexpected focus, and was a catalyst for bringing in new perspectives, histories, and texts in the moment. Micaela was also affected by the students. She told me that she was as nervous as they were before the classroom visit, and that their questions delighted her. She also told me that she viewed them as her constituents, which reminded me of the ways in which dialogue with outside-classroom audiences can position students in more powerful roles.

Surprisingly, students' private communications with their families and friends were just as powerful, new, and even daunting. Students considered how to make their parents feel comfortable and respected when they were sharing hard stories. They showed thoughtfulness and maturity as interviewers. As a result, the role of being a loving daughter or son was part of the projects for many students.

We should broaden what counts as a critical project to include what matters most to students. YPAR projects have typically been focused on an overtly critical (and general) project, and most of the topics in Sophia's classes reflect this: fighting racism, improving youth mental health, and helping the homeless. In one of Sophia's

tenth grade classes, the students saw school re-opening as an issue they wanted to work on, but Sophia was uncomfortable with this and steered them toward another issue that they had brought up, the lack of student motivation. Both of these topics were different from those in the other classes. School re-opening was specific, local, and imminent, and these aspects made it particularly engaging to the students and particularly intimidating for Sophia. In wanting to protect the students from potential disappointment, she discouraged them from engaging in the issue that was most pressing in their lives. She preferred the more generalized topics, and saw these as safer and more hopeful. These topics could also be seen as more daunting and less hopeful because they are so entrenched, but engaging with them in this general way is almost protective: no one expects homelessness or racism to be solved, but people can feel that they made a positive contribution. Expectations are low, and so is disappointment. Interpreted this way, projects can provide hope, but it may be a hollow version of hope that pacifies rather than encourages appropriate anger and action.

I suggest we move beyond narrow definitions of social justice work and view students' engagement in their own ideas, interests, and concerns as the critical project. Two questions could help to focus classroom communication projects and also to serve as a springboard for emergent critical work:

1. What problem or topic would you like to explore?
2. Who could you communicate with about this topic?

The first question moves beyond the idea of a problem (the focus of this study), and illustrates that anything could be viewed through a critical lens. It also centers the unfolding communication rather than a final product that addresses the problem, which was the focus in this study. In a previous pilot study that I did, students designed skateboards to represent themselves. In Sophia's previous Genius Hour projects, a student researched the history and significance of lowrider cars. YPAR projects could be done about these topics, and they would be more specifically tied to students' lives. The combination of honoring students' interests and engaging them in outside-classroom dialogue positions them as both knowers and learners. The second question does not specify whether the students would be learning from their audience, or if they would be teaching their audience. Too often, YPAR projects have presented these interactions as a binary. This study showed that students and their outside-classroom audiences are partners in dialogue, both learning from each other. The version of YPAR that confines audience interaction to students' monologic presentation of their findings at the end of projects misses many learning opportunities.

Anticipate Tensions, Paradoxes, and Contradictions

Much work is needed to normalize the inevitable challenges of doing critical work within the institution of school. It makes sense that classroom communication projects are extremely difficult to implement in school. As much as we talk about the importance of student-centered learning, the vast majority of schools are grounded in

rational and positivist ideas of learning that have not changed much through the years. Teachers without specific lesson plans (with end results in mind) are seen as shirking their duties. The rule-dominated logistics of classroom and school operations are designed to control students' minds and bodies in the name of safety, efficiency, and curriculum coverage. Surprises are seen as risky and are discouraged. How can we then begin to interrupt these norms with YPAR that focuses on the emergence of youth-driven projects?

Rather than trying to resolve the contradictions that are often hidden, we can focus on recognizing them and using them as opportunities for both student and teacher learning. Drawing attention to the paradoxes of doing critical work in school is an important first step, rather than ignoring them or smoothing them over. This involves noticing when students' participation is flowing, and then when and why it gets stuck. The stuck places and moments in this study offered us important lessons. We all got stuck when Xavier and others expressed doubt rather than optimism throughout the study, and this became important for all of our learning. The contradiction for us was that a student involved in the class project to fight racism did not believe in it. The contradiction for Xavier was that a class project could do anything to fight racism. At first both Sophia and I tried to convince Xavier that change was possible, even if it was on a small scale, which seemed to keep everyone stuck. Later Sophia chose to listen more deeply to Xavier, and in doing so, they co-created a new direction for the projects that was more meaningful to him and

others. Movement became possible again, because of both of their learning and contributions.

The contradictions that were never resolved, in regard to 1) what counted as legitimate project work and 2) the balance of control and freedom/risk, were still brought to light in useful ways. Sophia was in the difficult position of valuing the projects and also ensuring that they fit into school. Her reflections and views helped illuminate the barriers, and this is an important step in working to mitigate them.

Embrace Teacher Collaboration

The previous two recommendations are difficult, and educators should work with other educators engaged in classroom communication projects. In this study Sophia implemented a classroom communication project, a new pedagogy, despite a wide variety of challenges. We did not know what contradictions and tensions she and the students would face beforehand, and did our best to navigate them as they arose. Sophia was grateful that I was there, but I was not able to provide the same support as a teaching colleague because I was not in the same context and facing the same pressures. However, my presence was likely a factor in the way that the projects unfolded differently in the ninth and tenth grades. Sophia felt more supported in the ninth grade because of the ways in which I could provide ideas in the moment during class or afterward, and as a result she felt more comfortable "letting go" and following the students. In the interviews we talked about what happened in the tenth grade classes when she was on her own and felt the need to "put the brakes on"

students' topics and plans. She still felt like she had made the right choices, but she also reflected that she could have been more open with the students about the fact that the topic of returning to in-person school was upsetting for her. Our conversation gave her an opportunity to reflect and think about alternatives, even though there were not easy solutions.

Working together gave us a chance to celebrate our own and the students' learning. Sophia was proud that she had overcome her fears of how they would all be represented, and began to revel in the risk of getting out into the world because of the ways in which it more closely aligned with her ideas of empowering students. Similarly, she came to love the ways in which Xavier was challenging her thinking. She referred to the turning point conversation with him as "magic" and "a light bulb" moment. I validated when she followed her teaching instincts into unknown territory instead of staying in safe and familiar places.

It is interesting to imagine how this class project might have unfolded differently if Sophia had been prepared for the specific types of challenges she discovered, and if she had the opportunity to discuss these with other teachers. I can imagine how helpful it would be if teachers who were doing these sorts of projects could discuss the fact that they would likely encounter tensions related to control, legitimacy, and representation. They could reflect and share ideas about navigating these tensions, and offer each other support, alternatives, and suggestions. Making space for this kind of professional dialogue could allow them to better understand an emergent approach philosophically and practically, and bolster its sense of legitimacy.

It could also allow them to challenge each other as critical friends when they may be unnecessarily controlling students' projects or defaulting to a text-driven, academic English lens.

There are other ideas that come to mind about how teachers could support each other. They could practice an emergent approach with colleagues and observe each others' classrooms, and develop new evaluation paradigms that better reflect students' learning in classroom communication projects. They could help each other find spaces in their curricula for projects, amidst their various other teaching responsibilities. They could work together to address how teacher positionality impacts students' plans and project topics. As it unfolds, the teacher collaboration itself is emergent learning that would likely reveal other important mobilities and immobilities related to the unique identities and contexts of the participants engaged in classroom communication projects. This spirit of emergence and exploration should be part of future research as well.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study points to multiple avenues for future research that is focused on pedagogy related to emergence and youth epistemologies. I hope to engage in some of this work, and also to collaborate with and learn from other researchers who are also exploring these issues. The following ideas provide some starting points for researchers.

Study Classroom Communication Projects in Other Contexts

Conducting similar studies would be useful, especially in in-person literacy classrooms, because the context of this study was so specific, unusual, and limited. The way that emergent projects unfold depends on the participants, the contexts, and the topics and plans that the students make. It would be interesting to look for commonalities and differences across the projects, in terms of the students' views and transliteracies practices. For example, self love in this study can be seen in two ways that may or may not relate to other classroom communication projects. First of all, Micaela suggested it as a direct response to racism, the students' project topic. Her words were remixed in the classroom and used to address Xavier's skepticism and inspire the individual family appreciation projects. Self love was manifested in the ways in which students honored their communities' knowledge, resilience, and power. This connects to the idea of valuing YPAR as an epistemology, which could be present in other projects even if self love was not overtly discussed.

As researchers, we can use transliteracies tools to trace mobilities and immobilities and students' transliteracies practices. YPAR literature has not typically foregrounded students' language and literacy practices in detail. Studying how students are composing as part of YPAR brings up deeper ideological issues that are important. The ideas of emergence, uptake, resonance, and scale can allow us to dive deep into a moment to better understand students' and societal lenses that can open up or cut off opportunities for equity and learning. For example, the different characterizations of racism in this study that were revealed through the use of these

tools, ranging from colorblindness to anti-racism and foregrounding BLM rather than Latinx issues, warrant further attention and discussion.

YPAR research can incorporate ethnographic methods and an inquiry stance to study students' communications with outside-classroom audiences throughout the course of the projects. As previously mentioned, students' interactions and dialogue during YPAR has not often been the focus of research, if it has been included at all. The students' leveraged their transliteracies practices in these pivotal moments and took on new classroom roles because it was needed: real people were coming to talk with them. This created an ongoing opportunity for novelty, for the students' ideas to be valued beyond school, and for unexpected things to happen. The culminating conversations and texts were also important in the classroom communication projects, but were not the only story. In fact, this study was made up of a multitude of stories, only some of which were reflected in this written dissertation. Other research on YPAR could utilize an ethnographic lens to tell other stories of the complexities and opportunities within classroom communication projects.

Build a Body of Research about YPAR Failures and Skeptics

It is important that YPAR researchers share and investigate stories of YPAR gone awry instead of ignoring it in order to better understand the immense challenges of doing critical work in hegemonic spaces like school. The body of literature about YPAR is glowing, and researchers simply do not publish their YPAR fails. This is a shame, because we could learn so much from the difficulties to inform future YPAR

implementation and research. Because of YPAR's importance, literacy researchers seem hesitant to turn their critical lenses on the ways in which YPAR can be co-opted (Caraballo et al., 2017) or contradictory, especially in school. The issues of representation, control, and legitimacy are always present in YPAR, yet we do not discuss them. I remember implementing a YPAR project in a first year composition course at UCSC, and I was hesitant when the students chose the topic of housing challenges in Santa Cruz. In addition to working as a graduate student instructor, I also worked in residential life, and I could not help worrying that my students' investigations and critiques would reach my employer and affect me negatively. Every YPAR educator must navigate how to share power with students, and future research on how these decisions are made (and their consequences) would be illuminating. In the ninth grade classes, Sophia was able to give students enough of a say in the direction of the projects that they remained engaged in them. In the tenth grade classes, her fears of risk caused her to take some of the decisions out of the students' hands. These students became less engaged in the projects.

Another topic worthy of more investigation is student skepticism in YPAR. Through this study, I learned to appreciate skepticism, and so did Sophia. Xavier's skepticism was warranted, and it made me remember other instances of student skepticism in my previous research. Most of the YPAR research does not address the fact that there were likely at least a few skeptics in the classroom, or even moments of skepticism. In this study, skepticism deepened the level of analysis for everyone, and resulted in another project option that seemed to be a better fit for the students. As

mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation, students' skepticism is a fitting enactment of critical literacy. Let's not shy away from it or demonize it. Instead let's explore it, and celebrate the brave students who are willing to go against the grain and take a stand.

Research How Teachers Think about Emergence

We need to better understand teachers' knowledge and views of the role of emergence in teaching and learning. To Sophia, not knowing what would happen in her classroom was concerning because it undermined her view of good teaching as teaching that was carefully planned with the standards in mind. Even though she saw that the students were doing literacy work that related to the same standards as part of the projects, it was difficult for her logistically and philosophically to fully embrace emergence. This makes sense given the immense pressure on teachers, and the responsibility they feel to students as a result. Sophia wanted her students to learn and to be prepared to be successful in the rest of their high school careers. It seemed risky to her to deviate from a planned curriculum and open it up to alternatives. That said, the emergent activity was what brought her (and the students) the most joy in the projects. Those unexpected moments of shared learning delighted and surprised her, and helped her to continue to navigate the tensions she faced.

One area of inquiry could be how and why perspectives of emergence vary among teachers of different grade levels and content areas. In some forms of early childhood education, emergent curriculum is embraced. This is based on diverse research about its benefits, and also likely by the fact that the early childhood

environment is less constrained by high-stakes curricular standards, mandates, and accountability. In early childhood, these are seen as inappropriate, yet they are increasing realities as students get older, so much so that they do not allow much room for emergence. As researchers we need to raise questions about why we trust preschoolers to guide their own learning more than we trust high schoolers. A quick response might be that we know more about what high schoolers will need to be successful in the system of school and higher education, but this too should be questioned. The sorts of transliteracies practices that students were demonstrating in this study were often more in tune with emerging and dynamic communications than traditional school literacy practices. Rather than asking high schoolers to continue to conform to an outmoded curriculum, we should make room for them to lead the way. Through emergence, learning could truly be more relevant and student-centered.

Lastly we can work with teachers to investigate places of convergence and divergence between emergence and school curricula. Sophia was surprised when she found that she could plan for the classes in an open way using reflective, flexible assignments. She also realized that all students were going to be engaging in communication with their outside-audiences, so the classes were engaged in parallel processes, even if the specific details differed. I noticed that Sophia was much better at implementing an emergent curriculum than she gave herself credit for. The way that she facilitated student dialogue was something that she was proud of, but that she did not necessarily see as tied to an emergent curriculum. As an experienced educator, she found rich learning opportunities along the way in the students' projects. Future

research could also investigate the connection between teachers' lack of confidence in their skills as emergent educators and the ways in which they have been de-professionalized in schools and excluded from curricular decisions for their students.

Studying YPAR through a transliteracies lens in this study revealed more questions than answers, and hopefully also illuminated the importance and complexity of future research and practice. Insights from both fields can make a contribution, especially by focusing on the immobilities in order to change them.

Conclusions

Caraballo et al. (2017) discussed the importance of YPAR's evolution. This study suggests that pursuing the above research areas would help YPAR to expand possibilities in "the struggle for educational justice" (Morrell, 2008, p. 21). In a recent talk about racism, the writer Ijeoma Oluo (lecture, April 4, 2023) distinguished between "harm reduction" and "abolition or revolution," arguing that we must know which of the two we are doing and also that the former can create space for the latter. In other words, educators and scholars engaged in critical work must also recognize the constraints within which we operate. The recommendations I have offered for both educators and scholars suggest ways to work together at seeing persistent limitations, resisting them, and inventing alternatives.

The unexpected moments, connections, and learning that emerged from students' communications with outside-classroom audiences were compelling to both

the students and the teacher, yet there was also a pull in the opposite direction to control the topics, plans, and mindsets of the students. The students' knowledge, participation, and development drove the projects, but was not always seen as legitimate in its own right, without a school-sanctioned practice or product alongside it. These constraints of school are immobilities that are difficult to navigate, even by researchers and educators like us who seek to expand literacy and share power with students in YPAR and other social justice pedagogies.

Given the totality of my research, I conclude that emergence and youth epistemologies warrant more attention in YPAR and critical literacy research and practice, especially in terms of their relationship to ideological constraints related to representation, legitimacy, and control. This study builds upon existing YPAR research and expands it with a focus on what has been overlooked: students' communication with outside-classroom audiences, students' transliteracies practices and views, and the teacher's intentions and views. Self love and skepticism emerged in this study and shifted the focus from academic literacy to a more culturally sustaining pedagogy. While this study points to some recommendations for researchers and teachers, more research is needed to help YPAR continue to evolve.

This study showed one way of answering Caraballo and colleagues' (2017) call for the evolution of YPAR by focusing on outside-classroom communications. These communications sparked an emergent approach that counters school ideologies of teacher control and buy-in. The outside-classroom dialogue centers youth epistemologies, views, and literacy practices that push against the limited modes and

practices that are considered valid in school. Lastly, these types of projects make both students and teachers "good scared" because of the ways in which they reach out into the world. This study found that concerns about representation are easier to shift than concerns about control or legitimacy.

This study explored some of the immobilities of the school context and ideologies, and also the mobile spaces created by the students and sometimes by the teacher. The constraints were difficult to navigate, even by researchers and educators like us who sought to expand literacy and share power with students. There was a default "academic literacy" in this project that perpetuated deficit views of multilingual students' literacy practices. Mr. Happy took a leadership role in the projects, welcoming Micaela and creating a playlist, but he did not write the final essay and did not pass the class. The use of the transliteracies lens in this study showed that the students were drawing from and developing sophisticated literacy practices, though these were not always recognized.

The main challenge of YPAR cited in the literature is the lack of student "buy in." This study unsettles the premise of buy in. Paradoxically, Xavier's skepticism was what actually helped the projects to be "owned by the students," in Winn's & Winn's (2016) terms. The students "morphed" this project toward a more cultural and critical approach, and, in doing so, moved toward pedagogies related to testimonio and culturally sustaining teaching. Caraballo and colleagues' (2017) call for YPAR's evolution is important because of the ways in which YPAR in school continues to be seen as a linear and text-driven process culminating in a public, monologic, and

academic final product. All of these aspects could and should be interrogated to focus on the emergence of youth interests, literacies, and knowledge.

AFTERWORD

This study took place during the 2020-2021 school year, a time of extreme difficulty for all students and for my own oldest child. For my son, that year was the beginning of a period of mental health struggles that has lasted two years, included two hospitalizations and month-long stays in residential treatment, a neuropsychological evaluation, medication adjustment, and lots of family and individual therapy.

His latest discharge home from residential treatment was a little over three months ago, and just two weeks before a trip he was scheduled to take to Washington DC with other teens from our synagogue. After much discussion, my husband and I decided to let him go on the trip, which was focused on youth advocacy around social issues. While there, my son visited important historical sites and the capitol, where the group lobbied our representatives for changes around the issues of health care, reproductive rights, and mental health services. Their speeches incorporated Jewish texts and values. My son was in the group focused on mental health, and composed a speech with his peers. His portion of the speech was the most personal: he shared some of his struggles and how he was fortunate to be able to access supportive counseling at his school. Together his group asked that more mental health care services be provided in schools by delivering their speech to a member of our representative's team at his congressional office. The youth leader from our synagogue told me that the person who was listening was visibly surprised when my son shared his personal experience as part of the speech.

Two weeks after the group returned, the youth shared these same speeches with our community at a Friday evening Shabbat service. After the service, our son was approached by many different adults in the community, who expressed appreciation for his honesty and vulnerability. His grandparents, who watched on Zoom, texted messages of pride ("nachas" in Yiddish) and love to us and to him. In the weeks after, he has continued to hear about how sharing his story has made a difference to individuals. I like to wonder about the congressional staffer who was surprised by my son's words, and how those words (that include both pain and hope) added to the rising chorus that is calling for more solutions to the inadequate response to teen mental health.

My study calls attention to other inadequacies, specifically the ways in which youths' critical work is too often constrained. My own son's experience fit a more typical YPAR approach and was powerful, but the students in my study also had powerful experiences, by pushing and expanding the boundaries of YPAR to make room for what they needed at that time: personal connections with their families rather than public displays, honest discussions about the difficulty of making change in a racist society, and wisdom from elders who shared their identities. As educators, researchers, parents, and community members, we can support youth by learning from them about their ever-evolving needs, perspectives, and goals.

Appendix A

Interview Questions for the Teacher (3 Interviews) and Guest Speaker (1 Interview)

Teacher Interview Questions:

Before Class Communication Project

1. What do you think will happen in the class communication project? What do you hope will happen?
2. What do you think you will like about it? What do you think you will dislike about it?
3. What do you think will be the easiest part of the project? What do you think will be the most challenging? For you and for the students?
4. How do you think this approach will be different from and similar to how your class usually goes? What do you think about that?
5. How do you expect that students will communicate, in terms of choosing their audiences, modes, language, and roles?
6. Do you think this approach will work better with some kinds of students than with other kinds of students? Please explain.
7. What teaching and learning goals do you want to prioritize through this project?
8. What do you want your students to gain from doing this project?
9. How can I support you in this project?

During Class Communication Project

1. What is happening in the class communication project? What is it like for you?
2. What are you liking about the project? What don't you like about it?
3. What is the easiest part of the project? What is the most challenging part? For you and for the students?
4. How is this approach different from and similar to how your class usually goes? What do you think about that?
5. How are students communicating, in terms of choosing their audiences, modes, language, and roles?
6. Is this approach working better with some kinds of students than with other kinds of students? Please explain.
7. What teaching and learning goals are you prioritizing through this project?
8. What do you want your students to gain from doing this project?
9. How can I support you in this project?

10. Has anything surprised you about doing this project? As a result of your project, what do you hope will happen next?

After Class Communication Project

1. What happened in the class communication project? What was it like for you?
2. What did you like about the project? What didn't you like about it?
3. What was the easiest part of the project? What was the most challenging part? For you and for the students?
4. How was this approach different from and similar to how your class usually went? What did you think about that?
5. What were the ways that engaging with audiences outside of the classroom affected your teaching in this course?
6. What did you learn about your students when they communicated with beyond-classroom audiences? How were the roles that they took on in the communication different from and similar to the roles that they usually took on in class?
7. How were the two project cycles similar to and different from each other?
8. Did this approach influence a) your understanding of student learning b) your understanding of teaching writing c) your views about yourself as a teacher d) your enjoyment, motivation, or engagement with your class?
9. What are the primary challenges of this approach? What are the benefits of this approach?
10. Do you think this approach works better with some kinds of students than with other kinds of students? Please explain. Do you think this approach works better with some kinds of teachers than with other kinds of teachers? Please explain.
11. Would you choose to do another communication project with your class? Why or why not? Would you recommend doing a communication project to another teacher? Why or why not? What advice would you give other teachers who implement class communication projects?
12. Has anything surprised you about doing this project? As a result of your project, what do you hope will happen next?

Guest Speaker Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about how you got involved in this class's communication project. What happened? What was it like for you?

2. What was the easiest part about communicating with the students? What was the most challenging part?
3. What did you like about communicating with the students? What didn't you like about it?
4. What was your role in your communication with the students? What did you do and say? How was this different from how you usually interact as a [your position]? Did you like that? Why or why not?
5. How did the students respond to you?
6. Do these sorts of projects work better with some students more than others? Please explain. Do you think this approach works better with some teachers more than others? Please explain.
7. How do you think students learn through projects like these?
8. Would you choose to participate in another communication project and would you recommend it to others? Why or why not? What advice would you give to others who participate?
9. Would you recommend that teachers do classroom communication projects in the future? Why or why not?
10. Has anything surprised you about doing this project? As a result of your project, what do you hope will happen next?

Appendix B

Google Form Reflection Examples

2/1/21

1. What is the topic, issue, or problem we are discussing in class?
2. Why is this topic, issue, or problem important?
3. What do you think about it?
4. What do you think other people (inside and outside of our class) think about it?
5. What do you wonder about this topic, issue, or problem? This one is really important, because it will help me to know what YOU want to know.
6. How do you think we should find out more about this topic, issue, or problem?

3/3/21

1. Did you participate in Micaela's visit in any way? How?
2. What happened? What was it like?
3. How did your audience (Micaela) affect what you or other students said and how it was said?
4. How did the audience (Micaela) respond?
5. How did your purpose or goal affect what was said and how it was said?
6. How did the fact that it was a Zoom class visit affect what was said and how it was said?
7. What seemed like the easiest part of communicating with the audience (Micaela)?
8. What seemed like the hardest part of communicating with the audience (Micaela)?
9. What did you like about communicating with an audience outside of your classroom?
10. What didn't you like about communicating with an audience outside of your classroom?
11. What help was needed and how was it given?
12. What would you suggest could improve the communication in the future?
13. Did anything surprise you?
14. What do you hope will happen next?
15. Any other comments?

4/20/21

Playlist

1. Why did you decide to make a playlist for the project?
2. Who was your audience? Who did you share the playlist with? What happened?
3. How did who your audience was affect what songs you shared and how you shared them?
4. How did your audience respond to you or the playlist itself? What did they think about it? If you didn't hear from them, how do you think they would have responded?
5. How do you think a playlist could help fight against racism?
6. What was the easiest part of making and sharing the playlist?
7. What was the hardest part of making and sharing the playlist?
8. What did you like about communicating with an audience outside of your classroom?
9. What didn't you like about communicating with an audience outside of your classroom?
10. What help was needed and how was it given?
11. What would you suggest could improve the project in the future?
12. Did anything surprise you?
13. What do you hope will happen next?
14. Any other comments?

Children's Book

1. Why did you decide to make a children's book for the project?
2. Who was your audience? Who did you share the children's book with? What happened?
3. How did who your audience was affect what you wrote?
4. How did your audience respond to you or the children's book itself? What did they think about it? If you didn't get to share it yet, how do you think they would have responded?
5. How do you think a children's book could help fight against racism?
6. What was the easiest part of making and sharing the children's book?
7. What was the hardest part of making and sharing the children's book?
8. What did you like about communicating with an audience outside of your classroom?

9. What didn't you like about communicating with an audience outside of your classroom?
10. What help was needed and how was it given?
11. What would you suggest could improve the project in the future?
12. Did anything surprise you?
13. What do you hope will happen next?
14. Any other comments?

Individual Project: Family Interview

1. Why did you decide to interview a family member for the project?
2. Who did you interview? What happened?
3. How did who the person was affect how you communicated with them in the interview?
4. How did the person respond? What did they think about it? If you didn't get to interview them yet, how do you think they would have responded?
5. How do you think an interview could help fight against racism?
6. What was the easiest part of doing the interview?
7. What was the hardest part of doing the interview?
8. What did you like about communicating with an audience outside of your classroom?
9. What didn't you like about communicating with an audience outside of your classroom?
10. What help was needed and how was it given?
11. What would you suggest could improve the project in the future?
12. Did anything surprise you?
13. What do you hope will happen next?
14. Any other comments?

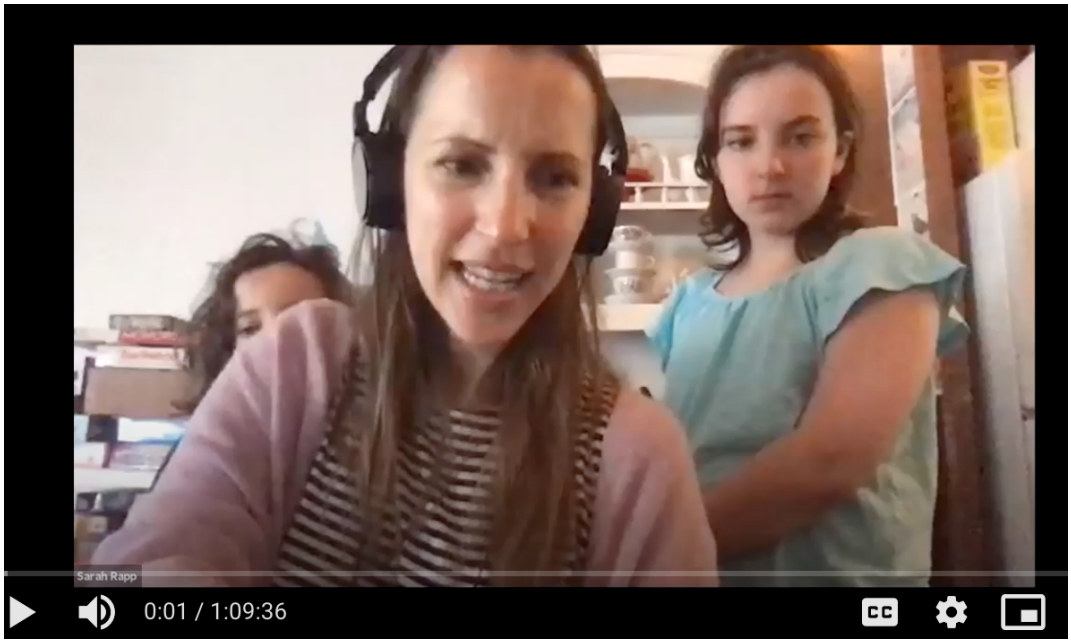
Individual Project: Presentation

1. Why did you decide to create a presentation for the project?
2. Who was your audience? Who did you share the presentation with? What happened?
3. How did who your audience was affect how you communicated with them in the presentation?
4. How did your audience respond? What did they think about it? If you didn't get to share your presentation yet, how do you think they would have responded?

5. How do you think a presentation could help fight against racism?
6. What was the easiest part of doing the presentation?
7. What was the hardest part of doing the presentation?
8. What did you like about communicating with an audience outside of your classroom?
9. What didn't you like about communicating with an audience outside of your classroom?
10. What help was needed and how was it given?
11. What would you suggest could improve the project in the future?
12. Did anything surprise you?
13. What do you hope will happen next?
14. Any other comments?

Appendix C

My Research Context



Appendix D

Multimodal Transcript Excerpt

Unmuting/Speaking Aloud Screen-Sharing/Other Modes	Zoom Chat (public)	
Sophia: **Mr. Happy and Samira have agreed to welcome her.** Sarah: **That's great, I think that's great.** Sophia: **Yeah** Sarah: **Thank you for doing that, Mr. Happy and Samira.** **-** **-** Agent E: **Okay, after that, I think I'll just, after that question, I think I'll ask about the music.** **-**	Mr. Happy: yeah Luna: Im asking her ways can help Luna: Ways we. Can help	Unattributed Jamboard note: *How was your day* [note was moved under the "Who will ask the first question?" question]

16:53

Appendix E

Codebook for Students' Transliteracies Practices

Category	Code	Definition of Code
Taking a Stand	Affirming	Expressing agreement with an idea, example, or plan
	Contesting	Expressing disagreement with an idea, example, or plan
	Reframing	Adjusting the premise or focus of an idea, example, or plan
	Clarifying	Ensuring an idea is clearly understood
Building a Case	Giving Examples	Providing an example from one's life or the world that relates to the idea under discussion
	Quoting	Using words from others to support an idea
	Citing Sources	Attributing others' contributions
	Connecting to Other Texts	Providing an example from another text that relates to the idea under discussion
Thinking Critically	Explaining	Sharing about an idea, plan, or example
	Analyzing	Describing why something has occurred or will occur
	Determining Effects	Sharing potential outcomes of plans or ideas
	Questioning	Asking for more ideas or examples
Communicating Effectively	Summarizing	Distilling an idea or plan to a shorter main point
	Characterizing	Describing what something is like

	Considering the Audience	Making composing choices that fit the audience
Taking Action	Proposing an Action	Giving an idea about what could be done
	Defining Self	Sharing information about who one is or who one is becoming

Appendix F

In Lak Ech: Excerpt of Valdez's (1971) Poem "Pensamiento Serpentino" at a Shopping Center near the School

Appendix G

Sarah's Preliminary Findings Shared with Students (Selected Slides)

What encouraged students' learning and what held students' learning back?

1. What happened **when students planned and prepared to communicate** with their beyond-classroom audiences?
2. What happened **when students interacted and communicated** with their beyond-classroom audiences?
3. What are **students' reflections about their own participation and learning** after the communication with their beyond-classroom audiences?

Beyond-classroom audience = anyone outside the class that we communicated with ([redacted], [redacted], family members, friends)

My Data: Final Project Essays

First Stage of Analyzing My Data = Having Students Involved in Data Analysis

What are **students' reflections about their own participation and learning** after the communication with their beyond-classroom audiences?

- Some students learned more about racism (that it is learned and passed along by family and friends, that it is local and also in our societal systems, that kids should learn about it from a young age, people of color don't have the same opportunities to go to college or own homes, that racism affects people with many different racial and religious identities)
- Some students thought the project was fun (getting to choose what they did, enjoying the experience)

What are **students' reflections about their own participation and learning** after the communication with their beyond-classroom audiences?

- Some students learned alternative ways of learning about a topic (listening to songs about racism)
- Some students appreciated working with other students (the teamwork was helpful in this project and as practice for the future)

What are **students' reflections about their own participation and learning** after the communication with their beyond-classroom audiences?

- Some students appreciated learning communication skills (thinking about what to write in emails)
- Some students felt like they could have worked harder on their projects (rushing the project, not doing their best work)

What are **students' reflections about their own participation and learning** after the communication with their beyond-classroom audiences?

- Some students communicated with their families about racism (they appreciated the struggles that their parents went through and also where they come from)
- Some students said they learned to take better care of themselves (self-care - *related to self-love?*)

What I wonder… (My remaining questions)

- Did any students take on different roles in the project than how they usually interact in class? How? Why?
- What was the project like for the quieter students?
- Would anyone have preferred a different topic or project?
- Was the type of writing/communicating that you did in this class different from what you usually would do in an English class?
- What did you learn about writing/communicating?
- Is there anything you would do differently if you could do the project again?
- How would the project have been different if school was IRL rather than on Zoom? What would have been the advantages and disadvantages?
- This class did smaller group projects and the other class did one large class project. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

Do you have any comments, suggestions, ideas, or questions for me?

Click to add text

Appendix H

Excerpt of Sophia's Interview 1 Transcript

Well, you know what, I just decided that this is the year of experimenting. I think it must have been about, like October, I was just like, you know what, this is the year to experiment and I think, you know, being in grad school again and really like the whole question we had to answer was why - what is education, why are we doing this? What's the purpose? And so, because that's rattling around in my head and I keep being challenged every Thursday, like why are we doing this? With learning styles is there really a basis in science? Are you a visual learner and auditory? What's the basis of that? How do we get to special ed? Like, how are we testing kids? There's a big, there was a big article in yesterday's [newspaper] about the achievement gap. And there's some group in [our county] that's measuring how the achievement gap starts, you know, before kids even start school, but I'm struggling. Because in our class, we talked about is there really an achievement gap? What are we measuring? Are we measuring whiteness? Who decides on standardized tests what culture really is important, and I think that there's enough evidence to point to white culture, It's white culture because that's who's doing well on the tests. And if you're poor or if you're of color, you're not exposed to all of that culture necessarily when you're really little and growing up. And it isn't about, 'Oh these parents don't care about education.' That's never - I have never met a parent who said 'I don't care about my kid's education' ever. I've never met a parent who's like, 'Screw it, it doesn't matter.' But coming from those different backgrounds, is there really a gap? Now, in the same newspaper, there's an article about how the [nearby county] Office of Education has included Native American culture, specifically [local tribe] culture, very specific [local tribe] culture. They're using, I think the [local tribe] baskets, the patterns that they weave into the baskets to teach mathematical concepts. And that's become part of their curriculum. So in my head I'm thinking, 'Yeah, so those kids may have failed standardized tests about those math topics, not because they didn't know them but because the way they asked the question isn't connected to their prior knowledge. Yeah. And I just feel like over the years, you know, working with [the Ethnic Studies] group. Our kids do have a lot of knowledge. They don't come as empty, like, 'Oh, I'm poor and I'm brown so I don't know.' 'Then let me pour all that knowledge into you.' They already know stuff, they already know stuff, and I might not know what this stuff is that they know, but they do know things. Yeah, and they have opinions on things and all of that is valuable, which is not measured on standardized tests. So, that's where I'm hoping that instead of, you know, repeatedly being told, 'Sorry, you don't know the stuff. Nope. Nope. He didn't do well enough. Nope, you're not-'

Maybe we make our own standards, you know, and that's why I'm like, let's read, let's write, let's think and show your thinking in your writing, but then let's learn to collaborate. Let's learn to work together and value what people have to say and what they already think. These essays [from previous semester] the kids wrote, like they're clearly- They care about poor people. Like one of them said, 'I'm blessed. Like I have a roof over my head.' He lives in my neighborhood, so he's not living in some big fancy house. He's like, 'I have a roof over my head and I have food to eat. I can't even'- And he literally was, 'I can't imagine what it's like to be out on the streets.' He really felt for people who were out on the streets. Like, 'That's not fair, we need to do something. We need to help take care of them.' I don't think that's a bad thing to think, you know. But is anybody going to ask you that on a standardized test? How is that going to help democracy? I mean, you know, making sure that we care about people and that people are fed and that they have decent lives. That, that means more to me, you know.

References

Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using Zoom videoconferencing for qualitative data collection: Perceptions and experiences of researchers and participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 18*, 1-8.

Bakhtin, M. (1981). Discourse in the novel. In M. Holquist (Ed.), *The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M. Bakhtin* (C. Emerson and M. Holquist, Trans.). University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. (1986). The problem of speech genres. In C. Emerson & M. Holquist (Eds.), *Speech genres and other late essays* (V.W. McGee, Trans.). University of Texas Press.

Baugh, J. (2000). Chapters 4 and 5 from *Beyond Ebonics: Linguistic pride and racial prejudice.* Oxford University Press.

Behizadeh, N. (2019). Aiming for authenticity: Successes and struggles of an attempt to increase authenticity in writing. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *62*(4), 411-419.

Bertrand, M. (2016). Youth participatory action research and educational transformation: The potential of intertexuality as a methodological tool. *Urban Review, 48*, 15-31. doi:10.1007/s11256-015-0343-8

Bhatt, I., & de Roock, R. (2013). Capturing the sociomateriality of digital literacy events. *Research in Learning Technology, 21*. doi:10.3402/rlt.v21.21281

Bloome, D., Carter, S.P., Christian, B.M., Madrid, S., Otto, S., Shuart-Faris, N., & Smith, M. (2008). *On discourse analysis in classrooms.* Teachers College Press.

Cadiero-Kaplan, K. (2002). Literacy ideologies: Critically engaging the language arts curriculum. *Language Arts*, *79*(5), 372-381.

Cammarota, J., & Fine, M. (2008). *Youth participatory action research: A pedagogy for transformational resistance.* Taylor & Francis.

Caraballo, L., Lozenski, B. D., Lyiscott, J. J., & Morrell, E. (2017). YPAR and Critical Epistemologies: Rethinking Education Research. *Review of Research in Education, 41*(1), 311-336. doi:10.3102/0091732x16686948

Cisneros, S. (1984). *The house on Mango Street.* Vintage.

Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2009). "Multiliteracies": New literacies, new learning. *Pedagogies: An international journal*, *4*(3), 164-195.

Cresswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.

Cruz, C. (2011). LGBTQ street youth talk back: A meditation on resistance and witnessing. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 24*(5), 547-558.

Curwood, J. S., Magnifico, A. M., & Lammers, J. C. (2013). Writing in the wild: Writers' motivation in fan-based affinity spaces. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(8), 677-685.

Davis, B., Sumara, D., & Luce-Kapler, R. (2000). Chapter 2: Learning and teaching structures. In *Engaging Minds: Learning and teaching in a complex world* (pp. 49-101). L. Erlbaum Associates.

Delgado Bernal, D., Burciaga, R., & Flores Carmona, J. (2012). Chicana/Latina *Testimonios*: Mapping the methodological, pedagogical, and political. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 45*(3), 363-372. Doi: 10.1080/10665684.2012.698149

Dockter, J., Haug, D., & Lewis, C. (2010). Redefining rigor: Critical engagement, digital media, and the new English/language arts. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 53*(5), 418-420.

Duke, N. K. (2016). Project-based instruction: A great match for informational texts. *American Educator*, *40*(3), 4-10.

Duncan-Andrade, J., & Morrell, E. (2008). *The art of critical pedagogy: Possibilities for moving from theory to practice in urban schools.* Peter Lang.

Ede, L., & Lunsford, A. A. (1984). Audience addressed/audience invoked: The role of audience in composition theory and pedagogy. *College Composition and Communication*, 35, 155-171.

Ferrera, A. (2019). *My identity is a superpower - Not an obstacle* [Video]. TED. https://www.ted.com/talks/america_ferrera_my_identity_is_a_superpower_not_an_obstacle

Freebody, P. (2017). Critical-literacy education: "The supremely educational event".

Literacies and Language Education, 95-107.

Freedman, S. W., & Ball, A. F. (2004). Ideological Becoming: Bakhtinian concepts to guide the study of language, literacy, and learning. In A. F. Ball & S. W. Freedman (Eds.), *Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language, Literacy, and Learning* (pp. 3-33). Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/cbo9780511755002

Freire, P. (1970/2007). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M.B. Ramos, Trans.). Continuum.

Fromkin, V., & Rodman, R. (1988). *An introduction to language*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Gee, J. P. (1989). Literacy, discourse, and linguistics: Introduction. *The Journal of Education, 171*(1), 5-17.

Gergen, K. J. (2002). The challenge of absent presence. *Perpetual Contact: Mobile Communication, Private Talk, Public Performance*, 227-241. doi:10.1017/cbo9780511489471.018

Grosjean, F. (2012). Bilingualism: A short introduction. In F. Grosjean & P. Li (Eds.), *The psycholinguistics of bilingualism* (pp. 5-25). John Wiley & Sons.

Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). Language as social semiotic. *Language and Literacy in Social Practice*, 23-43.

Heath, S. B. (1982). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school. *Language in Society 11*(1)*,* 49-76.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms.* Cambridge University Press.

Holland, D., Lachicotte, W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C.(1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds.* Harvard University Press.

Irizarry, J. G. (2009). "For us, by us": A vision for culturally sustaining pedagogies forwarded by Latinx youth. In D. Paris & H. S. Alim (Eds.), *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world* (pp. 83-98). Teachers College Press.

Kibler, A. K., & Valdés, G. (2016). Conceptualizing language learners: Socioinstitutional mechanisms and their consequences. *The Modern Language Journal*, *100*(S1), 96-116.

Kress, G. R. (2000). Multimodality. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (Eds.), *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures* (pp. 182-202). Routledge.

Kristeva, J. (1986). Word, dialogue, and novel. In J. Kristeva & T. Moi (Eds.), *The Kristeva reader* (pp. 34-61). Columbia University Press.

Kroskrity, P. V. (2010). Language ideologies–Evolving perspectives. *Society and Language Use*, *7*(3), 192-205.

Labov, W. (2003). Some sociolinguistic principles. In C. B. Paulston & G. R. Tucker (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: The essential readings*, 235-250.

Las Cafeteras. (2017). *If I Was President* [Music Video]. Youtube. tinyurl.com/54x6yrnz

Lemke, J. (1995/2005). *Textual politics: Discourse and social dynamics*. Taylor & Francis.

Lewis, C., & Fabos, B. (2005). Instant messaging, literacies, and social identities. *Reading Research Quarterly*, *40*(4), 470-501.

Lewis, C., & Moje, E. B. (2003). Sociocultural perspectives meet critical theories. *International Journal of Learning*, *10*, 1979-1995.

Love, B. (2014). Urban storytelling: How storyboarding, moviemaking, and hip-hop-based education can promote students' critical voice. *The English Journal, 103*(5), 53-58.

Low, D. E., & Pandya, J. Z. (2019). Issues of validity, subjectivity, and reflexivity in multimodal literacy research and analysis. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, *15*(1).

Low, D. E., & Rapp, S. M. (2021). Youth identities and affinities on the move: Using a transliteracies framework to critique digital dichotomies. In E. Aguilera & J. Z. Pandya (Eds.), Critical literacies in a digital age [Special issue]. *Pedagogies: An International Journal, 16*(2).

Lunsford, A. A., & Ede, L. (1996). Representing audience: "Successful" discourse and disciplinary critique. *College Composition and Communication*, 47(2), 167-179.

Lunsford, A. A., & Ede, L. (2009). Among the audience: On audience in an age of

new literacies. In M. E. Weisner, B. M. Fehler, & A. M. Gonzalez (Eds.), *Engaging audience: Writing in an age of new literacies* (pp. 42-69). National Council of Teachers of English.

Magnifico, A. M. (2012). Audience effects: A bidirectional artifact analysis of adolescents' creative writing. In J. van Aalst, K. Thompson, M. J. Jacobson, & P. Reimann (Eds.), *The Future of Learning: Proceedings of the 10th International Conference of the Learning Sciences* (Vol. 2, pp. 411-415). International Society of the Learning Sciences.

Marciano, J. E., Peralta, L. M., Lee, J. S., Rosemurgy, H., Holloway, L., & Bass, J. (2020). Centering community: Enacting culturally responsive-sustaining YPAR during COVID-19. *Journal for Multicultural Education, 14*(2), 163-175.

Matusov, E. (2020). Pattern-recognition, intersubjectivity, and dialogic meaning-making in education. *Dialogic Pedagogy, 8*, E1-E24.

Meng, Y., Neelon, M., Go, C., & Louie, B. (2022). Exploring challenges, successes, and benefits of online YPAR programming from both nutrition educators and youth's perspectives. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, 54*(7s), S5.

McIntyre, A. (2000). *Inner-city kids: Adolescents confront life and violence in an urban community*. New York University Press.

Michaels, S. (1981). "Sharing time": Children's narrative styles and differential access to literacy. *Language in Society*, *10*(3), 423-442.

Mintrop, H., Sunderman, G. L., & Orfield, G. (2009). Why high stakes accountability sounds good but doesn't work—and why we keep on doing it anyway. UCLA: The Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles. http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8w50w04c

Mirra, N., Filipiak, D., & Garcia, A. (2015). Revolutionizing inquiry in urban English classrooms: Pursuing voice and justice through youth participatory action research. *The English Journal*, *105*(2), 49-57.

Moje, E. B., & Lewis, C. (2007). Examining opportunities to learn literacy: The role of critical sociocultural literacy research. *Reframing Sociocultural Research on Literacy: Identity, Agency, and Power*, 15-48.

Morgan, W. (1997). *Critical literacy in the classroom: The art of the possible.* Routledge.

Morrell, E. (2008). *Critical literacy and urban youth: Pedagogies of access, dissent, and liberation*. Taylor & Francis.

Narayan, K. (2012). *Alive in the writing: Crafting ethnography in the company of Chekhov.* University of Chicago Press.

Noguera, P., Darling-Hammond, L., & Friedlaender, D. (2015). Equal opportunity for deeper learning. *Deeper Learning Research Series*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X16683419

The New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, *66*(1), 60-93.

Pandya, J. Z. (2012). Mandating and standardizing the teaching of critical literacy skills: A cautionary tale. *Theory into Practice*, *51*(1), 20-26.

Pandya, J. Z. (2019). *Exploring critical digital literacy practices: Everyday video in a dual language context.* Routledge.

Pandya, J. Z., & Low, D. E. (2019). Theorizing the addressive audience in children's digital video production. *Written Communication, 00*(0), 1-28.

Pandya, J. Z., Pagdilao, K. C., & Kim, E. A. (2015). Transnational children orchestrating competing voices in multimodal, digital autobiographies. *Teachers College Record*, *117*(7).

Rivera, A., Okubo, Y., Harden, R., Wang, H., & Schlehofer, M. (2022). Conducting virtual youth-led participatory action research during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Participatory Research Methods, 3*(3), 1-18.

Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Schleppegrell, M. (2004). *The language of schooling: A functional linguistics perspective*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Serhan, D. (2020). Transitioning from face-to-face to remote learning: Students' attitudes and perceptions of using Zoom during COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES), 4*(4), 335-3442.

Smith, A., Stornaiuolo, A., & Phillips, N. C. (2018). Multiplicities in motion: A turn to transliteracies. *Theory Into Practice, 57*(1), 20-28. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2017.1390334

Smitherman, G. (2004). Language and African Americans: Movin on up a lil higher. *Journal of English Linguistics*, *32*(3), 186-196.

Solomon, M. (2012). "Why can't you just say, 'It's cute'?" The role of audience in first graders' digital storytelling. *Talking Points, 24*, 1-22.

Stornaiuolo, A., Smith, A., & Phillips, N. C. (2017). Developing a transliteracies framework for a connected world. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *49*(1), 68–91. https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X16683419https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X16683419

Street, B. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice* (Vol. 9). Cambridge University Press.

Street, B. (2000). Literacy events and literacy practices. In Martin-Jones (Ed.) *Multilingual Matters* (pp. 17-29). J. Benjamins.

Street, B. (2003). What's "new" in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, *5*(2), 77-91. https://doi.org/10.1177/1086296X16683419

Street, B. (2013). Applying earlier literacy research in Iran to current literacy theory and policy. *Iranian Journal of Society, Culture & Language, 1*(1), p. 1-9.

Valdez, Luis. (1971). Pensamiento serpentino. In *Early works: Actos, Bernabe and pensamiento serpentino.* El Teatro Campesino.

Vasquez, V. (2000). Our way: Using the everyday to create a critical literacy curriculum. *Primary Voices K-6*, *9*(2), 8-13.

Walsh, J., Khan, A., Ferazzoli, M. T. (2023). Portholes of ethnography: The methodological learning from 'being there' at a distance. *Sociology, 57*(1), 243-252.

Wiley, T. G., & Lukes, M. (1996). English-only and standard English ideologies in the U.S. *TESOL Quarterly*, *30*(3), 511. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587696

Winn, L. T., & Winn, M. T. (2016). "We want this to be owned by you:" The promise and perils of youth participatory action research. In *Youth voices, public spaces, and civic engagement* (pp. 123-142). Routledge.