Somos Escritores/We Are Writers:

Latina Adolescent Girls' and Their Parents' Writing, Sharing, and Ways of Knowing

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation shares findings from a qualitative case study of Latina adolescent girls (ninth and 10th graders) and their mothers and fathers participating in Somos Escritores/We Are Writers. Somos Escritores was a five-week bilingual writing workshop for Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers that invited them to write, draw, and share stories from their lived realities on a variety of topics relevant to their lives. The stories, voices, experiences, and ways of knowing of the Latina adolescent girls, mothers, and fathers who allowed me a window into their lives are at the center of this study.

This study explored the ways a safe space was coconstructed for the sharing of stories and voices and what was learned from families through their writing about who they are, what matters to them, and what they envision for their futures. To understand Somos Escritores, and the Latina adolescent girls, mothers, and fathers who participated in this space and the stories that are shared, I weave together multiple perspectives. These perspectives include Chicana feminist epistemology (Delgado Bernal, 1998), third space (Gutiérrez, 2008), Nepantla (Anzaldúa, 1997) and sociocultural theories of writing (Goncu & Gauvain, 2012; Prior, 2006). Data were drawn from the following sources: (a) postworkshop survey, (b) audio recording and transcription of workshops, (c) interviews, (d) workshop artifacts, and (e) field notes. They were analyzed using narrative methods. I found that Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers are "Fighting to be Heard," through the naming and claiming of their realities, creating positive self-definitions, writing and sharing silenced stories, the stories of socially conscious girls and of parents raising chicas fuertes [strong girls]. In addition, Somos Escritores families and

facilitators coconstructed a third space through intentional practices and activities. This study has several implications for teachers and teacher educators. Specifically, I suggest creating safe space in literacy classroom for authentic sharing of stories, building a curriculum that is relevant to the lived realities of youth and that allows them to explore social injustices and inequities, and building relationships with families in the coconstruction of family involvement opportunities.

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INTRODUCTION

> Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity.
>
> —Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

A Celebration of Writing, Sharing, and Ways of Knowing

On a warm Tuesday night in June, Latina adolescent girls, mothers, fathers, and their invited guests, including younger siblings and close family friends, gather on the local university campus for a celebration of writing, stories, food, and community. The small meeting room in the student union, where the group and I met for five weeks to write and share our stories, has been transformed for the night.

Large tables with brightly colored tablecloths, in various shades of red, purple, green, and yellow, line the back walls. On these tables, a variety of foods prepared and purchased by each family wait to be shared on this celebratory night: turkey wraps with raspberry cream cheese sauce, Nana's "special recipe" spicy salsa, deep-fried potato skins topped with melted cheddar cheese and bacon, and ensalada de fruta con jello y marshmallows. Next to the food, a large white cake with whipped-cream frosting and the words "Somos Escritores/We Are Writers" written on top of it in blue frosting wait for the evening's conclusion.

Prior to this night, every Tuesday night for five weeks, four Latina adolescent girls in ninth and 10th grade and their mothers and fathers met on the university campus to attend Somos Escritores/We Are Writers. Somos Escritores/We Are Writers is a bilingual writing workshop (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 2006; Graves, 1983) for Latina adolescent girls

(ninth-12th grade) and their mothers and fathers. It is a "third space" (Gutiérrez, 2008), a pedagogical space, where languages, cultures, and experiences are resources that girls and their mothers and fathers draw upon to write, draw, and share stories.

Tonight is the culminating celebration of a summer of writing for these writers, the Latina adolescent girls, mothers, and fathers of Somos Escritores. On this night these writers will share their stories with their family, friends, and special invited guests. For many of the writers that will be celebrated, this will be their first time sharing their writing in a public space.

As families and friends arrive, the room is set up for a presentation—a reading of personal stories. Chairs have been placed side by side in rows facing the front of the room. At the front of the room are two large tables covered with the same brightly colored tablecloths as the tables in the back of the room. On top of these tables are awards for the celebration: copies of the book *America Is Her Name* by Luis Rodriguez, certificates, and thank-you cards. In the corner next to these tables is a wooden podium with a thin, black microphone attached to it.

Alma, one of the mothers in our writing group, stands at the podium with her writing placed in front of her. She is one of the writers we are celebrating on this night. On the night of our very first writing workshop, Alma declared to the group that she was "a writer with many stories to share."

On this night, Alma reads her poem, "De Donde Soy Yo," written on the very first night of the workshop. Looking up from the podium to the audience she reads, "Yo soy de la tierra, de donde nacen los Dioses, y se hacen guerreros. Donde mi raza de bronce florere apezar de un mextizaje [I am from the land where Gods were born and became

warriors. Where my bronze race flourished despite miscegenation].” She pauses for a moment and continues, “Yo soy donde la danza, el canto y la cultura aun existen aunque muchas veces nosotros no [I am from where the dance, the songs and culture still remain even though we don’t].”As Alma reads, her daughter, Blanca, a young Latina about to enter high school, holds her iPhone in front of her, recording her mother’s reading. Prior to this sharing of stories, Blanca and her mother sat side by side in this same room, writing stories and sharing stories from their own experiences. Side by side, they smiled. They laughed. They cried. They wrote.

As Blanca focuses on her mother, Alma continues,

> Yo soy de esta tierra llamada América y cada continente apesar de sus fronteras a pesar de separ la tierra y al hombre pero donde misma tierra vuelve asu origen, la pangea, la unión donde se mezclan todas las razas, las culturas, las risas y los cantos (I am from this land named America, and each continent in spite of the borders are trying to separate homelands and men, but where the land itself returns to Its origin, the Pangea, the union, where are mixed all human races, cultures, laughing, and chants).

Alma continues, “Yo soy de un lugar cerca de un lugar cerca de la tierra y el amor de la galaxia (I am from a place close to the Earth and the heart of the galaxy).” As she reads the final words of her poem, she looks up at the audience with a smile on her face. The audience, which consists of her fellow writers, family members, and close family friends, claps loudly.

For Alma and her fellow writers, daughters, mothers, and fathers, this public sharing of their personal writing is a celebration honoring their voices, their stories, and the naming of their realities. These writers live and attend local public schools in a state in the urban Southwest with a history of harsh immigration policies (Abrego & Menjívar, 2011), mandated English-only policies (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; García, Lawton, & De

Figueiredo, 2012;), ethnic studies bans (Delgado, 2013; Romero, 2010), and restrictive curricula and instruction that often assume a need for remediation (Arias & Wiley, 2013). Tonight's celebration of writing honoring youth and adult experiences, voices, and stories is an illustration of a counterspace, a "third space" (Gutiérrez, 2008), that is constructed *with* and *for* Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers to empower them rather than silence and shame them. It is a night of counternarratives filled with hope and possibilities.

There are several pedagogical possibilities for placing the personal stories of our students and families, penned in a variety of genres, at the center of family involvement spaces and English classrooms. English education scholars have argued for a shift in English language arts classrooms and research that is both empowering and transformative, that draws upon the language and literacy practices of youth and is embedded in their everyday realities (Kinloch, 2012; Kirkland, 2008; Morrell, 2005). I argue that by creating space, *with* and *for*, the writing and sharing of stories of our girls and their mothers and fathers, that is both "culturally relevant" (Ladson Billings, 1995) and "culturally sustaining" (Paris, 2012), we learn about their lives, how they view the world, their concerns, and their hopes for their futures. This not only is transformative and empowering, but also centers their experiences and ways of knowing as valuable resources (Moll, et al., 1992) for teaching, learning, and the development of more inclusive family involvement opportunities and spaces for Latino families.

Somos Escritores/We Are Writers Bilingual Writing Workshops

Somos Escritores is a "third space" (Gutiérrez, 2008) that invites girls and their mothers and fathers to write and share stories from their lived experiences on topics

focused on self, family, education, and community. Gutiérrez (2008) describes "third space" as the "transformative space where the potential for an expanded form of learning and the development of new knowledge are heightened" (p. 152). This third space, this pedagogical space, serves as an "in-between" space that works to disrupt the oppressive political context in which Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers reside, attend school, work, and play. It is a space constructed *with* and *for* adolescent Latina girls and their mothers and fathers to reflect and "bear witness" to their own experiences, both naming and claiming their identities, experiences, and ways of knowing in their own words.

Somos Escritores convened for six weeks, including the culminating author celebration, during the hot summer months of June and July. For six weeks, four girls entering ninth grade met on the university campus with their mothers and fathers to attend Somos Escritores workshops. Each workshop took place on Tuesday nights for one hour and a half. In Somos Escritores, drawing, writing, and storytelling were used as a vehicle to open dialogue between girls and their parents, facilitators, and families, regarding academic, personal, and social development. At each workshop, light snacks and drinks were provided, along with all writing supplies.

Somos Escritores was hosted at the local university situated near the downtown of a major metropolitan area. The university is the largest in the state, with four campuses spread across the state, offering a variety of undergraduate and graduate degrees. The campus where the Somos Escritores workshops were held is a mini-college town located within a larger city. All workshops were facilitated by a teaching team consisting of three women: a classroom teacher, a community teaching artist working in the film industry,

and myself, a PhD candidate in English education at the host university. The facilitators, with varied experiences working with youth and families in various school and community settings, came together to facilitate Somos Escritores based on a shared belief of the transformative power of writing and sharing stories. (More detailed information about Somos Escritores, including workshop themes, participants, and the teaching team, is given in Chapter 3.)

Sharing Stories

In *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios* (2001), the Latina Feminist Group, a group of Latina feminists from a diverse range of intersecting identities, backgrounds, sexualities, religious beliefs, and experiences came together as part of a writing collective to work on research. As the group met and learned about one another, the focus of their group shifted. Together they constructed a space in which their gaze turned inward, and their stories, their many "papelitos guardados," those "protected documents, guarded roles, stored papers, conserved roles, safe papers, secret roles, hidden papers, safe roles, preserved documents, protected roles," (p. 1) became a source of inquiry filled with both struggle and strength.

The Latina Feminist Group engaged in the act of collective *testimoniando,* telling their stories, of their *testimonios* making "visible and audible" their personal and private selves. Testimonios, or life stories, are the sharing and telling of lived experiences through oral tradition or written text. They are personal and political as those giving their testimonio engage in a critical reflective process uncovering the oppression they endured to heal, teach, empower and transform these realities (Huber, 2009; Delgado Bernal, Burciaga & Flores Carmona, 2012, The Latina Feminist Group, 2001). The testimonios of the Latina Feminist Group revealed

the complexities and contradictions of their evolving identities as they live and move within and between borders, both literal and figurative (p. 21). Collectively, their testimonios tell of the memories of growing up Latina, the sights and sounds of their homes and communities, the naming of oppressive forces and the powerful healing from painful experiences that they endured throughout their lives.

In imagining the space that would become Somos Escritores, I drew from the testimonios of my mother and the women who raised me and the coalitional work, words, wisdom, and stories of Black and Chicana feminists. Through the sharing and writing of their stories from their lived experiences, through their testimonios, these women opened up a space for me as a second-generation Chicana to explore and reflect upon my own experiences. Their words provided me with the language to describe the realities of my life experiences and to reimagine my future and the future of my own daughter, Milagros.

As a child, I was raised by the women in my life, specifically my mother. My mother has always played a very important role in my life, teaching me, through her own testimonios from her life experiences and actions, about life and how to treat myself and others. Her testimonios encouraged me to work hard in school and to seek opportunities to become involved in spaces and with people that would nurture my talents and interests. She shared stories with me of her involvement as a Head Start teacher and as a member of the high school marching band, where she was able to travel from her small town of Holbrook to Phoenix to perform in parades and at the local state fair. These experiences were important to her, allowing her to imagine for herself a life different than the one in which she was raised.

Throughout my life, my own mother, Vivian, recounted her story, her testimonio, to me in different moments in my life, from childhood to adolescence and now as a new mother. My mother was raised with limited financial means; she was very poor. She lived without such luxuries as indoor plumbing or reliable heating, and she never forgot the generosity that people showed to her and her family through alternate payments for medical care and donations of food and toys during the holidays. Because of her feelings of gratitude for being on the receiving end of such generosity and kindness and her generous spirit, my mother has spent her life volunteering for causes that support young children and families who are facing similar experiences to those of her childhood. In her efforts to give back, she modeled to me how to share what I have with others, be it money, my talents, or acts of kindness.

In Norma Cantú's testimonio, "Getting There Cuando No Hay Camino" (2001), she writes of the lessons gleaned from the women in her life and the impact they had on her evolving identity as a woman, feminist, writer, and teacher. She speaks of women, many women, her peers, friends, family, and the Chicana feminists and writers and their many lessons they imparted on her life. The lessons of her woman warriors provided her with tools to define herself on her own terms and traverse new spaces. Cantú's testimonio is an example of the importance that the support and encouragement of peers and adults can be to the lives of young girls as they navigate life and blaze new trails for themselves. This example is foundational in the creation of Somos Escritores, as it works to create a space for Latina adolescent girls to explore their lives through drawing and writing alongside supportive, loving adults, who in return explore and share their lives in a reciprocal sharing and telling of experiences.

The writing, sharing, and publishing of the testimonios of Norma Cantú and the Latina Feminist Group illustrates the empowering and oftentimes transformative process of creating space to "bear witness" to one's own experiences. Their coalitional work builds off the voices, narratives, and ways of knowing of Black and Chicana feminist scholars and writers. These women warriors bring to the forefront the urgency and necessity of writing and making public the stories often silenced and erased from the dominant discourse of girls, women, and men of color (Collins, 2008).

In the writing and sharing of stories, Black and Chicana feminist scholars and writers Audre Lorde (2007), Patricia Hill Collins (2008), and Gloria Anzaldúa (1999, 2015) have (re)written their pasts and (re)imagined their futures. In *The Transformation of Silence Into Action,* Audre Lorde (2007) calls upon us to break our oppressive history of silence that has kept us in a subordinate position by "bring[ing] silence into language and action" (40). Lorde challenges us to speak our truths "…even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood" (39). It is the speaking of these truths that we can begin to build bridges, form coalitions and come to deeper understandings of our collective experiences.

Like Lorde, in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Patricia Hill Collins (2008) speaks to the importance of the reclaiming of positive self-definitions by black girls and women. She states that "[w]hen Black women's very survival is at stake creating independent self-definitions becomes essential to that survival" (p. 123). This naming and claiming of our lived realities aids in our survival and works as a form of resistance in the face of oppressive structures and spaces.

In “Borderlands/La Frontera” (1987/1999), Gloria Anzaldúa writes about the ritualistic and transformative power of writing one’s stories. She describes her own feelings of illness, pain and eventual joy that comes with writing as “…an endless cycle of making it worse, making it better, but always making meaning out of the experience, whatever it may be” (p. 95). Anzaldúa explains that in the process of writing our stories and revisiting and reliving past traumas that we “put ourselves together again.” It is writing that provides a release in which we reconstruct our life experiences to construct new meanings. In this process of reconstruction, we begin to heal.

The testimonios, words, wisdom and voices of my mother, the women who raised me and the Black and Chicana feminist scholars provide a foundation for the work of Somos Escritores by illustrating how the sharing of our experiences can cultivate a third space (Gutiérrez, 2008), a space of creative resilience. Within this third space that these women created through their collective stories, they blurred boundaries and borders to theorize their experiences through the creation of “hybrid texts.” Through their texts, they shared their experiences using a variety of modes, drawing from their “complete linguistic toolkit” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 150) to mediate the ways in which texts were shared and produced.

As a classroom teacher, I entered teaching with a view of my students and their families as bringing valuable experiences, linguistic and cultural resources and practices, and knowledge to our classroom that enhanced learning opportunities and expanded ideas of what kinds of knowledge matters. I also believed that each of students and their families had important stories from their lived experiences that they needed to have space to share and write. Within this frame and understanding of my students and their families,

I created a bilingual after-school family writing workshop (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983) for my second-grade English Bilinguals (EBs) and their families. This early project was facilitated in collaboration with Jessica Early, the director of Central Arizona Writing Project (CAWP), the local site of the National Writing Project (NWP) and built on upon similar work with and for families that the Sabal Palms Writing Project facilitated at within the community at their local site (Peréz, 2005).

In the creation of this bilingual space, I had two goals for the family writing project. The first goal was to invite my students and their families into the classroom to work alongside one another to draw, write, and share stories from their lived experiences and build community among each other. The second goal was to disrupt traditional models for inviting families into the classroom by creating an opportunity that were culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and that built off families' "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992).

Although entire families were invited to participate, the majority of parents who participated were mothers alongside their children. Many of the stories, the testimonios, shared by mothers were stories from their childhood experiences. Their stories were of big ranches in México where holidays were celebrated, stories of special abuelitas who helped to disrupt cultural gender norms by loving and advocating for their granddaughters even if they played "boy games," and stories of their dreams and hopes for their children's future lives.

In the stories of my students' mothers, I witnessed instances of oppressive structures at play, the interplay of gender norms that impacted the roles and scripts that were ascribed to them, and the "pedagogies of the home" (Delgado Bernal, 2001, that

they used as forms of resistance to negotiate and combat these oppressive structures. Delgado Bernal (2001) describes "pedagogies of the home" as the "communication, practices and learning that occur in the home and community…a cultural knowledge base that helps Chicanas…negotiate the daily experiences of sexist, racist, and classist microaggressions" (p. 624). Within this family writing project space, I observed how mothers, through their stories, shared these resistance strategies, these "pedagogies of the home," with their own children. As Delgado-Gaitan (2005) also had found, in her ethnographic work with families, the mothers who participated alongside their children in the family writing project "discovered that indeed their life experience exemplified knowledge, intelligence, and courage—all the elements in their stories that they related to each other and their children" (p. 268) as a form of strength and survival.

Black and Chicana feminist scholars and writers, my own mother, and the mothers and fathers I worked *with* and *for* in family writing projects inspire the work of Somos Escritores by providing teorías, or the theoretical foundation, upon which Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers can draw to uncover and share their "pedagogies of the home." The collective voices and experiences of these women and their reclaiming of identities highlights the powerful potential of writing to liberate minds and "encourage people to change the conditions of their lives" (Collins, 2008, p. 129).

The lessons of their personal stories and their voices create a sense of urgency, even today, of the necessity of time and space for young people, women, and men of color to draw, write, tell, and share their stories in both informal and formal settings. In "Warriors with Words: Toward a Post-Columbine Writing Curriculum," Nelson (2000)

describes the powerful potential of the writing class as a space to work toward peace and healing by placing personal story at the center of the writing curriculum. He writes:

> Why personal story? Because without that, nothing else matters. Without that, the violence will not stop. Given story, allowed story all else becomes meaningful. Because the story and the story writer become meaningful. Because the story writer begins to find voice and identity. In an increasingly impersonal society, personal story affords self-affirmation, a modicum of esteem…Our stories must be told. Attention must be paid. (p. 43)

In our fast-paced world, we must slow down and find time to connect and learn from one another. We learn by sharing our personal stories and by being surrounded by others ready to receive the gift of our stories through deep, sincere listening. This is possible in spaces like Somos Escritores.

Situating the Study

Somos Escritores took place in the Arizona, in a state whose southernmost cities and communities share a border with the Mexican states of Baja California and Sonora. Gloria Anzaldúa describes this part of the country where the U.S. border collides with the Mexican border as "una herida abierta" (an open wound). This meeting of countries, peoples, practices, and ways of knowing is "where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 25). This herida abierta is filled with contradictions and tensions that prevent it from healing.

This borderlands region of the country, this "herida abierta," has become ground zero for anti-immigrant, anti-Latino politics (Abrego & Menjívar, 2011). It is contextualized by English- only mandates (Proposition 203), racial profiling (S. B. 1070) and an ethnic studies ban (H. B. 2281; Delgado, 2013). The social, cultural, and political battles specific to this geographic region continue to keep this wound, this "herida abierta," open and festering (Cantú, 2013).

The racial/ethnic demographics of Arizona where Somos Escritores convened are shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Racial/Ethnic Demographics

Race or ethnicity	%
White alone	83.5
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	30.7
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	5.3
Black or African American alone	4.8
Asian alone	3.4

Note. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2015).

Based on the 2015 Census data, Hispanics/Latinos are a significant part of the state's growing population. As the population of the state grows and changes, the state's conservative politicians have systematically developed and linked a plethora of reactive educational mandates and policies to immigration trends, border vulnerability, and the economic and political concerns of those most vocal within the state (Abrego & Menjívar, 2011; Cacho, 2010; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

In 2000, voters passed Proposition 203, English for the Children, placing restrictions on the types of instructional methods available to schools to instruct ELs (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010), limiting the use of bilingual methods to support children acquiring English as a second language (García et al., 2012). Ten years later, just weeks apart, Governor Jan Brewer signed two controversial bills into law: S. B. 1070 and H. B. 2281 (Delgado, 2013). S. B. 1070 required law enforcement officers to question the citizenship status of any person they detained for any infraction if they had reason to doubt an individual's "legal status." This law led to heightened police surveillance of predominantly Latino neighborhoods, targeting Latinos, both documented and

undocumented, living in the state through "immigration sweeps" and mass arrests (Delgado, 2013). H. B. 2281 explicitly prohibits any district or charter school from including any programs or classes that:

- Promote the overthrow of the United States government
- Promote resentment toward a race or class of people
- Are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group
- Advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals (H. B. 2281, 49th Leg., 2d Reg. Sess., Ariz. 2010, p. 1)

This law would dismantle the Mexican American studies program in Tucson Unified School District and place a ban on the highly successful ethnic studies program, without regard to the historic battles and achievements of students enrolled in the program. In addition, it would lead to the eventual removal of critical texts that were used as part of the curriculum from classrooms (Romero, 2010; Romero & Arce, 2010).

Like the physical U.S./México border, "la linea," "la frontera," these political mandates and policies crafted and mandated by state politicians create borders and boundaries that continue to marginalize Hispanics/Latinos at the intersections of race, language, and legal status (Abrego & Menjívar, 2011). The context of the state in which Somos Escritores convened is a prominent figure in the story of the lives of these Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers as they navigate the many boundaries and borders, both real and imagined, of their daily lives.

Within this herida abierta, many physical and metaphorical borders exist and are used as tools to control and repress the voices, experiences, ways of knowing and educational opportunities of Hispanics/Latino/as. As Anzaldúa writes, "[b]orders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them" (p. 25) and to marginalize. The borders, these systems, that exist must be deconstructed and be

reconstructed in order to create more equitable and just educational landscape for students and families.

The Study: Listening to Girls and Families

This study explores the experiences and identities of Latina adolescent girls (ninth and 10th graders) and their mothers and fathers participating side by side in Somos Escritores/We Are Writers, a bilingual writing workshop (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983) for Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers. The stories, voices, experiences, and ways of knowing of the Latina adolescent girls, mothers, and fathers who allowed me a window into their lives are at the center of this study. As a participant observer (Spradley, 1980), I worked alongside Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers in Somos Escritores as we collectively shared ourselves, views, and experiences through the drawing and writing of our stories.

The following questions guide my inquiry into Somos Escritores. They include the following:

1. How do daughters, mothers, fathers, and facilitators work together to create a bilingual community of writers, a "third space," where stories and ways of knowing are used as a resource for teaching, learning, and writing?
2. What can we learn from Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers through their writing about who they are, what matters to them, and what they envision for their future?

To understand Somos Escritores, and the Latina adolescent girls, mothers, and fathers who participated in this "third space," this pedagogical space, and the stories that are shared, I weave together multiple perspectives. These perspectives include Chicana

feminist epistemology (CFE; Delgado Bernal, 1998), third space (Gutiérrez, 2008), Nepantla (Anzaldúa, 1997) and sociocultural theories of writing (Goncu & Gauvain, 2012; Prior, 2006).

First and foremost, Dolores Delgado Bernal's (1998) CFE informed the entire research study, from inception of the space to analysis of the data and implications. A CFE centers the voices and experiences of participants by involving them in the entire research process. It is "concerned with the knowledge about Chicanas [Latinas]—about who generates an understanding of their experiences, and how this knowledge is legitimized or not legitimized" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 560). To understand the practices of Somos Escritores, and the borders, both real and imagined, that the Latina adolescent girls and their parents navigate on a daily basis I weave together Kris Gutiérrez's (2008) notion of "third space," and Gloria Anzaldúa's theorization of "Nepantla" (1997/2002). Gutiérrez theorizes third space as a "social environment…in which [youth and families] begin to reconceive who they are and what they might be able to accomplish academically and beyond" (p. 148). Anzaldúa theorizes Nepantla (1997/2002), which is a Nahuatl word meaning the "in-between space" (Keating, 2006, p. 8) as a "site of transformation…the zone between changes where you struggle to find equilibrium between the outer expression of change and your inner relationship to it (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 548-549). Both "third space" and "Nepantla" provide a lens to describe the spaces of liminality that the girls and their parents occupy and the transformative possibilities of Somos Escritores as a hybrid space. Together, these theorizations of spaces and borders, real and imagined, provide a lens into the lived realities and ways of knowing of the girls, the "nepantleras" (Anzaldúa, 2002, 2009) and their parents. Finally, sociocultural theories of

writing (Goncu & Gauvain, 2012; Prior, 2006) provides a lens to describe the social nature of writing and the stories that are crafted and shared within Somos Escritores. They account for the social, cultural, and historical aspects of the lives of the Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers and the influence of these factors in their stories, experiences, and ways of knowing. In addition, they illustrate the ways that the writing and sharing of stories mediated the cultivation of a community of writers and raised the collective consciousness of girls and their mothers and fathers.

This study drew from five sets of data. These include (a) pre/post workshop survey, (b) audio recording and transcription of writing workshops, (c) interviews, (d) workshop artifacts, and (e) field notes. The first set of data is a pre/post survey that each participant completed. The survey asked participants why they wanted to take part in the workshop and general questions about their relationships with each other. The second set of data is the audio recording and transcriptions of all workshops, including interactions, discussions, and the sharing of stories. The third set is semistructured interviews that I conducted to gain insight into the relationships between the girls and their mothers and/or fathers and to follow up with workshop recordings and field notes. I conducted a total of eight individual interviews. This included an individual interview with each girl, Rocky, Reyna, Blanca, and Elizabeth, and an individual interview with each parent, Valente, Samuel, Alma, and Rose. The fourth set consisted of workshop artifacts, which include free writing, group writing, and polished final pieces. The fifth set consisted of handwritten field notes that I took at each workshop and typed immediately following the workshop.

Purpose of the Study: Learning From Girls and Families

One purpose of this study is to reimagine the ways that we as scholars, educators and teacher educators engage with students and their families, specifically Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers. Though educational research on family involvement points to the benefits of directly involving parents in the education of their children (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Gándara, 2010; Ramirez, 2010), many involvement opportunities for Latino families continue to replicate deficit perspectives (Valencia, 1997) of youth and families. In design, these programs seek to "fix" or "save" families from themselves (Auerbach 2007; Ordoñez-Jasis 2010; Ramirez 2010) and teach white middle class parenting skills (Auerbach 1995; Caspe 2003; Compton-Lilly, Rogers, & Lewis 2012; Whitehouse & Colvin, 2001). In reimagining the ways that we engage with families, we must acknowledge cultural and linguistic resources residing in families, home and communities (Ada & Zubizarreta, 2011; Delgado Bernal, 2001; Delgado, 2001, Moll, et al. 1992, Villenas, 2006; Yosso, 2005), while reconsidering who is viewed as an expert in the lives of their children and what counts as knowledge to transform educational spaces and programs that are inclusive of this knowledge (Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Godinez, & Villenas, 2006; Delgado Gaitan, 2001; Valdés, 1996).

Another purpose is to (re)mediate the ways that we invite mothers and fathers to participate in the education of their daughters. Somos Escritores is an opportunity for parents to participate in a family involvement space where their lives, experiences, and ways of knowing are central to the space that is coconstructed *with* and *for* families. This learning can be used to invite families into the classroom in new ways and find more engaging ways to work with Latina adolescent, by centering their voices and concerns, specifically

through agentive and intentional instructional design in curriculum like Youth Participatory Research (YPAR; Cammarota and Fine, 2010), as one example (This is expanded upon in chapter five).

Each week in Somos Escritores, Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers gathered to write, draw, and share stories. These stories offer another lens through which we can understand the complex lives of each writer. They shared special memories of their mother and father they remembered from their childhood. They retold the folktales of "brujas," or witches, giving the kiss of death, shared by grandparents at family gatherings. They wrote about their desire to leave the world better for future generations. Their stories disrupt what Eve Tuck (2009) refers to as "stories of damage" to illuminate strength, courage and love, highlighting the ways that girls, mothers, and fathers are thriving and "sobreviviendo" (surviving) while fighting to be heard.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> … the pain and joy of the borderlands—perhaps no greater or lesser than the emotions stirred by living anywhere contradictions abound, cultures clash and meld, and life is lived on an edge—come from wound that will not heal and yet is forever healing. These lands have always been here; the river of people has flowed for centuries. It is only the designation "border" that is relatively new, and along with the term comes the lives in this "in-between world" that makes us the "other" the marginalized… (Cantú, 1993, p. 29)

On the night of the final author celebration, Reyna stood behind the podium and read her author biography. This was a piece that she had crafted to introduce herself on that night as a writer. She read:

> This is a paragraph my life in a paragraph from me to you and to share to you so you can understand we are all built the same, but expressed differently. I am Reyna. I am 14 years old and a freshman in high school. I am a writer and many more things. I am Mexican, and currently growing up in South Phoenix. I've lived here my whole life and what I've written mostly revolves around what I listen to, what I am taught and what I've experienced. Despite being 14, I've written many pieces in and out of school. Not yet a published author, but getting there. The goal is to help kids like me break stereotypes and boundaries. Remember that anyone can do anything. Good luck (writing artifact, July 12, 2016).

As a 14-year-old Mexican teenager, Reyna introduces herself as a writer working to "break stereotypes and boundaries." In her author's biography, Reyna draws upon her "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) and "pedagogies of the home" (Bernal, 2001) to explain who she is and who she is becoming.

For six weeks Latina adolescent girls, including Reyna, and their mothers and fathers met on the university campus to participate in Somos Escritores bilingual writing workshops. When they met, they wrote, drew, and shared stories from their lived experiences—stories contextualized by the realities of living and learning in the

borderlands. The anti-immigrant and anti-Latino politics (Abrego & Menjívar, 2011) of the state created many tensions and contradictions in their lives as they navigated many spaces and borders, real and imagined, in their day-to-day lives. But, within these sometimes tenuous situations, as evidenced in Reyna's writing, girls and their families were working to disrupt the dominant narratives of "kids like me" and families—through their voices, writing, and being in the world.

In the creation of Somos Escritores, I wove together Chicana feminist epistemology (CFE; Delgado Bernal, 1998), sociocultural theories of writing (Göncü & Gauvain, 2012; Prior 2006), third space (Gutiérrez, 2008), and Nepantla (Anzaldúa, 1999). These theories worked together to guide my thinking, understanding, and writing as I engaged with Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers in Somos Escritores/We Are Writers bilingual writing workshops. In the following sections, I outline how these theories, and related research on youth and families, provided a framework for the entire research process.

Chicana Feminist Epistemology

This study employed a framework that draws upon Dolores Delgado Bernal's (1998) CFE. A CFE provides a foundation for research that privilege and centers the voices, experiences, and ways of knowing of participants. In addition, it emphasizes the unique knowledge, life experiences, and ways of knowing that Chicana/Latina researchers bring to their research projects.

Using a CFE as a framework informs the entire research process (Calderón, Bernal, Huber, Malagón, & Vélez, 2012). This encompasses the questions that are posed, the analysis of data, and the politics and knowledge Chicanas bring to their work. A CFE

is “concerned with the knowledge about Chicanas—about who generates an understanding of their experiences, and how this knowledge is legitimized or not legitimized” (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 560). This framework provides tools to look beyond “normative” views of women to a more expansive vision of family, school, discrimination, and male privilege in ways that traditional educational scholarship and epistemologies ignore, thus lifting up the experiences of women.

A foundational component of CFE is what Delgado Bernal (1998) calls “cultural intuition” (563). This concept extends Strauss and Corbin’s (1999) concept of “theoretical sensitivity,” which informs the ways researchers come to know and understand their data. Theoretical sensitivity is described as the sources of knowledge that influence the researcher during the research process. They include literature, personal experience, professional experience, and the analytic research process. Delgado Bernal accepts these sources of knowledge as foundational to a CFE, but expands upon personal experience to include *collective experience* and *community memory* and the importance of including participants in the research process.

According to Delgado Bernal, “cultural intuition” is informed by importance sources of knowledge and ways of knowing that a Chicana researcher brings to her research projects. She states that a “cultural intuition is a complex process that is experiential, intuitive, historical, personal, collective and dynamic” (568). They are personal experience, existing literature, professional knowledge, and the analytic research process.

The first source of knowledge that Bernal asserts is important to cultural intuition is personal experience. The personal experiences that a Chicana researcher brings to the

research process include the cultural and feminist ways of knowing that are part of our unique community memory and collective experiences as Chicanas/Latinas. These experiences are intertwined with our own histories and the stories and experiences of our families and the communities in which we were raised. It is the "knowledge that is passed from one generation to the next that can help us survive in everyday life by providing an understanding of certain situations and explanations about why things happened under certain conditions" (Delgado Bernal, 1998, p. 565). It is our personal experiences as Chicana/Latinas that provide us with valuable insights, a "perspective from the cracks" (Anzaldúa, 1987), in our work with and for Chicanas/Latinas.

Existing literature is another source that contributes to a cultural intuition. This literature includes empirical and theoretical pieces, biographies, personal documents, and other writings that provide insight into the research in important ways. For my work with girls and daughters in Somos Escritores, my reading of Chicana and Black feminist theory and biographies, empirical and theoretical pieces within the field of literacy, youth studies, and family studies provided me with extended understandings about how to locate myself in my study and ways to analyze data with and for girls and their parents.

Another component of cultural intuition is the professional experiences of the researcher. Professional experiences inform the researcher in a unique way giving them "insider" perspectives into the project and what they see happening. My eight years of classroom experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families, facilitating family writing workshops, and training in leadership development were unique and valuable experiences from which I drew upon throughout the entire

research process. These experiences helped me to envision the space that would become Somos Escritores and informed the ways that I approached data and analysis.

The last component of cultural intuition is the analytic research process. This involves including participants in the research process through the collecting of data and analysis. It is foundational in centering voices and experiences of participants and the knowledge that is produced about them. Within Somos Escritores, I set up structures to include the girls and their parents in the analysis of the data collected.

As a second-generation Chicana educator and researcher, this framework informed my entire research process, from inception of the project to facilitation of the workshop to the analysis and presentation of data. Each step of the way, I drew from my lived experiences and ways of knowing, my cultural intuition, as important sources of knowledge for the research process.

Sociocultural Theories of Writing

Sociocultural theory views literacy as a social act that is embedded and informed by a set of practices and context in which literacy occurs (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 2012; Göncü & Gauvain, 2012; Prior, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). This theory views learning as an interactive process that occurs between a child and the child's peers, teachers, family, or community. A child's learning begins long before the child enters the classroom. In children's homes and communities, they are surrounded by knowledgeable others, who apprentice them into the discourse and literacy practice of these spaces. This learning is embedded into their interactions with others as they participate in various cultural and community events where language and literacy are authentically woven into their environments. According to Göncü and Gauvain (2012), "learning is mediated through

artifacts such as language and technology, and guidance that can range from playing to observational opportunities and explicit instruction" (p. 125). This view of literacy and learning was foundational in the creation of Somos Escritores and the practices and interactions of the space; however, a focus on sociocultural theories of writing was warranted to understand the social nature of the writing, sharing, and becoming that occurred in the space.

The writings of Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin are critical for understanding the stories that were shared, the ways in which writing mediated the being and becoming of girls and parents, and how writing invited different perspectives, viewpoints, and discourses into each workshop. Bakhtin (1981) wrote that an ideological self is developed based upon his or her negotiations of the resources located within their environment. These resources include the people, discourses, and contexts—and their social, cultural, and historical histories. This development, this "ideological becoming," refers to "how we develop our way of viewing the world, our system of ideas…" (Freedman and Ball, 2004, p. 5). Our ideological becoming cannot be separated from the contexts in which we interact with people and the conflicting discourses within the spaces in which we live, learn, and exist.

According to Bakhtin (1981), an ideological becoming occurs from within the spaces riddled with moments of tensions, contradictions, and "intense struggles" between and "among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values" (p. 346). The coming together of different voices, ideas, and ways of knowing of others and our interactions with discourses within social contexts (home,

school, church, etc.) is critical for our growth and what we come to know and understand about our world, who we are, and what we envision for our futures.

The diversity of voices in an ideological environment is essential to a person's growth and ideological becoming. Freedman and Ball (2004) explained "that when diverse voices interact, we struggle to assimilate two distinct categories of discourse: (1) authoritative discourse, and (2) internally persuasive discourse" (p. 7). Authoritative discourse refers to

> the authoritative word (religious, political, moral; the word of a father, of adults, of teachers, etc.) … It is, so to speak, the word of the fathers. Its authority was already acknowledged in the past. It is a prior discourse. It is therefore not a question of choosing it among other possible discourses that are its equal. It is given (it sounds) in lofty spheres, not those of familiar contact…for example, the authority of religious dogma, or of acknowledge scientific truth or of a currently fashionable book. (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 342–343)

On the other hand, according to Bakhtin (1981), the internally persuasive discourse "is denied privilege, backed by no authority at all, and is frequently not even acknowledged in society" (p. 342).

A conflict may occur when the authoritative and internally persuasive discourses come in contact with one another because "although some people take authoritarian words as authoritative, … some may resist" (Ball and Freedman, 2004, p. 8). The authoritative word "demands … that we make it our own" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 342) which lead to disagreements, tensions, and contradictions when among competing discourses that collide, and it is this moment that Bakhtin refers to as the "zone of contact" (1981, p. 345). In the "zone of contact" when conflicting discourses and ideas cause dissonance and we disagree, "it is those moments of struggle that we develop our own ideologies" (Ball & Freedman, 2004, p. 7). Our ideologies may be situated near the authoritative

word or far away from it. Within this process of developing our ideologies, which does not happen in isolation, we must make decisions of how to position ourselves in our families, schools, and communities.

This conflict between our internally persuasive discourse, which is "denied all privilege, backed by no authority at all, and is frequently not even acknowledged in society" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 342), and authoritative discourse creates an inner struggle in which we need to figure out how we will navigate our world. This inner struggle influences how we will react to our world and those that we encounter. Through the interactions with others—peers, parents, teachers, etc.—we discern these discourses, and decide what ideas and beliefs will become our own. It is in these spaces of discomfort, in the zone of contact, where new ideas and new knowledge is cultivated.

Volosniv's (1973) theories stem from his belief that language that "language is a continuous generative process implemented in the social verbal interactions of speakers" (p. 98). He states that "there are many meanings of words as there are contexts to its usage" (Volosniv, 1973, p. 79) and that all utterances contain different meanings. Utterances are uniquely filled with the "reverberations" and "echoes" of others speech and understandings, thus not "self-sufficient," but "mutually reflect" others' utterances. Both Volosniv and Bakhtin believed that utterances occur within social and cultural contexts and that understanding is dependent on others and the context in which they occur.

Drawing upon these foundational theorists, since the 1970s studies in the field of writing research have predominately used sociocultural theory (Prior, 2006). This theory has helped to expand our view of writing by accounting for the social, historical, and

political contexts in which writing occurs by drawing on interdisciplinary fields, such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, and linguistics. As Prior states:

> Writing involves dialogic processes of invention. Texts, as artifacts-in-activity, and the inscription of linguistic signs in some medium are parts of streams of mediated, distributed, and multimodal activity. Even a lone writer is using an array of sociohistorically provided resources (languages, genres, knowledge, motives, technologies of inscription) that extend beyond the moment of transcription and that cross modes and media (reading, writing, talk, visual representation, material objectification). Text and moments of inscription are no more autonomous than the spray thrown up by the white water in a river, and like that spray, literate acts today are far downstream from their sociohistoric origins. Seeing writing as distributed and mediated means recognizing that all writing is collaborative…" (Prior, 2006, p. 58)

From this perspective, writing is never a solitary act; it depends on context and the lived histories of the writer.

Scribner and Cole (1981, 1987, 2001) conducted ethnographic studies with the Vai people of Liberia that focused on literacy, cognitive abilities, and schooling. The Vai are literate in the use of three different scripts: the indigenous Vai script, Arabic, and English. Some Vai people are biliterate in Vai and Arabic and some are triliterate in all three scripts. Each script is learned in different contexts and is tied to specific cultural, religious, educational, and social functions. In their studies, Scribner and Cole specifically focused on how the Vai acquire literacy skills, what literacy skills they acquire, how these skills are used, and the cognitive consequences of literacy. A series of tasks was designed to "determine if prior practice in learning and use of the script enhanced performance" (Scribner & Cole, 1981, p. 132) and performed by the Vai. The results of these studies indicated "that social organization creates the conditions for a variety of literacy activities, and that different types of text reflect different social practices" (Scribner & Cole, 1981, p. 135).

Brian Street's (1984/1995) ethnographic study of the literacy practices of villagers in Iran has provided us with important ways that we as literacy scholars and educators can being to understand literacy as a social practice. Street's findings point to the connection between the culture and specific literacy practices as his work illustrates the complexity of literacy in the lives of the local community in Iran.

Street studied three types of literacies that villagers engaged in that were context specific and vital for navigating daily life. These three literacies he observed were: 1.) maktab literacy associated religious schools, specifically Islam and Qu'ranic (or maktab) 2.) commercial literacy involved in fruit sales 3.) school literacy which was developing and becoming more modernized. Each literacy was enacted, or practiced, by villagers and tied to specific contexts, activities, identities and ways of knowing.

In Street's study, he also observed the disconnect between the maktab schools and the state education schools and the types of literacy that was valued and taught. Children who attended these "urban schools" found that their schooling did not prepare in ways that they could transfer their schooled literacy learning into their local contexts in their homes and communities, specifically to use with commercial practices. It was in the learning of the local maktab (Quar'nic school) in which they could transfer their knowledge to the commercial literacy necessary which could lead to better economic and social stability.

Street explanation of how the maktab literacy transformed the commercial points to the malleability of literacy. (Street, 1995, p. 40-41). He observed how the literacy practices evolved to meet the needs of the people through the creation of a "commercial literacy practice." Street illustrates that literacies are not neutral, rather they evolve and

transform to meet the needs of the people and their communities. Literacy is not simply a set of functional or technical skills that "exist in the head." Literacy exists in the larger social context in which it is practiced and varies across time and space (Street, 1997).

Shirley Brice Heath's classic nine-year (1969-1978) ethnography, *Ways With Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms* (1983), describes the language learning, language practices, and school experiences of children and their families in communities located within 6 miles of each other in the Piedmont region of the Carolinas. The Trackton children and families were predominantly African American and from working-class backgrounds, while the Roadville children and families were White and from working-class backgrounds. Families from both communities worked in the textile mills or in construction jobs; their income levels were similar, with a few families making about $12,000 a year and most with an annual income between $8,000 and $10,000. Heath also describes the townspeople, who included African American and White professionals. From her interactions and observations of children and families within these communities, she found that families from each community had different ways with words and language.

Families from both Roadville and Trackton raise their children with a desire for them to have success in school and beyond. The Townspeople and Roadvillers surround their children with talk and learning activities that very much mirrors that of traditional schooling. Families from both communities teach their children the concepts of prints, how to describe and label events and buy the toys with educational value. They read fantasy books with their children and engage them in developing their imaginations to produce, develop and read texts. However, their interactions are also redundant and

follow the same patterns on a consistent basis.

Children from Trackton were brought up surrounded by stories and storytelling. They, in turn, are rich storytellers using sophisticated language practices in the crafting of oral stories. Stories might have been based on an actual event with pieces fictionalized and fabricated for the enjoyment of the audiences. Children learned language through challenge and learning to "talk junk" and were surrounded by supportive and encouraging models of their elders as they were socialized in this process.

Children from Roadville were brought up to understand that storytelling is the recounting of actual events with close attention paid to factual details. Children learned to talk through the models of their mothers with careful attention paid to correctness in order to prepare them for school.

Children from each of these different communities were socialized in language use through different traditions and beliefs and for different purposes, resulting in different experiences and successes in school. All children were raised surrounded by words and talk, with children from Trackton being immersed in the most talk of all three communities. However, the townspeople socialized their children through language in ways that matched the ways of language and learning of the school. They come with the skills of labeling, naming features, and providing narratives on items out of their contexts" (Heath, 1983, p. 352). Therefore, "it is the kind of talk, not the quantity of talk" that sets townspeople children on their way in school.

Ethnographic studies of families and communities, like Heath's classic study (1983) of the Roadville and Trackton communities, illuminate the sociocultural ways of knowing, literacies, and languages that students bring with them to school from their

homes and communities. Her work provides us with a more expansive view of literacy and families. Studies of families and communities continue to disrupt deficit views (Valencia, 1997) of families from historically marginalized homes and communities as lacking or in need of remediation. These studies highlight the cultural, community, and familial resources present in homes and the ways parents teach their children strategies of resistance and survival that provide them with tools to navigate different spaces in their daily lives.

In *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities and Classrooms* (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), Moll et al. provide an overview of a collaborative qualitative research study conducted by university researchers and teachers focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the local knowledge and expertise located within households and how these resources can be used to leverage teaching and learning. Teachers conducted ethnographic home visits in which they entered their students' homes as learners with questions rather than answers. With an ethnographic eye and a change in perspective, they learned about the rich familial and cultural histories, practices, and resources, the "funds of knowledge," residing in the homes and communities of their students.

Moll et al. (1992) define *funds of knowledge* as "the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). Teachers learned of an abundance of expertise located in homes, such as cooking, child-rearing, economics, and other activities necessary for everyday functioning in the world. From these visits, teachers worked to finds ways to draw on the "funds of knowledge" of their students and families in order to

optimize learning opportunities for students and find entry points into the curriculum through existing knowledge.

In a funds of knowledge approach to teaching and learning, teachers learn to view students and families from a resource perspective. They realize that students and families are not unidimensional beings; they begin to view students and families as multidimensional and complex, taking into account more of the social, historical, and political influences in their lives and ways of knowing and being.

Guadalupe Valdés's (1996) book, *Con Respeto: Bridging the Distances Between Culturally Diverse Families and Schools—An Ethnographic Portrait*, highlights the struggles, successes, values, and beliefs of 10 Mexican-origin families living along la frontera, the border between Texas and México. Valdés's ethnographic study, conducted between 1983 and 1986 in a small town located along la frontera, shares the ways that families navigate their daily lives at the intersections of language, poverty, and immigration status. In addition, she illuminates the strong familial bonds and social networks of families that are a source of strength and a necessary part of their survival and well-being.

Valdés's study highlights the importance families placed on raising their children to be good people (buen educado). Parents raised their children within a traditional parenting style which stemmed from respect and consejos (cultural narratives). Through these teachings, they hoped to instill in their children respect, to teach them to obey parents and take care of their brothers and sisters, and to keep the focus on family goals by discouraging selfishness (Valdés, 1996, p. 131)

The three years that Valdés spent in the field with parents enabled her to cultivate strong understandings of families beyond the superficial and surface-level views. A majority of her time was spent listening to and learning from mothers; however, their relationships took extensive time to nurture and develop. For nearly two years she worked to build "confianza," or mutual trust, with mothers, which is crucial in this kind of work. Sporadic and superficial visits and interactions lead to unfair understandings of youth and their families. This greatly influenced the care that went into cultivating authentic relationships through confianza with both girls and parents in Somos Escritores.

In "The Power of Community: Mobilizing for Family and School," Concha Delgado Gaitan (2001) recounts 10 years of ethnographic research *with* and *for* families that she conducted in the Carpinteria community in California. She tells the story of students and families living and attending school in a changing community while illuminating how parents worked within these changes through the creation of the Comité de Padres Latinos/Committee of Latin Parents (COPLA) parent group.

Delgado Gaitan describes the journey of COPLA parents as they mobilized to become a visible presence in their child's education and in their schools. COPLA provided a space for the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and experiences between parents as they "motivated each other…to make sense of a system from which they previously felt alienated" (Delgado Gaitan, 2001, p. 70). COPLA parents collectively worked together to create opportunities and changes and find resources for their children's academic and social growth. In particular, COPLA parents advocated for a family literacy program that provided them with opportunities to learn about the existing literacy curriculum while modeling ways to support their child's literacy development.

Over the course of a school year, parents attended meetings where they learned how to interactively reading strategies to use with their child at home. Through this direct involvement in their child's education, parents felt a sense of empowerment as they increased their own literacy while extending their social networks with parents.

Delgado Gaitan's ethnographic research illuminates the transformative power and sustaining change that is possible in families, schools, and communities when parents are empowered to lead and realize their potential as advocates for success of their children.

Research studies like those mentioned continue to focus on the lives of students and their families at various junctures of their lives to understand how the learning that occurs in homes and communities influences the ways in which their children navigate their world. Delgado Bernal (2001) conducted interviews with over 30 Chicana students in which they discussed their educational journeys form elementary school to college. Their stories of their educational experiences pointed to the myriad of ways they navigated the silencing and exclusionary practices of school by drawing upon their "pedagogies of the home" as a source of strength. Delgado Bernal defines *pedagogies of the home* as "the communication, practices and learning that occur in the home and community…and serve as a cultural knowledge base that helps Chicanas…negotiate the daily experiences of sexist, racist, and classist microaggressions" (p. 624) According to Delgado Bernal, "pedagogies of the home are partially shaped by community memory and experience that are taught and shared in legends, *corridos,* storytelling and behavior" (p. 597) and shared across generations as tools of resistance and survival. An understanding of pedagogies of the home is helpful in understanding the valuable lessons

shared between girls and their parents and the messages embedded within their written and oral stories.

Using a critical race theory framework, Yosso (2005) problematizes and disrupts Bourdieu's view of "cultural capital" which he posits as valuable capital that is privileged knowledges and ways of knowing of the upper and middle class that can lead to social mobility. According to Yosso, Bourdieu's theoretical understandings creates an assumption that students of Color and their families are "lacking" and "deficient" in social and cultural capital. Yosso offers the term "community cultural wealth," arguing that students of Color come to school with an array of capital that is located in their homes and communities stemming from cultural ways of knowing and being that is often "unrecognized" as a valuable asset.

Community cultural wealth consists of six types of knowledges found in homes and communities. They are "aspirational capital, linguistic capital, familial capital, social capital, navigational capital and resistant capital" (Yosso, 2005, p. 78–81). According to Yosso, "community cultural wealth is an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Color to survive and resist macro and micro-forms of oppression" (2005, p. 78). The wealth that students bring from their homes and communities provides them with rich resources to draw upon in their daily lives, and, like "pedagogies of the home" (Delgado-Bernal, 2001) to serve as resistance strategies.

Family Literacy and Family Writing

Research from *Family Literacy: A Review of Programs and Critical Perspectives* (Caspe, 2003) suggests that in order to bridge home and school learning in a way that values the resources of the student and parent, family literacy programs need to

understand the critical perspectives of programming so as to not inadvertently dishonor the families that they serve and support. The critical perspectives that have emerged from this research *with* and *for* families provides important principles that can be utilized as a framework to create and promote equitable family involvement opportunities. These perspectives include capitalizing on the literacy resources of families, focusing on the interests of the participants, and providing platforms for families to reflect on their literacy journeys and the ways literacy is utilized in their daily lives (Caspe, 2003). In next section, I provide examples of family literacy programs that were envisioned from these perspectives and that utilize a sociocultural framework in their coconstruction and implementation. These opportunities have informed the work of Somos Escritores.

Family Writing

In locating youth and families as sites of rich resources, educators and scholars have worked with schools and communities to create family involvement opportunities within a sociocultural view of families and literacy. According to Flory Rodriguez-Brown (2004), "Sociocultural research-based programs add to and build on what the parents bring to the program, giving them new linguistic and cultural repertoires and knowledge, rather than trying to change their cultural practices" (p. 220). The importance of family literacy programs for parents is that they also work as a space for social networking/family networking to occur—a space for families to meet each other and form bonds (Rodriguez-Brown, 2004, p. 226). Although they mainly focus on families with elementary-age children, the studies that this study builds upon, their practices, and the use of sociocultural theories in coconstructing the opportunities with and for families provided foundational understandings for the creation of Somos Escritores.

Pájaro Valley Experience. The Pájaro Valley Experience was a program for Spanish-speaking parents and their children in which families attended monthly workshops to read and discuss children's literature and share stories and poems written by children (Ada, 1988). The idea for the program stemmed from the interests and desires of the children. It was developed to encourage parents to spend time with their children reading and discussing books (Caspe, 2003). At workshops, parents learned and practiced strategies for reading aloud and discussing books with their children. In addition to learning read-aloud and discussion strategies, the program provided a space for parents to encourage their children to write their stories and to begin to write themselves (Ada, 1988).

The success of the program was due to the intentional planning and implementation of practices based on sociocultural views of literacy and families. The use of Spanish was an important practice in the space that started with the initial invitations to attend and follow-up reminders being written and made in Spanish. Workshops were conducted in the home language of parents and children. The topics and subjects of each workshop, which were based on the discussion of children's literature, were of interest to children and parents. I believe that the intentional planning and facilitation of the workshops was critical to the success of the program and an illustration of a sustainable model of family involvement, all of which informed the work of Somos Escritores.

Project FLAME. Project FLAME: Family Literacy aprendiendo, mejorando, educando (learning, improving, educating) is a family literacy program designed to support Hispanic parents with children ages 3–9 years. The program brings together

theories on language acquisition, sociocultural theories of literacy, and the idea that parents as learners can be powerful advocates for their children. Project FLAME supports parents by teaching them strategies to become involved in the education of their children and to bridge home and school to remediate discontinuities between these spaces (Rodriguez-Brown, 2004; Shanahan, Mulhern, & Rodriguez-Brown, 1995).

When Project FLAME was established in 1989, its central focus was on parents; the program "proposed to train parents to become literacy models and to support their children's literacy development in the language the parents knew best" (Rodriguez-Brown, 2004, p. 215). The program was undergirded by the belief of the positive influence parents can have on their children, the importance of the home environment in literacy learning, and the transformative power of parents as learners and effective teachers of their children. To support these beliefs, Project FLAME consisted of four components based on literacy-learning research to support parents' growth and understanding: "literacy opportunity, literacy modeling, literacy interaction and home-school connection" (Rodriguez-Brown, 2004, p. 216). These components work in concert to provide parents with tools and strategies for supporting the literacy learning and development of the children through creating space at home for literacy learning, modeling their own literacy for the children, and increasing their interactions with their children around literacy activities and practices.

The central focus Project FLAME placed on parents informed Somos Escritores' invitation to parents to work alongside their daughters in the space. However, unlike in Project FLAME, parents attended workshops with their daughters. The Home-School Connection component of Project FLAME, which works to "increase and improve the

relationships between parents and schools" (Rodriguez-Brown, 2004, p. 217), was foundational in thinking about what learning can happen and the relationships that can be built between teachers and parents when they are in constant contact. In addition, Project FLAME continues to evolve and stay relevant by listening to the voices of the parents and the community to meet their needs and address their concerns (Rodriguez-Brown, 2004)

Padres Como Escritores/Parents as Writers. "Padres Como Escritores" (Parents as Writers) was a workshop in the Little Village, a predominantly Latino area, in Chicago. This writing group consisted of mothers with children enrolled in the Telpochcalli school. Adams and Hurtig wrote:

> The Project's purpose is to provide a forum for creative expression in which ordinary people can share writing based in their experiences, draw on their work to examine their lives and develop the art of writing, and become recognized within and beyond their communities as writers, thinkers, and leaders. (2002, p. 15).

The workshops were a space for mothers to write, share, and recount stories from their lives back in México and their current residence in Illinois. Each workshop consisted of mothers providing each other feedback and writing prompts that built off the discussion and concerns of mothers in the group. The workshop had three phases: writing process, publication, and public reading. The mothers involved used stories and storytelling to "contest and defy the racial and ethnic structuring" of the urban spaces in which they resided and the "borders" they crossed on a daily basis.

Hurtig (2005) describes the way that participation in the writing group and engaging in storytelling allowed mothers to participate in the city and socially engage in new ways via readings and publication of stories. In addition, the act of storytelling and

publishing provided a counternarrative to the view that "outsiders" or the dominant narrative placed on them and their families, communities, and schools. Writing allowed mothers to fight back and share counternarratives based in their own firsthand experiences (Hurtig, 2005, p. 242). One example of the transformative nature of the participation in the group is the collective effort of the mothers to rename the group to better fit with how they viewed their role in the group and the purpose in the group—and they imagined themselves as "writers," not just writing, but in the act of being a writer.

Voces del Corazón: Voices from the Heart. Voces del Corazón: Voices from the Heart (Peréz, 2005), was created by Teacher Consultants (TCs) from the Sabal Palms writing project, a site of the National Writing Project (NWP), located in southern Texas. TCs from this local writing project site collaborated with two local schools to organize and host family literacy nights. The goal was to create an inviting space for parents and students to feel safe and motivated to participate in writing and sharing. This was accomplished, by making the space festive, the use of creative and relevant writing prompts, allowing for sharing to occur in the language of the heart and for stories to be shared using a variety of modalities. These events were so successful in bringing the community together in meaningful ways, through the sharing of stories, that they evolved into a larger partnership within the community. Through sustained writing and sharing with families, TCs, learned that the families shared many of the same concerns, hopes and dreams that they did, and that in the process many "lost stories" were uncovered and shared.

The Family Writing Project. The Family Writing Project (FWP; Early & Flores, 2015) was a bilingual writing workshop that invited Flores's second-grade English

language development students and their families into the classroom to draw, write, and share stories from their lived experiences. The FWP was facilitated in conjunction with the director of the local writing project site. The goal of the FWP was to create a space to invite families into school to draw, write, and share stories form their lived experience and to work as a counterspace to disrupt language acquisition policies of the state which mandated that all instruction be conducted in English. In addition, we hoped to create opportunities to learn about the rich cultural and linguistic resources that resided in families and provide parents with additional tools to use with the children to support their writing, in and out of school.

Families participated in the FWP by attending weekly writing workshops for 12 weeks. The workshops consisted of opportunities to write, draw, and use artwork and oral storytelling as a vehicle to share stories from their lives. At the final workshop, all families participated in an author celebration where they shared in front of their families, their friends, and the larger school community a story they had written during the project.

These family literacy involvement opportunities were all created using sociocultural theories of writing, literacy, and families. Each program tapped into the "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al., 1992), "pedagogies of the home" (Delgado Bernal, 2001), and "community cultural wealth" (Yosso, 2005) of families to create invitations into classrooms, schools, and community centers that built off their collective strengths (Zentella, 2005).

Youth Writing

In the study of Somos Escritores, the focus on the interactions was between Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers. Within this frame, all workshops were

created to draw upon the experiences and cultural and linguistic resources of parents; however, the space was intentionally created for Latina adolescent girls. It is important to draw upon the body of literature that focuses on youth writing, specifically programs created within a sociocultural approach to literacy and youth that create spaces for young people to explore their lives through lives writing and other performative acts (Brown, 2014; Garcia & Gaddes, 2012; Jocson, 2008; Muhammad, 2016, Winn, 2011).

In Ruth Nicole Brown's book *Hear Our Truths: The Creative Potential of Black Girlhood* (2013), she explores Saving Our Lives Hear Our Truths (SOLHOT). SOLHOT is a radical, creative space that (re)imagines black girlhood through various modes of performance and expression.

SOLHOT was imagined and established in 2006 by Ruth Nicole Brown. Following research and writing of *Endangered Black Girls, she* took insights gleaned and imagined space that centered the lives and experiences of Black girls in which they "[w]ould not be an afterthought…Would not exist in comparison. Would not be watched for the purpose of punishment or voyeurism" (Brown, 2013, p. 39) Rather, she imagined space where Black girls would come to together to have fun, to be empowered, and to be transformed. Brown writes, "SOLHOT is a space to envision Black girlhood critically among and with Black girls…it is a celebration of Black girlhood in all its complexity…foregrounding complexity in a collective and creative work with Black girls and women" (2013, p. 1). At SOLHOT Black girls are seen as experts of their lived experiences and participate in a variety of creative endeavors to express, critique, liberate, and transform visions of who they are and who they may become.

García and Gaddes (2012) studied an after-school reading and writing workshop for Latina adolescent girls that was created using sociocultural theories of literacy and learning and within a culturally and linguistically responsive framework. At workshops, Latina girls examined their lives using texts as springboard for writing and exploration. From analysis of the girls' writing, researchers found that the use of culturally relevant literature supported girls in "authoring their lives," finding ways through writing to articulate their experiences, rewrite ascribed scripts, and envision different futures. In addition, they drew upon their "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al., 1992) to illustrate their lives navigating two cultures.

Muhammed (2012) facilitated and organized a five week writing institute for adolescent Black girls between the ages of 11-17. The workshops were designed to empower girls to share their stories, while realizing the powerful potential of the pen and their voices. At workshops explored literature, written by Black women authors, that focused on themes of "identity, resiliency, solidarity, and advocacy" (p. 204). From her participation alongside girls, she conducted a single case study (Yin, 2009) and found the how one participant used writing as a vehicle to make meaning of and develop their identities in the space and the classroom in very different ways. Her work suggests the importance of creating "safe space" in the classroom for Black girls to explore their identities, write with students and connect introduce literature that is connected to Black girls' lived experiences (p. 210).

These studies focused on youth participation in intentionally organized and designed third spaces (Gutiérrez, 2008) and "second classrooms" (Campano, 2007) illustrate the ways that youth read, wrote and (re)wrote their lives in powerful ways.

Based on their research in these spaces, working alongside youth, researchers provide practicing teachers, teacher educators and scholars with insights into the practices that are necessary for the cultivation of these spaces and for critical reflection on the lived experiences. The practices, texts and ways of being together were grounded in the lived realities of the youth, drawing upon their existing linguistic, cultural and familial resources for the creation of critical texts and performative expressions of being and becoming.

Third Space and Nepantla

In the creation of Somos Escritores *with* and *for* Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers, I wove together Kris Gutíerrez's (1997, 2008) notion of third space with Gloria Anzaldúa's (1999) theorizing of *Nepantla.* Gutíerrez defines *third space* as a hybrid cultural space valuing youth and families' linguistic and cultural resources (Gutiérrez, Baquedano-López, & Turner, 1997). In Gutiérrez's (2008) work with migrant youth participating in a university-sponsored leadership program, she uses the construct of third space to describe the "transformative space where the potential for an expanded form of learning and the development of new knowledge are heightened" (p. 152). Gutiérrez's conceptualization of third space realizes the potential of the spaces between the "official script" and "counter script" as a "social environment…in which [youth] begin to reconceive who they are and what they might be able to accomplish academically and beyond" (p. 148).

Gloria Anzaldúa wrote and theorized from her lived experiences as a queer Chicana feminist border crosser, living in the margins, within contradictory roles and scripts ascribed to her. This place of liminality, which she lived between and within

throughout her life, she refers to as *Nepantla*. *Nepantla* is a Nahuatl word meaning the "in-between space" (Keating, 2006, p. 8). According to Anzaldúa (2002):

> Nepantla is the site of transformation. The place where different perspectives come into conflict and where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, your education, your different cultures. Nepantla is the zone between changes where you struggle to find equilibrium between the outer expression of change and your inner relationship to it. Living between cultures results in seeing double, first from the perspective of one culture, then from the perspective of another. Seeing from two or more perspectives simultaneously renders those cultures transparent (p. 548–549).

As a self-defined "nepantlera," Anzaldúa speaks to the ways that those residing between and within multiple worlds develop a "perspective from the cracks" that allows them to find ways to negotiate, resist, and combat the dissonance of these worlds (Keating, 2006).

In Anzaldua's evolving ideas of selfhood, she theorized the term "nepantlera," as she defined, herself, she coined this term to describe the place of liminality to describe those who "facilitate passage between worlds" (2009, p. 322). Nepantleras cross borders, real and imagined, and live, travel and exist in multiple worlds. Through their passage between borders, spaces and worlds the "see double" and thus, experience pain due to the contradictions, tensions and negotiations they encounter as a nepantlera. From this space of liminality, and their "perspective from the cracks," they create new ways, to (re)imagine and transform their multiple worlds and realities (Anzalduá, 2002, 2009).

In weaving together Gutíerrez's (2008) third space and Anzaldúa's (1987) *Nepantla*, I argue that Somos Escritores/We Are Writers comprises tenets from each of these concepts. Somos Escritores blurs the lines between home and school and "official script" and "unofficial script" in ways that honor many stories and ways of knowing. Through the sharing of stories, inner reflection occurs, and the writers—Latina adolescent girls, mothers, and fathers—have the opportunity to hear different points of

view which can lead to *conocimiento,* a critical consciousness about their worlds, their experiences, and the experiences of others. It is a space of creative resilience where, through writing, sharing and being, and "ideological becoming" (Bakhtin, 1981) writers can (re)imagine their world and their lives—serving as a place for coalition building between girls, women, and men through collective storytelling. In studying an after-school writing workshop for Latina mothers and daughters, the third space can serve as a place for coalition building between girls and women and collective knowledge construction.

Somos Escritores/We are Writers fills a gap in educational research on family involvement and family literacy by connecting Latina adolescent girls (grades nine and 10) and their parents, through writing, drawing and storytelling, in the intergenerational exchange of knowledges, ways of knowing and stories. A majority of the literature on family literacy is mostly focused on parents and their young children (Pre-K-grade three) engaging in early literacy, specifically focused on reading and decoding strategies, in family literacy spaces. In addition, the literature on youth writing spaces is focused exclusively on youth writing and youth writing practices and does bring them together with elders to engage in the reciprocal sharing of knowledge.

By inviting Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers to participate in Somos Escritores they are entering the space as experts of their own experiences. The stories that are shared, by girls and their parents, will become a participant in the space, and used as a vehicle to share cultural knowledge, intergenerational wisdom and strategies of resistance and survival. This work will illuminate the themes that are at the center of these stories and provide educators with insight into the ways that they may

include the knowledge that is embedded within these stories as a tool for classroom learning, to build confidence and agency of Latina girls, and to strengthen home/school connections. In addition, an important benefit of this study is potential to create stronger bonds between girls and their parents through the sharing of stories. These bonds may extend beyond the learning that takes place in the workshops and include building stronger ties within the entire family. By strengthening the bonds between families, ultimately, we strengthen neighborhoods, communities, and entire cities and states. This begins through an understanding of our experiences as human beings that is uncovered through the writing and sharing of our stories.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

> Writing is dangerous because we are afraid of what the writing reveals: the fears, the angers, the strengths of a woman under triple or quadruple oppression. Yet in that very act lies our survival because a woman who writes has power. And a woman with power is feared. (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 169)

Exploring Where We Are From

On a hot evening in June, four adolescent Latina girls, about to enter ninth or 10th grade, and their mothers and fathers gather in the student union at the local university to attend the first workshop of Somos Escritores/We Are Writers, a bilingual writing workshop for adolescent Latina girls and their mothers and fathers that encourages the sharing of stories through drawing, writing, and oral storytelling. In the small meeting room, each girl sits next to their mother or father at tables set up in a U shape, eating pepperoni pizza and chocolate chip cookies. The workshop begins.

"Where are you from? De donde eres? Think about this question. How would you answer? Como contestaron?" Holding up a blank piece of white paper, I continue, "Ahora, on a blank piece of paper draw a picture of where you're from. Haz un dibujo de donde eres. Think about what you would draw if someone asked you this question. How would you introduce yourself to others? How would you answer? Como contestaron?"

As I finish, Reyna reaches for a piece of white paper that is lying on the table in front of her. She hands a piece to her father, Samuel, and with a yellow No. 2 pencil, she begins to quickly sketch a tall pole holding a backboard and net on her paper. Seated next to Reyna, her father Samuel, paper in his hand, removes a pencil from behind his right

ear and leans over his paper, where he carefully sketches an outline of the state of Arizona and the state of Sinaloa, side by side.

At the table next to him, Blanca whispers in her mother Alma's ear and smiles. Then, with pencils in hand, they both focus their attention at the blank paper (canvas) in front of them and begin their sketches. Across the room, Rocky sketches a saguaro cactus with two fat arms on either side, the kind you see in a children's book about desert plants. Her father, Valente, is coloring with a blue crayon his sketch of the national flag of Honduras.

Seated next to Valente, Elizabeth sits next to her mother, Rose. Elizabeth takes a bite of a slice of pepperoni pizza as she sketches a desert scene with two saguaro cacti, with a sun shining in the corner of her paper. Her mother glances down at her daughter's drawing, points to the skinny saguaro cactus that she notices, smiles as she turns back to her sketch of the Arizona flag crossed with the Texas flag.

After all the girls and their mothers and fathers have sketched and colored their pictures, they each share their finished piece with the group. Their pictures serve as a tool to introduce themselves to the group and begin to build community. One by one, holding their paper up for the group to see, they explain what each part of their drawing symbolizes.

Seated in her chair at the table, Elizabeth, who is about to enter 10th grade, holds her paper in front of her face and explains her drawing to the group. She starts, "I was born and raised in this state, surrounded by the desert. In the hot, dry desert." She stops and smiles. "I drew two saguaro cacti and the bright yellow sun to represent the desert that I know as home. It represents parts of where I'm from." After she shares, Blanca,

who is about to enter ninth grade, holds up her paper, and points to a cloud outlined in turquoise blue with "101 degrees" written in the middle of it. As she points to the cloud she says, "I was born in this hot, dry desert, and I just can't get used to the heat." She looks at the group and they nod in agreement.

For six weeks, these Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers met on the university campus to attend Somos Escritores/We Are Writers bilingual writing workshops. At each workshop, the girls and their parents drew, wrote, shared, and discussed stories from their lived experiences. As a participant observer (Spradley, 1980) in this space, I participated in all aspects of Somos Escritores, from selection of mentor texts (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2007) and creation of workshop themes to facilitation to conducting interviews, alongside the girls and their mothers and fathers as we collectively shared our ideas and experiences through the telling of our stories.

Informed by a Chicana feminist epistemology (CFE; Delgado Bernal, 1998), sociocultural theories of writing (Goncú and Gavin, 2012; Prior, 2006) and third space (Gutiérrez, 2008), this study employed a qualitative case study (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Yin, 2013) approach to inquiry. This study was grounded in the stories and experiences shared between and among daughters, mothers, and fathers, and draws on the work of scholars (Brown, 2013; Dyson, 1997; Finders, 1997; Heath, 1983; Winn, 2011) who have used this approach to understand and uncover the complexities of teaching and learning as students, teachers, and families participate in experiences across sites of learning, homes, and communities. As did these scholars, I desired to understand similar complexities and learn through firsthand observation and participation how people make meaning of lived experiences within specific contextual

situations (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). Also, as Yin (2013) suggests, in conducting case study research, I "want[ed] to understand a real-world case and [I] assume[d] that such an understanding is likely to involve important contextual conditions" (p. 16).

The intentional selection of methods was extremely important to honor and reflect the voices, experiences, and stories of the adolescent Latina girls and their mothers and fathers who participated in Somos Escritores. According to Hancock and Algozzine (2011), a case study is an "intensive analyses and description of a single unit or system bounded by space and time" (p. 10). Somos Escritores is a group of Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers bound by their participation in six 90-minute bilingual writing workshops where participants gathered to write and share stories from their lived experiences within the scope of organized workshops.

Positionality

Somos Escritores is part of a larger journey that started for me as a child. I came to this study as a second-generation Chicana. I was born and raised, attended school, and worked as a teacher in the same city and state where Somos Escritores convened. My first language is English. I didn't grow up speaking Spanish because of experiences that my mother, also born and raised in this state, endured as a child being punished at school for speaking Spanish on the playground. This experience had a great impact on her and so she made the decision not to teach me and my sisters Spanish, with the hopes that we would not endure the same pain. However, I can read, write, and speak Spanish conversationally, but lack confidence when speaking in public, due to my "gringa" accent or not speaking Spanish "the way I should" and the ridicule I have experienced throughout my life.

I grew up in a very large family. My mother is the youngest child of 13 children and my father is the fourth oldest of seven children. My uncles and aunts, on both sides of my family, all had kids, and their kids had kids, and so the family tree continued to grow and extend its branches for several generations.

Surrounded by my immediate family and extended family, I first learned about the importance of love, faith, service, advocacy, family, and education. I learned about these things through words, actions, and stories—many, many stories. At weekend visits, holiday celebrations, and nightly meals around the dinner table, there were always stories. These stories were recalled most often when my older aunts and uncles came together to recall their many travesuras during their childhood. The stories they shared were about the intercession of saints, winning the state football championships, marching in parades with the high school band, healing women during childbirth, working in the fields picking lemons, chauffeuring the Morgans, and participating in relief efforts to comfort and console small children in Hiroshima.

Over the years, I listened to my family tell many stories. There were some stories that I heard only one time, while others were repeated multiple times because of the impact these experiences had on our family. The many stories that were shared with me contained important lessons and illustrated to me the strength and courage of my family and their experiences at the intersections of race, gender, class, and language in a highly conservative state. The lessons in these stories I carried with me throughout my life, and as I've grown older, I understand them differently, and pull from this wisdom when navigating my day-to-day life.

As I entered teaching, this value of story, has always been a huge part of the learning community that I built *with* and *for* my students and families. Story was at the center of our lives in the classroom. We read stories by authors that we could relate to our lives. We wrote stories from our lived experiences that we shared with one another that became part of the fabric of our community. Through this reading, writing, and sharing of stories, my students and I not only learned academic content, but also learned so much about each other, more than would have been possible if our classroom wasn't a space where we all knew our stories mattered.

The idea behind family writing workshops was grounded in stories. In workshops, parents shared stories with their children were stories of their memories growing up on ranchos in México, special abuelitas who disrupted gender norms by allowing their granddaughters to play "boy games," creating social networks as new immigrants for the success of the children and special family traditions. Their stories were filled with powerful lessons of survival, resilience, love, struggle, and hope, illustrating the many forms of "community cultural wealth" (Yosso, 2005) that they drew upon in their daily lives. As a teacher, they provided me with a deeper understanding of their lived realities and the rich resources residing in these that I could draw upon for teaching and learning.

The workshops were intentionally developed to provide a space for families to use many different methods, mainly drawing and artwork, to write, draw, tell, and share their stories. In my classroom, with my students and their families, and our work of sharing our stories, my own upbringing, sitting around the table with my own family, was part of this space.

I bring all my experiences, what Delgado Bernal (1998) refers to as my *community memory* and *cultural intuition* to this study and the creation of Somos Escritores. Through my own lived experiences and the experiences of my family, I have borne witness to the politics of this state and the impact of oppressive laws and mandates that work to silence and subordinate Latinx at the intersections of gender, language, race, and legal status. I have witnessed the impact of these laws and mandates on not only my family, but also the students and families that I worked *with* and *for* in and out of schools. These experiences are what brought me to this current space and what I draw upon in all aspects of the study.

Research Questions

This study explores the experiences and identities of Latina adolescent girls (ninth and 10th graders) and their mothers and fathers participating side by side in Somos Escritores: We Are Writers*,* a bilingual writing workshop (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983). The stories, voices, experiences, and ways of knowing of these girls, mothers, and fathers that allowed me a window into their lives are at the center of this study. As a participant observer (Spradley, 1980), I worked alongside these Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers in Somos Escritores as we collectively shared ourselves, our views, and our experiences through the drawing and writing of our stories.

The following questions guide my inquiry into Somos Escritores. They include the following:

1. What can we learn from Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers through their writing about who they are, what matters to them, and what they envision for their future?

2. How do daughters, mothers, fathers, and facilitators work together to create a bilingual community of writers, a "third space," where stories and ways of knowing are used as a resource for teaching, learning, and writing?

Somos Escritores takes place within a state situated in the southwestern United States with a record of oppressive policies and mandates in place that impact, specifically, the lives, jobs, and educational opportunities of each girl, mother, and father at the intersections of gender, race, culture, and language. All workshops took place during a specific social, political, and historical time in the lives of the participants and within the state. The context influenced not only my questions, but also the creation of the space, practices, analysis, and recommendations (Maxwell, 2013; Reissman, 2008)

My first question seeks to understand how Latina adolescent girls, their mothers and fathers, and the teaching team worked to create a "third space" (Gutiérrez, 2008) where stories and ways of knowing were utilized as a resource for teaching, learning, and writing. I am interested in the specific practices of Somos Escritores that are part of the fabric of each workshop. Also, what were the practices of the girls, mothers, and fathers, and how did they engage together to coconstruct a "pedagogical space "(Villenas, 2006) where there was a reciprocal sharing of stories, ideas, and knowledge? And, how can these practices and this knowledge that was shared be used in our classrooms and schools to open spaces of love for our girls and their families to enter as experts and that support them socially, personally, and academically?

My second question seeks to learn from the writing, specifically the stories, shared from the lived experiences of Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers. Through listening to their stories, I wish to understand more about their hopes

and concerns and how we as educators and scholars may open spaces in our curriculum and our scholarship to address these issues. In addition, I wish to learn from these stories how we center spaces in our classes that encourage the voices and knowledges of girls, mothers, and fathers to create inclusive spaces.

The Workshops

In this section, I provide an overview of Somos Escritores workshops. This includes where the workshops took place, access, participants, facilitator roles, and an overview of the workshops.

Site

Somos Escritores workshops convened at a university campus situated in a city outside the capital city of a southwestern U.S. state. The university is a public research university with five campuses located throughout the state. It is the largest university in the state, offering a variety of undergraduate and graduate degrees across all five campuses. The university was selected because of the free space that it offered to me as a PhD candidate. In addition, the girls and their parents were familiar with the campus through their membership and participation in a university-sponsored outreach program for Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and/or fathers.

Somos Escritores workshops took place on the university campus in the student union. Workshops were held on the second floor where a majority of the meetings rooms are located. A historic point of interest and pride for Mexicans/Chicanx on campus, which can be viewed from a glass enclosure on this floor, is a mural depicting more than 500 years of Mexican/Chicano history painted by early members of the university chapter of El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA). The mural features images

from the “Classic Era of Indian Mexico, the Aztec Stone of the Fifth Sun and iconic figures such as Emiliano Zapata and Cesar Chavez” (Greguska, 2016). Students worked collaboratively to create the mural, and it is said that Cesar Chavez visited campus to meet with students and participate in the painting the mural (Greguska, 2016). (https://clas.asu.edu/content/recovering-asus-latino-history). This point of pride was the perfect backdrop to invite girls, mothers, and fathers to reflect on their histories and share them with one another.

Somos Escritores workshops were held in a meeting space that accommodated approximately 25 people. We met in the same room each week. The room contained a podium with all classroom and technology amenities, complete with large rectangle tables, cushioned folding chairs, screen, and whiteboard and markers.

Each week facilitators arrived early to set up the space for the workshop. We purposefully arranged tables and chairs to elicit conversations and the sharing of stories and ideas. The tables and chairs were always set up facing each other, so that all girls, mothers, and fathers could hear and see each other. At a majority of the workshops, the tables were arranged in a U shape with all writing materials, including mentor texts, paper, pens, pencils, crayons, and markers.

Access

As an undergraduate student at Arizona State University, I worked as a student worker (spring 2001–spring 2003) for an outreach program for Latina middle and high school students aimed at increasing the enrollment of first-generation students by directly involving families in the education of their children (Hispanic Mother Daughter Program, 2016). The program was established in 1983 as a grant written to secure funds for a

program to improve the preparation of Hispanic girls to enroll at the university and increase the number of graduates by creating mother-daughter teams committed to the goal of achieving a higher education. Through their participation in the program, families were connected to the university through monthly workshops focused on demystifying the college application process, resources on obtaining scholarships and enrichment activities, and opportunities to engage with university staff and community advocates while receiving support and advice on the college-going experience (Hispanic Mother Daughter Program, 2016).

During the fall 2015 semester, for an assignment for my Qualitative Methods course, I reached out to program staff to ask permission to attend a workshop. The eighth-grade outreach specialist graciously allowed me to attend a workshop as a guest. I attended the workshop and took jottings that I eventually typed into detailed field notes.

Early in January 2016, after I passed my oral and written exams, I reached out to the specialist again to set up a meeting to discuss my dissertation study and invite families from the program to participate. At our meeting, she invited me and Somos Escritores facilitators to attend their monthly session in March 2016. This invitation was to attend their workshop and facilitate a writing workshop for all participants of the outreach program. This was also an opportunity for me to "case the joint" (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) and learn more about the outreach program, its goals and meet the girls, mothers, and fathers who were part of it.

At the session, we facilitated a 45-minute writing workshop for eighth-grade girls and their families. During our presentation, we modeled for them a drawing and writing activity that was similar to the drawing and writing we planned for the summer

workshops. We passed out drawing and writing materials and invited all the girls and their families to draw and write about a special family memory. The writing workshop provided them with an overview of my dissertation study and the opportunity to participate in a sample workshop similar to what would be offered in the summer through Somos Escritores.

Participants

At the March session hosted by the university sponsored program, I initially recruited 22 families (44 girls, mothers, and fathers) to participate in Somos Escritores. After the workshop, I created a spreadsheet with contact information of all interested families. Then, in mid-April, I called family to ask for the mailing address and answer any questions about the summer workshops. At the end of the month, I mailed, through the U.S. Post Office, to each family a Somos Escritores workshop schedule, an application to attend workshops, and logistical information, including parking and workshop location. Each mailing contained a self-addressed stamped envelope in which families could mail back to me their application for the program. After all families were contacted by phone and/or email and information on Somos Escritores was mailed, five families enrolled in the program and the study. Of the five families that enrolled, four participated in all workshops and the study.

Of the four families that participated in Somos Escritores, two were daughter and mother writing pairs and two families were daughter and father writing pairs. I created a narrative profile of each participant. Each narrative profile was two to three pages long and was written based on a synthesis of personal interactions, field notes and observations, interviews, and written artifacts. I shared these profiles with each

participant to ensure that I was representing each participant correctly and gather feedback to increase trustworthiness (Delgado Bernal, 1998; Tracy, 2010). Narrative profiles were written in English and translated into Spanish by a friend in México who teaches English and literature. Two narrative profiles were translated for two parents who were predominately Spanish speakers.

In the following pages, I introduce each Latina adolescent girl and her participating parent by sharing pieces of their narrative profiles.

Rocky and Valente. Rocky was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, by her Honduran-born parents, Valente and Julia. She is a 14-year-old girl who spends her free time drawing, painting, writing, reading, playing with her dogs, and spending time with her friends—when her parents permit it. She became interested in drawing through a class that she took in seventh grade in which her teacher took interest in her because of her talent and hard work. When she enters high school, she plans on continuing to take art classes and seek out after-school clubs to meet other students who share her interest in drawing. She is part of an online community, an "affinity group" (Gee, 2004), in which she and her friends write stories and share them in the group for constructive and supportive feedback.

This school year, she is attending a school that is located outside of her attendance area. She learned about this school from a teacher at her school and applied for admission because of their unique course offerings, specifically the focus on science, technology, engineering, and math, and their extracurricular activities. Rocky went through a rigorous application process including a written application and an interview with school administration to be considered for enrollment. Her parents supported her through the

entire process and, once she was admitted, worked with her to figure out the city bus route and meet students who live nearby so that the families could support each other to ensure their kids are safe to and from school. Rocky hopes that the school will provide her with the curriculum, tools and resources necessary to help her pursue her dream of attending college and becoming a doctor. She wanted to participate in Somos Escritores because although she wants to be a doctor, "writing is [her] back-up plan," and she felt that the opportunity to participate in Somos Escritores could support her in continuing to develop her craft and grow as a writer.

Valente attended Somos Escritores with his daughter, Rocky. He attended the workshops with her because her mom's work schedule would not permit her to attend. Valente also attended all the university outreach program for Latina girls and their mothers and/or fathers with Rocky.

Valente was born and raised in Honduras. He arrived in this country as a 15-year-old and has lived in the States, where he met his wife Julia, ever since. He works as a maintenance man for an apartment complex. When not working, Valente enjoys spending time in nature and with his family. He has very high hopes that his daughter will fulfill her dreams and works tirelessly to ensure that she is able to take advantage of every opportunity that is placed before her.

Reyna and Samuel. Reyna is a second-generation self-identified Mexican growing up in the southern part of the capital city of the state. Her father, Samuel, was born and raised in this same part of town, and their extended family, including her grandmother and uncles, live within the vicinity of where he lived when he was younger.

Reyna is the oldest of three children. She attended elementary and middle school at the same school her father attended as a child.

Reyna attends school at public charter school in the downtown area of the capital city of the state. The school is connected to the university and several professors and graduate students conduct research with teachers and students and offer special programs to the students and families. Her dream is to become a musician and make a difference in the world through her music.

Reyna enjoys listening to music and playing music. Her favorite band is My Chemical Romance. She loves this band because of their heightened consciousness and the messages rooted in peace, love, and hope that are written and performed in their songs.

Reyna plays the guitar and has formed a band with her friends. Although the band is off to a rocky start due to turnover in group membership and time constraints imposed by school and family commitments, they are working to solve these growing pains. Reyna is hopeful that one day, like her favorite band, their band will make their mark in their world and, through the writing and performing of their music, can make a difference in the world.

Reyna's father, Samuel, was born and raised in the city in which he currently resides. He attended elementary, middle, and high school in the area where he resides. He met his wife, Lucy, in high school, where they dated and eventually became pregnant with Reyna and married. Samuel and Lucy have been married for 15 years. They have three children; Reyna is their oldest. Samuel works in pest control. He recently left the

company he had worked for several years to work at the largest high school district in the city as the district pest control contractor.

Samuel enjoys spending time with his entire family. They get together on the weekends for barbecues and dinners. It is important to him that his kids have a good relationship with their relatives and understand the importance of family. Since losing his youngest brother unexpectedly in a car accident, the family has been even closer.

Samuel attended every Somos Escritores workshop with his daughter because she was interested in attending and he wanted to support her. Like Valente, he attends university outreach workshops with her while his wife stays at home with their two younger children. He hopes that Reyna will pursue the things that are important to her, but also encourages her to be realistic in her goals and not "put all of her eggs in one basket."

Blanca and Alma. Blanca is a first-generation Latina living with her mother, Alma, in the southern part of the capital city of the state. She is the youngest of two children. She is 14 years old and entering ninth grade at a high school in the downtown area of the capital that is linked to the local university. Blanca and Reyna will be attending the same school in the fall.

Blanca enjoys listening to music on her iPod, working out at the gym, and FaceTiming her friends. She is interested in fashion and likes to go shopping with her friends. When she is older she wants to go to college out of state and pursue a degree in a field where she can make a difference in the world.

Alma is 38 years old and was born and raised in México. She is a "dreamer" with many aspirations for herself and her daughters. She views her place in the world as part

of a larger universe of people and animals. She believes in treating all living creatures with dignity and respect and shares these beliefs with her daughter.

Alma takes classes at the Institute of Healing Arts. She is interested in yoga and reiki. At the Institute of Healing Arts, she is studying to be a life coach. She wants to help people heal, but finding peace and strength in themselves, much like she has found in herself.

Elizabeth and Rose. Elizabeth lives in the downtown area of the capital of the city. She is Rose's youngest child. She attends a high school that is part of the largest high school district in the state. She enjoys writing, especially stories about her life and about things that concern her like racism.

Elizabeth is involved in a Christian youth group. She attends meetings on a biweekly basis and even attended a summer camp in the northern part of the state. She likes to go to the group by herself because she enjoys meeting new people and hearing the message of the night.

Rose was born in El Paso, Texas. She works from home as a loan officer for a car dealership. Rose enjoys dancing, shopping, making others smile, and spending time with her family. Her family is very important to her, and they have a strong bond. On the weekends they get together for family time, which includes a lot of dancing, drinking, laughing, and fun.

Rose is the oldest child of four daughters. Her sisters are very close to her and they help each other through the good times and bad times. She has two children: a son, Guillermo, and a daughter, Elizabeth. She hopes that Elizabeth graduates from college and enters a profession that she loves and in which she can make a difference in the

world. Rose attended a few years of college before she got married and encourages her daughter to stay single and follow her dreams.

Facilitators

To support the creation and implementation of Somos Escritores workshops *with* and *for* Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers, I reached out to my network of friends and family to assist in the study. The role of facilitator included designing workshop writing activities, modeling their writing at workshops, support with Spanish translation at workshops and leading various parts of each workshop. In addition, facilitators worked with me to revise and rethink writing activities and to document various aspects of the program through video and photography.

Two women, Alexa and Sally, both of whom shared my views and beliefs about the power of writing and sharing our stories, volunteered and agreed to help organize and facilitate Somos Escritores workshops. Not only did we have a collective belief in the power of writing and stories, but Alexa and Sally brought with them rich experience and knowledge of the teaching of writing and theater techniques and work in after-school and arts-based literacy spaces, and they themselves were writers.

Each Somos Escritores facilitator brought a unique set of skills and knowledge to the workshops. The first facilitator, Alexa, a 30-year-old Caucasian, was born and raised in the Midwest, where she attended school and received her degree in elementary education and English. She has six years of experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse students and families as a third and fourth grade teacher and teacher consultant for the local National Writing Project site. In addition, she has experience in

organizing and facilitating after-school family writing projects at her school site and at schools around the state.

The second facilitator, Sally, a 34-year-old Latina, was born and raised in the same state where the study took place. She attended college at the local university and received a degree in mass communication. Currently, she lives on the West Coast, where she works in the film industry and is a blogger, theorizing life from her lived experiences and sharing her learning with others in order to provide light, hope, and guidance to others. In addition, she takes classes in improv and voice and has extensive experience working with youth in arts-based creative writing spaces.

As a PhD candidate conducting my dissertation study, I facilitated and participated in the space as a participant observer (Spradley, 1980). I am a 36-year-old Chicana, born, raised, and residing in the same state where the study took place. I have eight years of teaching experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse elementary and middle school students and their families. In addition, I have organized and facilitated summer writing programs for high school-age youth and hosted after-school family writing projects for my students and their families.

Together, Alexa, Sally, and I facilitated all workshops. We planned each workshop, which included the flow of writing, sharing and discussion of stories, the mentor texts (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2007) to be used to model writing, and who would take the lead on different parts of the workshop.

Somos Escritores Workshops

Somos Escritores consisted of six weekly writing workshops (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983). Each workshop was one and a half hours long. During the first five

workshops, we met to participate in writing on a specific topic or theme. The final workshop was the author celebration, where each girl, mother, and father selected a piece of writing to share at the culminating author celebration.

Each Somos Escritores workshop focused on a central theme. These included Where I'm From, Scar Stories, The Masks We Wear, Speaking our Truths as Teenagers, and Why We Write. Prior to the first workshop, facilitators selected the central theme for each session. After each session, the facilitators met to debrief and plan for the upcoming week. Based on the conversations that families had, the writing that they shared, and what they discussed at interviews, the workshop themes changed to follow the concerns and ideas of the girls and their families.

Somos Escritores workshops were organized as a writing workshop approach (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983) and consisted of minilessons with mentor texts, both print and digital; writing time; and partner and whole-group author share time. This approach allowed Latina adolescent girls, mothers, and fathers extended time and space to draw, write, discuss, and share. Each workshop session began with the reading and discussion of a bilingual picture book, poem, of short memoir, either print based or in digital form. This piece was used to open discussion around the workshop theme, to model text for writers, and to weave together the drawing and writing for each specific workshop. Next, one of the facilitators led the group through a minilesson in which they asked probing questions and modeled pieces of their own drawing, writing, and thinking. Then, the group was invited to draft their own pieces about the topic based on our discussion and their own experiences. This writing time was chunked into segments, with the group being given extended time to write, discuss, reflect, and return to writing. At the end of

the workshop, each girl shared with their mother or father. Then the facilitators invited each girl, mother and father to share a line, paragraph or stanza or their entire piece with the entire group. All workshops were facilitated using this approach.

Week One: Where I'm From/De Donde Soy Yo: Introducing Myself to the World

This first workshop was designed to create a safe and supportive space for Latina adolescent girls, mothers, and fathers to enter into self-reflection and discussions of their lived experiences through drawing, writing, and storytelling. As facilitators, we were cognizant of the vulnerability that occurs when we open ourselves up through writing. Therefore, in each workshop we engaged in the same writing and sharing that we asked girls and their families to do by writing and sharing our stories alongside girls and their families.

In this first workshop Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers were invited to reflect on where they were from, using drawing and writing to introduce themselves to the group through crafting their own "Where I'm From/Yo Soy De" poems (Christensen, 2001; Lyon, 1999). Families drew pictures of where they were from, then shared their drawings with partners and the whole group. After this, the facilitators shared digital and text-based examples of "Where I'm From/Yo Soy De" poems in English and Spanish. The original poem written by George Ella Lyon (1999) describes all the people, places, and memories that have shaped her identity. Lyon's poem invites us to think deeply about our histories and the people, places, and moments that have shaped our evolving identities and view of the world. After reading, watching, and discussing the poems, each girl, mother and father drafted and shared with the group their original "Where I'm From/Yo Soy De" poems.

Week Two: Scar Stories

The theme of this workshop, "Scar Stories," stemmed from a workshop created by G. Lynn Nelson (2004) and facilitated in English classes and professional development workshops at the local university and the community. My dissertation advisor, Dr. James Blasingame, has presented a similar workshop in writing workshops for youth in summer writing programs and teachers in professional development workshops focused on the teaching of writing. According to Nelson, in his book *Writing and Being: Embracing Your Life Through Creative Journaling*, "[g]iven the tools, we can heal ourselves and break the terrible chain of passing down wounds" (p. 112). This workshop provides writers with the opportunity to reflect on their lives and uncover the stories that reside in their physical and emotional scars. Through this reflection, writers "bear witness" to the deep emotions and the important learning attached to these experiences of strength and survival.

We opened the workshop with the reading of the poem "Cicatrices," written by Piedad Bonnett (2011), and discussed the dolor [pain] and belleza [beauty] of our scars and the memorias [memories] that were invoked by remembering and reflecting on the experience that caused the scar. Afterward, we discussed different types of scars: physical scars, the ones we can see, and emotional scars, the ones that are hidden or that we hide from others. Next, the group was provided with several text-based and digital examples of people sharing their scar stories through video, music, art, and writing. Then I shared my own scar story, a piece about my pregnancy and postpartum experience. I described the many joys and challenges of this life-changing time, including my hopes and fears in raising my daughter to be a good person.

After I shared my scar story, girls, mothers, and fathers reflected upon and wrote their own scar stories. First, they labeled their physical and emotional scars on an outline of a body and heart that we provided them. After labeling, they picked one scar to write about, describing in detail the experience behind the scar and their learning from this experience.

Week Three: The Masks We Wear

At this workshop, the girls and their mothers and fathers explored, through drawing and writing, the masks that they wear and show the world (the outside), and the masks that they keep hidden and guarded (the inside). This workshop built on the previous week's workshop, where families explored their scars and reflected upon their learning of the feelings and emotions of the scar, thus creating a counternarrative of the experience.

To begin the workshop, we read the short poem "Masks" by Shel Silverstein (2011) which describes the importance of self-acceptance and self-love. Next, girls, mothers, and fathers were provided with a white piece of paper with a blank mask on both sides, symbolizing their inner and outer masks. Then, everyone labeled their outer masks with symbols, words, or drawings that represented how others perceived them, noting what was surprising and how they felt doing this. This was repeated on the other side of the paper (mask), with everyone labeling their inner masks, reflecting upon how they perceived themselves.

Once both sides of each person's masks were labeled and everyone had a chance to write about the experience of labeling inner and outer masks, we separated girls into one group and parents into another group for sharing of masks. After girls shared with

each other and parents shared with each other, one of the facilitators invited them to look at their inner and outer masks, select two labels that contrasted how they viewed themselves and how others perceived them and write about it in any form, poem, essay, letter, etc. Finally, girls rejoined their mothers or fathers and read their piece to their parent before sharing with the entire group.

Week Four: Speaking My Truth: What It's Like Being a Teenager

In this workshop, girls, mothers, and fathers shared, discussed, and wrote about their experiences as a teenager. This provided girls and parents with the chance to hear about their experiences in the past and today, and to dialogue about the similarities and differences of their experiences based in social and historical contexts. Collectively, girls and their parents reflected on and wrote about their teenage experiences, sharing the joy, the pain, the good, the bad, the unspoken, in their own words.

The workshop started with a reading of the poem "Teenagers," written by Pat Mora (2000) We read it in English and Spanish. After reading the poem, parents and daughters were invited to draw a picture of how they viewed their parent when they were children. Parents drew their own parents and girls drew pictures of their parents, first sharing and then writing about their parents with the following guiding questions:

How did you see your parents?

What have you come to understand about your parents?

What memories do you have of your parents?

What do you want your parents to know?

¿Cómo vio a sus padres?

¿Qué has llegado a entender acerca de sus padres?

¿Qué recuerdos tiene de sus padres?

¿Qué desea que sus padres sepan?

After writing time, mothers and fathers shared with their daughters and daughters shared with their mothers and fathers. Then, we split the parents and girls up, with parents sitting on one side of the room, and girls sitting on the other side of the room.

Once parents and girls were seated at their new tables, we invited them to think and write about the following question: What is it like being a teenager in 2016? [¿Qué se siente ser un adolescente en 2016?]. Girls and their parents wrote a response to this question, then shared with partners at their table. Finally, parents and daughters were provided with additional guiding questions and invited to write a letter to their parent or daughter about what it was like being a teenager, now and then. After everyone wrote their letters, we asked parents and daughters to return to their seats next to each other and read aloud the letter they had written to their mother, father, or daughter.

Week Five: Somos Escritores/We Are Writers: Why We Write & Share our Stories

At the final workshop, in preparation for the culminating author celebration, girls, mothers, and fathers wrote an author's statement about who they were and why they wrote. Girls and their mothers and fathers were provided with three bilingual examples of author's statements from published authors websites. These examples include Alma Flor Ada, Rene Colato Laínez and Duncan Tonatiuh. We read and discussed each statement, focusing on what was similar or different between the statements. Afterward, writers were given time to begin to draft their statements and select a piece of writing that they would share at the upcoming celebration. The statements that girls, mothers, and fathers

wrote would be read by a facilitator to introduce them to guests the night of the author celebration.

Week Six: Author Celebration

The culminating author celebration took place during our regularly scheduled Somos Escritores workshops. Families invited friends and extended family members to share in the festivities. Everyone brought food for the potluck-style dinner and I provided a cake and punch. Each girl, mother, and father who participated in Somos Escritores shared a poem, story or essay that he or she had crafted at workshops or on his or her own time. At the end of the celebration, each writer received a certificate, a book, and a writer's notebook, to support them in continued writing.

Data Collection

This study drew on five sets of data which worked together to create a narrative (Reissman, 2008) of the inquiry into Somos Escritores. These include (a) pre/post workshop surveys, (b) video recording and transcription of writing workshops, (c) semistructured interviews, (d) workshop artifacts, and (e) field notes. I collected data from multiple sources to assist in the "development of *converging lines of inquiry*" (Yin, 2014, p. 120), referred to as triangulation.

In this section, I provide a detailed description of each data source that was collected for this study.

Ethnographic Field Notes

As a researcher, I participated in Somos Escritores as a participant observer (Spradley, 1980). I took this stance to immerse myself more fully in the space and participate alongside girls, mothers, and fathers. According to Yin (2014), participant

observation provides the researcher with a "distinctive opportunity...to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone 'inside' a case rather than external to it" (p. 117). As participant observer, I was able to fully participate in all aspects of the Somos Escritores, from inception to facilitation and follow-up, with each girl, mother, and father.

At each workshop, while facilitating and working with girls and families, I carried a red spiral notebook with me. This notebook was used to write alongside girls and mothers as we all crafted our stories and to record jottings. Following the advice of Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011), in my jottings I recorded my initial impressions, important and surprising events and incidents, the reactions of participants to important or surprising events, and the routines and organization of Somos Escritores workshops. My jottings, written in black pen, included sketches of the layout of the workshop space and how the workshop was intentionally set up to create opportunities for sharing between and among girls and families. I jotted snippets of conversations between girls and their families and the entire group, being careful include as much direct quotation as possible to understand their ideas and reactions in their own words. When I was not facilitating, I sat at the tables next to the girls and parents participating in workshops to record jottings, and while facilitating or working with families, I wrote at the podium or alongside them as they shared.

Immediately following each workshop, I drove to a nearby restaurant or coffee shop to fill in my jottings with more extensive details about the workshop to prepare for typing descriptive field notes. According to Emerson et al. (2011), the "process of inscribing, of writing field notes, helps the field researcher to understand what he has

been observing in the first place and, thus, enables him to participate in new ways to hear with greater acuteness, and to observe with a new lens" (p. 19).

To begin to fill in my jottings with specific and detailed description, I read them three times. Each time I read my jottings was for a very specific purpose. First, I read all jottings to refresh my memory of my observations, thinking, and questions of the workshop. Next, with a blue pen, I filled in my jottings to elaborate with more detailed description. Then, with a red pen, I reread my jottings that were now filled in and added any additional details and observer notes based on the first two readings. Finally, I wrote a reflective memo (Saldaña, 2012) about the workshop and my jottings to capture any initial thoughts regarding analysis and lingering questions.

The next day, I typed my field notes as a Word document to provide for rich, thick description (Geertz, 1973). Field notes were typed in 12-point Times New Roman font and were double spaced. Each set of field notes was between 13 and 15 pages long. It took 3–5 days to type each set. After typing each set, I reread it and added any final details that came to mind while being immersed in transcription. Finally, field notes were uploaded into MaxQDA Qualitative Data Analysis Software for coding and analysis.

Interviews

In the book *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*, Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) describe interviewing as "an active process where the interviewer and interviewee through their relationship produce knowledge...[that] is contextual, linguistic, narrative, and pragmatic" (p. 21). In conducting interviews with Latina girls and their mothers and fathers who participated in Somos Escritores, I drew from this description as I developed my interview guide.

I conducted eight individual semistructured interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) with each girl, mother, and father. Interviews were conducted with each girl, mother, and father because, as Seidman (2013) suggests, "interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). Interviews were facilitated to follow up with each participant in regards to observations and field notes, in order to capture "descriptions of the[ir] life world" (p. 6). These interviews provided the time and space for us to engage in deep one-on-one conversations that allowed each girl, mother, and father to reflect on and share through oral stories their personal experiences in school, home, family, and the community.

All interviews took place on Sunday afternoons at coffee shops near the participants' homes. In scheduling the interviews, I suggested meeting in a public space that was comfortable and relaxing. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and were recorded using an Olympus recording device. Reissman (2008) suggests recording all conversations to ensure that participants' ideas and voices are represented fairly and with great accuracy. In addition, recording interviews was necessary for transcription purposes. Following each interview, I wrote a reflective memo (Saldaña, 2013) about the experience highlighting my immediate impressions of our conversation, including any points of tension that I noticed and emotional responses to questions or stories.

First, I interviewed each of the girls who participated in Somos Escritores. I interviewed Reyna, Rocky, and Blanca in June and Elizabeth in January. Then, I interviewed each mother and father. I interviewed Alma, Samuel, and Valente in July and Rose in January. There was a lag between the last set of interviews with Elizabeth and

Rose due to unforeseen family circumstances in which they had to travel to another state for a few months. All interviews were conducted using the same format. This included an opening script, five background/demographic questions, and nine to 11 preselected open-ended questions. This structure, as Brenner (2006) states, "...has the advantage of asking all informants the same core questions with the freedom to ask follow-up questions that build on the responses received" (p. 362). The questions that I asked were crafted to be open ended and provide opportunities for girls, mothers, and fathers to answer through storytelling, entering their "life world" in order to understand their experiences and perspectives in their own words (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012).

Each interview started with an opening script that I read aloud in English or Spanish that informed each girl, mother, and father of the purpose of the interview. This included asking for permission to record the interview and informing them of their right to abstain from answering a question and their right to end the interview. Then, I asked five background/demographic questions, which included age, birthplace, ethnic identity, language background, and school experiences. I found that these opening questions about their background/demographics helped girls, mothers, and fathers to begin to reflect on their lived experiences, helping to build ease and comfort in the interview.

Following the opening set of background/demographic questions, I asked a set of nine to 11 preselected questions that included time for follow-up and clarification. Girls were asked 11 questions and mothers and fathers were asked nine questions. The questions I asked were about their experiences in Somos Escritores, their relationship to their daughter or parent, their concerns, and goals and hopes for the future. A sample of the questions asked to girls, mothers, and fathers included:

- Describe your relationship with your mom, dad or daughter.
- Describe the role that your mother and father plays in your life.
- How do you think your mom, dad or daughter views you?
- What do you want society to know about girls your age?

Following each interview, I uploaded the audio file to MAXQDA Qualitative Analysis software for transcription and analysis. Each interview was transcribed in MAXQDA in 12 point Times New Roman font and double spaced.

Artifacts

I collected writing samples from every girl, mother, and father who attended Somos Escritores workshops. The writing samples included free writing, group writing, and polished final pieces. In addition, any handouts, including mentor texts (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2007), workshop announcements, and workshop reflection slips, were collected.

Following each workshop, I made two photocopies of the writing that each girl, mother, and father did during the week's writing workshop. Then, I scanned each piece of writing. Next, I created a digital folder in my Google Drive for each girl, mother, and father. I saved a copy of each scanned piece of writing in its respective folder. I also copied and scanned one set of handouts that were given out at each workshop, saving a scanned copy in a folder in my Google Drive as well. All scanned writing samples were uploaded into MAXQDA Qualitative Data Analysis Software for analysis.

Survey

In April 2016, two months prior to the first Somos Escritores writing workshop, I sent each family one bilingual (English and Spanish) application to be filled out and sent back to me via the U.S. Postal Service. I included a self-addressed stamped envelope and

a short letter about Somos Escritores with the application. The application served two distinct purposes. First, the application was used to collect contact information on each family, girl and father or girl and mother. Second, the application included two questions for families to answer. The same question were asked of girls and their parents: Why would you like to attend Somos Escritores? What to you hope to gain from the experience? Please explain. [¿Por qué le gustaría asistir Somos Escritores? ¿Lo que se espera obtener de la experiencia? Por favor explique.]

At the final Somos Escritores writing workshop, prior to the author celebration, I gave each girl, mother, and father a bilingual (English/Spanish) post survey. My goal was to obtain more insight into their experience participating in Somos Escritores. In addition, I wanted to follow up on earlier interview questions and workshop observations.

I created two different surveys with some similar and different questions for girls and parents. Some of the questions that both girls and parents were asked were:

- How have you changed through your involvement in Somos Escritores/We Are Writers? [Cómo ha cambiado a través de su participación en Somos Escritores?]
- Did you have any experiences writing prior to joining Somos Escritores/We Are Writers? Explain. [Ha tenido alguna experiencia de escritura antes de unirse Somos Escritores? Explique.]

In addition, girls and parents were asked these questions that were different:

- What do you wish for your daughter? [Qué desea para su hija?]
- What are your school interests? Are you involved in clubs, sports, etc.? Explain.

Everybody received their surveys in a blank white envelope for privacy. They were instructed to reflect on their experiences in Somos Escritores and respond honestly to each question.

Video

I video recorded each Somos Escritores workshop using a Cannon VIXIA HFR600 Camcorder. Video data provides researchers with tools for "close documentation and observation and presents unprecedented analytical, collaborative, and archival possibilities" (Derry et al., 2010, p. 5) in complex field settings, such as classrooms and after-school learning spaces. In Somos Escritores, I collected video of each workshop to gain a close-up view of girls, mothers, and fathers as they drew and wrote their stories and shared and discussed them with one another. The video also provided a lens into the practices of this "third space," including the components of the writing workshop; the language used by facilitators and participants in teaching, learning, and sharing; type of writing; and any rituals or routines that may have become coconstructed by facilitators and participants.

Sally, a facilitator of Somos Escritores who works in the film industry, helped me to film each workshop. She not only helped to facilitate writing workshops, but also was in charge of filming. Before each workshop, we would arrive early and set up the camera in the back left corner of the room. The camera was attached to a tripod with the legs extended to full length. We pointed the lens of the camera toward the tables where girls, mothers, and fathers were drawing, writing, and sharing and where the facilitators led workshops. We made sure that all tables were part of the shot and that the sound was audible.

During workshops, the camera did not stay placed in the same location. As Derry et al. (2010) discussed, "Enhanced observational power [afforded through video] requires thoughtful attention to the problem of how to extract data and meaning from the large, complex video corpora" (p. 6). Therefore, I worked with the workshop facilitator to discuss the different events and discussions that I wanted to have captured close up, focusing on the practices of the space and stories shared by girls, mothers, and fathers. We worked together to make intentional decisions on what aspects of the workshops would be recorded from the back of the room and then moved to close-up views for better audio and visual recording. I specifically discussed with her the movement of the camera from the back of the room during whole-group facilitation, writing, and sharing to close-up on specific girl and mother and girl and father partner writing and sharing. Also, when we asked parents to work together and girls to work together, I discussed with her how we could move the camera to different locations to film the different conversations between families, parents and girls.

After each workshop, the film was downloaded and backed up on an external hard drive. Then, film was uploaded to MaxQDA for partial transcription and coding.

Data Analysis

I analyzed all data sources using narrative inquiry methods (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Reissman, 2008). As a researcher whose role in the study was as a participant observer (Spradley, 1980), it was important to me to center voices and experiences of participants throughout the research study. In doing so, I weaved together a variety of narrative inquiry methods, specifically thematic analysis and dialogic/performance analysis (Reissman, 2008) to construct a methodological approach

to analysis that was collaborative and consisted of "mutual storytelling" and "restorying" of the experiences of girls, mothers, and fathers in Somos Escritores and their day-to-day lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990).

Narrative inquiry methods provided me with tools to illuminate the knowledge that resided in the voices and stories of Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers, allowing me to retell and share their stories in a way that humanized their experiences. Clandinin and Connelly (1990) state, "The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (p. 2). In addition, narrative inquiry methods made evident the intentional practices of Somos Escritores to show how a "third space" was constructed *with* and *for* Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers and the possibilities of transformation when these practices are present.

Thematic analysis helped me to look across participants through various data sources for themes that emerged across each case. According to Reissman (2008), "thematic analysis can be applied to stories that develop in interview conversations and group meetings, and those found in written documents" (p. 54). However, using thematic analysis created a limited view of each participant and the Somos Escritores space. Where thematic analysis fell short, dialogic/performance analysis provided me with tools to consider and reflect upon the context in which the stories were written and shared, as well as what was unwritten and left unspoken. In addition, my role as a participant observer (Spradley, 1980) and my theorization from my own lived experiences (Delgado Bernal, 1998) aligned with the role the researcher plays in thematic analysis, allowing me to enter the text as an "active participant" (Reissman, 2008).

Coding

The coding of data sources was a cyclical and iterative process (Saldaña, 2013) taking place throughout the entire research process. In *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Saldaña (2013) defines a code as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3). The coding of data sources is described by Charmaz (2001) as the "critical link" in the collection of raw data into the meaning-making process that results in an explanation of a phenomenon. It is not "just labeling, it is linking" (Saldaña, 2013).

Throughout my inquiry into Somos Escritores, I coded all data, field notes, interviews, workshop artifacts, surveys, and video footage and organized this analysis in MaxQDA. The coding of data throughout the research process provided me with the opportunity to experience conversations, stories, and moments again. Initial coding consisted of both open coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2007) and in vivo coding methods (Saldaña, 2013). Open coding is a method of tagging by applying a word or descriptive phrase to a unit of data (Corbin and Strauss, 2007), and in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) is coding data with a code that is "taken directly from what the participant himself says" (p. 4). These coding methods worked in concert with one another to help me begin to make connections between what I was observing, how girls and their parents were interacting in the space and the stories that were both shared and left unspoken in workshops and interviews—in their own words, thus centering their voices and experiences (Delgado Bernal, 1998). In addition, these coding methods allowed for close reading and full

immersion into data sources, helping me to see, feel, and experience beyond my expectations, making the "familiar strange" (Kaomea, 2003).

Continuing to move forward with coding, I used focused coding to make sense of the large amount of codes from initial coding. This focused coding lead to the development of categories and initial definitions of each. I initially had 17 categories, including Defining Myself, Describing My Parents, Excelling in School, and Envisioning Future Selves. As I continued to code data sources, I collapsed categories and revised based on themes that emerged in the data. As I continued focused coding, I placed each code into a category, continuing to revise and redefine categories and to collapse them when necessary **(SEE APPENDIX D).** In the following chapters, I outline the answers to my questions.

Memos

Throughout the entire research process, I wrote analytic memos (Saldaña, 2013), to capture ideas and decisions that I made during data collection and analysis. Memos were a space for me to capture my initial thinking and noticings during observations, interviews, and informal conversations. They were a space to think on paper about my data collection and analysis and to process the codes and themes that were emerging.

I wrote different kinds of memos: coding memos, theoretical memos, and follow-up memos. Coding memos were written to tease out my thinking about codes and themes and to reflect upon what they meant to the larger research study and the questions that I was seeking to answer. Theoretical memos (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Saldaña, 2013) were written after I read literature to help me to analyze how theories were informing analysis and possibly opening up new ways of thinking about my study. Follow-up memos were

written immediately after each workshop and interview to capture postexperience reflections and to apply codes to what I was observing to make sense of it.

To keep track of the memos that I wrote, I created a table of contents in my Google Drive that contained a record of each memo. The table of contents contained the date and title for each memo, which was also recorded in the actual memo. The table of contents also included a section where I wrote a few key words to help me to remember what was written in the memo. This system helped me to access memos more easily.

Member Reflections

The centering of participant experiences and voices was central to the design of the study of Somos Escritores. Weaving a CFE (Delgado Bernal, 1998) into my theoretical framework provided me as the researcher with important tools to include participants—girls, their mothers, and their fathers—throughout the entire research process in collaborative and progressive ways. A CFE is "concerned with the knowledge about Chicanas—about who generates an understanding of their experiences, and how this knowledge is legitimized or not legitimized" (560). Therefore, for me as a researcher working *with* and for *my* participants, collaboration through the cultivation of reciprocal relationships and "member reflections" (Tracy, 2010) was critical to the study of Somos Escritores.

Throughout the study, I intentionally created multiple occasions, both inside and outside the formal Somos Escritores workshops, to collaborate with girls and their mothers and fathers in the research process. One way this was achieved was through providing girls, mothers, and fathers with occasions to participate in member reflections. Tracy (2010) describes "member reflections" as occasions spent "sharing and dialoguing

with participants about the study's findings, and providing opportunities for questions, critique feedback, affirmation, and even collaboration" (p. 844). All the girls and their mothers or fathers opened up their lives to me through participation in the workshops and I wanted to ensure that I not only centered their voices and experiences, but honored them as well.

As a researcher, I asked girls, mothers, and fathers to reflect on the research process in a variety of ways. One way was through end-of-workshop "member reflections." At the end of each workshop, girls and their mothers and fathers reflected on the workshop and their learning. This was in the form of an exit slip or a quick write. A quick write is a timed writing strategy to build stamina in writing and briefly reflect in writing. Here is an example of questions asked at the end of a workshop to elicit reflection and feedback on the workshop and learning:

What did you learn about yourself? ¿Qué aprendiste sobre ti mismo?

What did you learn about your parent? ¿Qué aprendiste sobre tus padres?

What did you learn about your daughter? ¿Qué aprendiste sobre tu hija?

What do you wonder? ¿Tienes alguna duda?

This was used as a tool to plan future workshops and a way to check in with each participant. After each interview, once transcriptions were complete, I sent them to the participants and asked for feedback and clarification on parts that were unclear to me, and also asked for them to clarify anything they wanted to expand upon or that I got wrong or they felt did not represent them in a way in which they wanted to be represented.

To authentically include girls, mothers, and fathers in the research process, I believed it to be vital to build authentic and reciprocal relationships with them. This type

of relationship building takes time and, I believe, vulnerability on the researcher's behalf to open up in ways that traditional epistemologies and frameworks do not allow (Delgado Bernal, 1998).

The relationships that were built with girls, mothers, and fathers started at the very first Somos Escritores workshop. They were built in the space of the workshops and spaces outside of the formal workshops, before and after, when families arrived early or stayed late to chat and share more. They were cultivated during workshops when each of us, including the facilitators, shared our stories from our lived experiences, through drawing and writing. They continued to be strengthened at interviews when girls, mothers, and fathers were asked to reflect on their lived experiences, their relationships with their daughter or parent, and to discuss their concerns and hopes for today and the future. They were nurtured after interviews through the sharing of transcripts and follow-up feedback on codes and analysis. As the formal research is completed, these relationships continue as reciprocal relationships, as families continue to connect with me to ask questions about college and invite me to school and family functions. These relationships matter for so many reasons.

Data Analysis Software

MaxQDA Qualitative Data Analysis Software was used to store and organize data. Typed field notes were uploaded for coding and category creation. Interviews were transcribed using the transcription software that is available in the platform. After transcription, the interviews were coded and added to categories. Video footage of Somos Escritores was uploaded and coded using the visual coding tools, then added to categories. In addition, artifacts, which include all writing samples, workshop handouts

and reflections, and pre/post surveys, were converted from PDF to Word documents using Adobe Acrobat Office and then uploaded to MaxQDA for coding.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

> I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. (Lorde, 2007, p. 39)

On a Sunday evening in late June, I meet with Rocky at a Starbucks near her home to learn more about her experiences in Somos Escritores, her lived experiences, and what she envisions for her future. Rocky sits across from me at a table with a small umbrella on the patio, smiling as we talked about the summer and her plans for the upcoming school year, when she will enter high school. Her thick, wavy dark brown hair lies just past her shoulders. She wears a black T-shirt with the name of her favorite band, My Chemical Romance, written across the front, in thick white spray-painted letters.

Normally, her father does not allow her to go out by herself. Today he has made an exception because of the trust that I have gained from him and his desire to support his daughter in following her interests and developing her talents. Placing the digital recorder between us, I turn it on, asking her if she minds. She shakes her head "No." I proceed asking her, "How do you think society views girls your age?"

She looks at me and then looks up at the sky, as if searching for the answers. After a few moments, she looks at me and responds, "Probably like say 'Oh my god you're really smart you must be a nerd' or 'Yeah you're really antisocial, you must have no friends.'" As she speaks I nod my head, letting her know I hear her. She continues, "They…um...they say that 'oh my god you cut your wrist. You harm yourself…wow,

you're such an attention person. You just want attention...Yeah, the labels. Stereotypical'" (interview, June 26, 2016).

In this study, Latina adolescent girls and their parents attended weekly bilingual writing workshops to write, draw, and share stories from their lived experiences. At workshops families explored topics such as self, family, education, community, and social justice. Alongside girls and their parents, I learned from the stories that were shared, and those that were not shared, about who they are, what matters to them, and what they envision for their futures. I also learned about the intentional practices that are necessary for the coconstruction of a space, a third space (Gutiérrez, 2008), like Somos Escritores, *with* and *for* girls and their mothers and fathers that centers their voices, stories, and ways of knowing as valuable resources for teaching, learning, and writing. In this chapter I answer the following questions:

1. What can we learn from Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers through their writing about who they are, what matters to them, and what they envision for their future?
2. How do daughters, mothers, fathers, and facilitators work together to create a bilingual community of writers, a "third space," where stories and ways of knowing are used as a resource for teaching, learning, and writing?

In this chapter, I share my findings, the answers to my questions, and my many learnings as I participated side by side with girls and their parents in Somos Escritores/We Are Writers, a bilingual writing workshop (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983) for Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers. Through their stories, voices, experiences, and ways of knowing, the Latina adolescent girls, mothers, and fathers who

participated in Somos Escritores provided me with a window into their lives. This allowed me to learn more about who they are, what matters to them, and what they envision for their futures and the practices that must be present to coconstruct a third space (Gutiérrez, 2008) with and for Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers.

Fighting to Be Heard

In this section, I answer the following question: What can we learn from Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers through their writing about who they are, what matters to them, and what they envision for their future? I describe how Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers are "Fighting to be Heard," through the naming and claiming of their realities in their own words, creating positive self-definitions, writing and sharing silenced stories, the stories of socially conscious girls and of parents raising chicas fuertes [strong girls]. The honesty and strength of their collective experiences are important for educators and scholars to listen to as they provide us with important insights into how to make our English Language arts (ELA) classrooms and schools more inclusive of their realities while supporting them in imagining and writing their future selves through revolutionary teaching and learning.

Naming and Claiming Their Realities in Their Own Words

In Somos Escritores workshops and interviews, Rocky, Reyna, Blanca, and Elizabeth, and their parents, Valente, Samuel, Alma, and Rose, shared stories and reflections from their lived experiences. In the girls' oral and written stories based on their lived experiences, they spoke to the ways that they view themselves and the ways that they believe society views them as teenagers and girls of color. They named the

labels, standards, and stereotypes, the many "controlling images" that are placed upon them by society. The controlling images of girls and women of color and other marginalized groups are "imposed and assumed qualities" that are "racist and sexist ideologies permeat[ing] the social structure to such a degree that they become hegemonic, namely, seen as natural, normal, and inevitable" (Collins, 2000, p. 7). In the very act of naming these labels, standards, and stereotypes, the girls push back on these narratives while trying to disrupt these labels that are pervasive in their lives.

This pushback first became evident in the third Somos Escritores workshop, held on June 21, 2016, titled "The Masks We Wear." This workshop was the midpoint of Somos Escritores, and girls and their parents had already gathered at two prior workshops to write and share within their family, while also meeting and learning about the other girls and their families participating in the space. This workshop provided girls and their families with an invitation for inward reflection. Through drawing and writing, families explored the many ways they defined themselves in their own words, while at the same time pushing back upon society's narrow views and what they perceived as "unfair" standards, labels, and stereotypes.

In this workshop, Blanca and Rocky discussed how others saw them after completing an activity in which they labeled a two-sided mask, with one side being how they viewed themselves, and the other being how society viewed them. They reflected and wrote words and/or drew symbols illustrating their view of themselves and society's view of them. Seated at a table next to each other, munching on thin pink cream-filled wafer cookies, Blanca shared with Rocky that others saw her as "cool, chubby, funny, over nice, doing too much." As she shared, Rocky looked at her, nodding her head as if

she understands it all. After Blanca shared, Rocky told Blanca that "the same as you" others saw her as "nice," but also "smart, good at drawing, creative, and cool."

During the same workshop, Blanca and Rocky continued to share their masks, but this time sharing with one another how they saw themselves. Rocky told Blanca that she saw herself as "open-minded and stylish and a girl that don't care, and also smart…but not too smart." Blanca responded by telling Rocky that she saw herself as "stress[ing] too much, always tired and as overthink[ing] life" which makes her have "anxiety." To which Rocky responded with a nod of her head, saying "Me, too."

This conversation between Blanca and Rocky illustrates the girls' awareness of the disconnect between how they see themselves and how they believe they are perceived by their peers, family, and society. Many contradictions exist between the girls' self-images and society's imposed stereotypes of girls their age. After sharing their masks, the girls wrote about these contradictions. Blanca wrote:

> People. Random people judge me by appearance. So I wouldn't be surprise if people talk. But they don't know me. I am part of the unknown. People see me as just a girl that gets along with boys. Humor most of the time. Only pretty when I wear makeup. As childish as a Kinder.
>
> But I love being a child so no worries. Can express how I feel. I love how I am not fat but …How I care, but don't care. I am really always scared. I care what people think and it hurts me, but I get over it (writing artifact, June 21, 2016).

In Blanca's writing, some of these "unfair" labels appeared to be internalized, illustrating how the girls name and claim them in how they, too, see themselves. In the naming and claiming of these labels, they present a counterimage of themselves, describe more deeply what is on the inside, what they keep locked away.

As shared in the opening vignette, Rocky stated that the world has a narrow view of girls her age. She wished that people would "give us a chance" and "get to know us."

Later in that same interview, she admitted that "deep inside I care what people think." At the workshop, after sharing their masks with each other and their entire group, Blanca closed their discussion by stating what is most important to her. She declared, "The way I look when I wear makeup is how I see myself, so that is what matters to me." Blanca presented a declaration of a beauty and confidence inside that was always there if we would get to know her and listen.

To follow up with workshops with what I observed and what girls, mothers, and fathers wrote and shared, at interviews, I asked each girl, "How do you think society views girls your age?" Across all girls, and their experiences and bearing witness to the experiences of their family and friends, each spoke to the harsh, hurtful, and contradictory labels, standards, and stereotypes that society unfairly places upon them. In an interview with Reyna, she answered the question as follows:

> **Reyna:** Well….it depends on the race really. It depends on the race cuz…
>
> **Tracey:** Can you tell me about that?
>
> **Reyna:** Yeah cuz a lot of…if you're Mexican and you're going to high school people are going to think of you as you're not going to graduate because you're going to get pregnant and drop out. That's how a lot people view girls my age. They're like, "Oh in four years you're going to be pregnant and probably just dropped out" so why why try, why bother." …And, that's how I think society views me as just um… just mmm somebody who's gonna get pregnant before they graduate. And, I don't, I don't, I don't think of myself like that. (interview, July 10, 2016)

In this interview, Reyna described how she believed society viewed girls her age. In her response to my question, she immediately brought up "race" and how Mexican girls are viewed, or rather seen, differently than other girls. Later in our conversation, she expanded on this to include different expectations for boys and girls. She spoke and theorized from her experience as a self-identified Mexican who she knows from her

personal experiences is already viewed by society as a high school dropout who will become pregnant at an early age. She countered this view by stating, "…I don't, I don't, I don't think of myself like that."

Similar to Reyna, in a conversation with Blanca during an interview, in response to the same question, "How do you think society views girls your age?" Blanca spoke about the labels, standards, and stereotypes that are placed upon girls her age with the major focus being placed on their appearance. Here are her thoughts based on her personal experiences in her own words:

> **Tracey**: Sí... How do you think society views girls your age?
>
> **Blanca:** Now?
>
> **Tracey:** Yeah.
>
> **Blanca:** Well... I don't know; I feel like right now it's all about like... like... like the body of girls. So I think that's what people think the most important thing about a girl, 'cause if like you have a pretty body, you have everything. (interview, July 17, 2016)

Her response to this question expanded upon a conversation that she had at the third Somos Escritores workshop with Rocky regarding their inner and outer masks, which symbolized the ways they viewed themselves and the ways that they believe society viewed them. In both conversations, at the workshop and at our interview, she talked in length about these contradictions, explicitly naming them. She stated that these labels, standards, and stereotypes, and all their contradictions were "empowering," but also at the same time "not empowering." There is an internal struggle that exists living within and navigating these "controlling images"—the labels, standards, and stereotypes imposed on them by society.

She continued:

> **Blanca:** And so, I just think what girls like now it's the way they look what's important now, what they have to offer, if they´re smart or not or... They could have like the prettiest body ever but they could have like the suckiest personality.
>
> **Tracey:** Yeah.
>
> **Blanca:** So, it's just... I think like it's just all about the image of the girl that had... what she has now…Or if you're pretty and like they think you're dumb but you're really smart, you know. (interview, July 17, 2016)

In her final response to the question, Blanca closed by naming the contradictions, society's double standard, of being beautiful on the outside as being important to society, and girls owning it. She pushed back on society's view in her response by stating that a girl could have "the prettiest body" but have "the suckiest personality," and that, having a pretty body and having an appearance that fit into society's dominant view of beauty, a girl would still have to battle with being perceived as "dumb" even if she was "really smart."

These contradictions that exist in the ways that the girls name and claim who they are and who they will become illustrates the many tensions they navigate on a daily basis. The many labels, standards and stereotypes described by the girls are rooted in traditional gender scripts ascribed to Latinas and exist in the media. This can have negative implications for how Latina adolescent girls are treated and perceived by their teachers (Lopez, 2014). Teachers, teacher educators and scholars can support girls to continue to disrupt and "speak back" to these "controlling" images through being mindful of the using inclusive discourses in the classrooms that may continue to unintentionally recreate and normalize negative scripts. In addition, teachers and teacher educators can work to create curriculum that speaks to these concerns ensuring that is rooted in their lived realities. Our literacy classrooms are full of opportunities, of possibilities, to provide girls

with time and space to learn how to be critical readers and writers of the word and the world (Freire, 1970).

Creating Positive Self-Definitions

Patricia Hill Collins (2000) writes about the importance of girls and women of color creating "positive self-definitions" for themselves as a means of resistance and survival. The positive definitions that girls have for themselves can be a resource to draw upon in classrooms for teaching and learning.

Throughout their participation in Somos Escritores, Rocky, Reyna, Blanca, and Elizabeth wrote about and discussed, in workshops and interviews, their experiences navigating the world, fully aware, to use their words, of "standards, labels, and stereotypes" that society had about girls their age. The girls resisted these standards, labels, and stereotypes by creating positive self-definitions for themselves. Their defining of themselves on their own terms was embedded in the importance they placed on receiving a quality education, involvement in and out of school, and envisioning of future selves despite negative stereotypes and low expectations.

During individual interviews, Rocky, Reyna, Blanca, and Elizabeth all discussed the importance of education in their lives. Rocky, Reyna, and Blanca were attending or were to attend schools located outside of their attendance areas. With their parents' support and encouragement, the girls actively researched and sought enrollment in these schools. They chose to enroll in Technology High and University Preparatory Academy (UPA) based upon the schools' reputations for supporting students to pursue a university education and their specialized curriculum foci.

The inspiration for the girls' educational empowerment may have begun with their participation in a university-sponsored program, "Madres y hijas juntas for education." This program is for Latina adolescent girls (grades 8–12) and their mothers and is aimed at increasing the "number of first-generation Hispanic women who complete a bachelor's degree by directly involving mothers in the educational process of their daughters" Their involvement in this highly selective program provides them with access to university staff with expertise in the requirements of applying and registering for college that goes beyond what is available in a guide book or online forum. This program is one example of the girls' involvement in enrichment opportunities that they sought out to learn more about the educational process and develop additional skills.

At Somos Escritores workshops, Rocky shared her excitement and anxiety about attending a new high school where she didn't know anybody. At our interview, she explained to me in detail why she had chosen this new school. She said, "I want to become a doctor [pediatrician] which is why I'm going to Technology High." Rocky explained that she learned about this school from a teacher at her junior high school. Technology High is located in the largest unified high school district in the downtown section of the city. Technology High is a magnet high school that boasts an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning, focusing on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Upon learning about Technology High and their approach to teaching and learning, including course offerings and extracurricular offerings, Rocky discussed with her parents the potential benefits the school could offer her in supporting her future endeavor of becoming a doctor. Rocky's parents responded in support by telling her, "We will get you there" (interview, July 26, 2016). The

resourcefulness that Rocky's parents had modeled for her through their actions and words provided strategies to draw from to create opportunities for herself.

Reyna and Blanca also opted out of their neighborhood school. They attend a K-12 public charter school, UPA, that is located in the downtown and is connected to the local university. In individual interviews, they explained that they had learned about UPA through their involvement with the university-sponsored program for mothers and daughters. The director of this program also worked at UPA and was an important resource in providing Reyna's and Blanca's parents with information about the school, including the curriculum plan, the application process, and the mandatory family involvement component, to help them to make an informed decision *with* and *for* their daughters. Professors from the university offer students and their families an enhanced educational experience through opportunities linked to their research in STEM, literacy, gaming, and drama. The atmosphere is that of a college-going environment with direct access to the university's many educational programs and athletics and constant talk about college life. In addition, the school has a strong family involvement component with a requirement that each family volunteer 30 hours each semester to school events and activities (interview, July 10, 2016; interview, July 17, 2016).

Elizabeth attended her neighborhood school. During a conversation we had at her kitchen table (interview, January 27, 2017), she talked to me about her school. "I don't like my school. I'm looking for a new school…I like to write. I wanna go to a school that focuses more on the writing." She wasn't concerned about leaving her childhood friends or starting over at a new school. Her main concern was developing as a writer and getting extra support in math. She said, "If you want to accomplish your goals, you have to work

hard…you have, you have to sacrifice." At workshops, she and her mother talked to girls and their parents about their schools in hopes of finding one that was just right for them.

The important role that education played in Rocky's, Reyna's, Blanca's, and Elizabeth's lives was instilled in them by their parents. Their parents supported and encouraged them in all aspects of their education. This was clearly evident during interviews with parents in which they shared their hopes for their daughters' futures. All of their responses included discussion of the importance of staying focused and continuing their education. In individual interviews, they said:

> **Samuel:** I encourage her to explore all her options and not put all her eggs in one basket. She needs choices. (interview, August, 7, 2016)
>
> **Valente:** …queremos que ella sea una profesional de bien y esperando la carrera que ella escoja... esperamos que llegue a la universidad y que se gradúe y que la carrera que escoja. […we want her to become a professional who does good by choosing the career she likes… we hope she'd get to the university and graduate in the area she chooses.] (interview, August 14, 2016)
>
> **Alma:** Y su meta siempre es... Siempre ella tiene bien claro que ella quiere ir a la universidad. Y la apoyo. [And, her goal always...She always has been clear that she wants to go to the university. And, I support her.] (interview, July 17, 2016)
>
> **Rose:** Stay in school. Study, study, study…cuz books are food for your brain. That is what I tell her (interview, January 27, 2017)

The importance of education in the lives of the girls started at home with the support and encouragement of their parents. Their aspirations, goals and self-definitions have been nurtured in their homes by their parents in powerful ways (Delgado Gaitan, 2012). Rocky, Reyna, Blanca and Elizabeth's parents were also helping the girls to begin to cultivate positive self-definitions for themselves.

Interviews indicated, and surveys, field notes, and video confirmed that Reyna, Rocky, Blanca, and Elizabeth were involved in a variety of extracurricular activities

offered at their schools. Much of their involvement in school-sponsored clubs, organizations, and sports was based on interest, while membership in some was based upon academic achievement. The girls had a variety of out-of-school interests that they pursued after they finished homework assignments and household chores. They intentionally selected certain elective courses based upon their out-of-school interests and their desire to continue to cultivate their talents and pursue their passions.

Reyna is interested in music and finds inspiration to pursue her passion in the socially conscious music and actions of her favorite band, Twenty One Pilots. In our interview, she described a speech that the lead singer of the band gave at a concert in Texas following the shooting of police officers in Dallas. She summarized the speech, which she saved on her phone, in the following way:

> [h]e did a whole speech about how he's part of the band, he only writes music, he only sings music, dances and all that, he can't, can't stop this, but he knows that together we're able to stay safe and you know bring peace" (interview, July 10, 2016)

Reyna hopes that at her new school she will meet people who may be interested in starting a band. She dreams of pursing passion by creating her own music that inspires others, like Twenty One Pilots' music, to "bring power…and change to the world" for future generations.

Rocky's involvement in extracurricular activities includes being a member of the student council as a homeroom representative. Because of her service to the school through student council, high grade point average, and overall academic achievement, she was nominated and accepted into the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) chapter at her school. As a member of NJHS she served as the vice president of the club, where she organized community service opportunities for members. NJHS members are required to

complete 30 hours of community service; she served above and beyond this required amount, providing 64 hours of service by tutoring children in math and reading.

Rocky loves writing, drawing, and art. She became interested in art during junior high school, with the encouragement and support of her art teacher. She enrolled in Art and Advanced Art as an elective in seventh and eighth grade. She spends a great deal of time outside of school, when not completing homework or tending to household chores, drawing and writing. Rocky engages in collaborative writing with friends in an online fanfiction community or "affinity space" (Gee, 2004). Gee (2004) describes affinity spaces as informal sites of learning where interaction occur between "newbies and masters and everyone else" based on a shared passion (p. 85). This "affinity space" provides Rocky with space to share her work with other writers who are interested in and understand this genre. Through her involvement in this space, Rocky has published her writing and continues to practice her craft in a supportive environment.

Several times during conversations at Somos Escritores workshops and in our individual interview, Rocky talked about why she was interested in participating in Somos Escritores workshops. She said, "If [Somos Escritores] We Are Writers was offered at my school, I would join because becoming an author is my backup plan and this club could help me a lot in improving my work." Rocky participated because she viewed Somos Escritores as an opportunity to continue to develop and improve her writing, helping her with her "backup plan" if she does not end up becoming a pediatrician.

Elizabeth is involved in Young Life (YL), a Cristian-based ministry group for teens that supports them in their faith journey. There are various YL groups that serve

teens in different regions of the state. She has been involved with the group for two years and attends bi-monthly workshops and various organized outings. Elizabeth enjoys attending "Club" nights because it provides time and space for her to "think about her life…and hang out with new friends." Over the summer she attended YL camp. This was a weeklong event that brings together teens involved in YL from across the state for deeper faith development in a summer-camp infused environment.

Rocky, Reyna, Blanca and Elizabeth are involved in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities that provide them access to many different types of literacies. From Reyna's interest in music and song writing that can change the world, Rocky's involvement in fan fiction "affinity spaces," Blanca's personal journal writing and Elizabeth's participation in YL, these girls are engaged in complex literacies that tend to and extend their "repertoires of practices" (Gutiérrez, 2008) across time and space. Their literacies are rich sites of knowledge and ways of knowing that teachers can draw from to create curriculum that builds upon these practices.

Girls are creating positive self-definitions for themselves, and their parents are supportive and proud of the young women that their daughters are becoming. In an interview with Valente, he discussed how happy he was that his daughter received good grades, was focused, and enjoyed being involved in a variety of activities. He said:

> Con mi hija... Yo con mi hija estoy súper emocionado porque nos ha resultado muy... muy buena para sus estudios. Es muy aplicada desde que empezó el kínder hasta la fecha. Siempre ha sacado unas buenas calificaciones, siempre ha sobresalido, y también a ella le gusta mucho participar en actividades de la escuela... [With my daughter ... I with my daughter I am super excited because we have been very ... very good for their studies. It has been very applied since kindergarten to date. She has always had good grades, always excelled, and she also enjoys participating in school activities ...] (interview, August 14, 2016).

At workshops, his support was evident in the way that he encouraged his daughter to share her ideas with the larger group because, "Me encanta mucho que dijó ella. She is so smart." Parents raise their children to do well in school and honor their family name (Valdés, 1996), by preparing them for a life beyond the one that they could imagine for themselves (Villenas & Moreno, 2001).

Rocky, Reyna, Blanca, and Elizabeth are pushing back on the narrow view, the standards, the labels that society has for girls their age. The believe that the world views them as a statistic and as not having a chance to achieve their full potential. They are aware of these views, and through their views of education, their involvement in and out of school, pursuing their passions, and imagining a world beyond the one in which they currently reside, they are creating a future and writing it each day. They are the architects of their own lives.

Rocky, Reyna, Blanca, and Elizabeth are making intentional decisions to create opportunities for themselves that will set them up for success in their personal and academic lives. Their educational aspirations, academic achievement, involvement in and out of school, and envisioning of future selves are a form of resistance to the negative stereotypes that society places upon them. They are resisting by achieving and accomplishing, which is something that society does not expect of them, and in the process reclaiming their self-worth (Collins, 2000) Along with their parents, who support them every step of the way, they are proving the world wrong (Delgado-Bernal, 2001; Delgado Gaitan, 2001). They are aware. They are alive. They are fighting to be heard.

Writing and Sharing Silenced Stories

At Somos Escritores workshops, Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers shared a variety of stories from their lived experiences. Many of the stories and histories that were shared were those that had been lost, silenced and suppressed over time and space. The stories that they shared illustrated not only who they were and what mattered to them, but also their hopes and dreams for their futures. In addition, these stories showcased the many ways that these girls and their mothers and fathers used writing as way to learn more about themselves through reflecting on past experiences, to make sense, to heal, and to look to the future (Anzaldúa, 1987).

The stories that were shared by the girls and their mothers and fathers were filled with many emotions. They shared stories of love, loss, struggle—always with important messages and learnings filled with hope. They drew, wrote, and shared stories of childhood memories, immigrant journeys, the scars that were carried both physically and emotionally, and their goals for their futures.

At the final Somos Escritores workshop, we had an author celebration. All girls, mothers, and fathers selected a piece of writing to share with invited guests at a potluck-style event. They could choose to share a piece they had written during a workshop or write a new piece to share at the celebration. Valente, Rocky's dad, shared a piece he drafted outside the workshop, titled "El Imigrante." In his piece, written as a letter, Valente narrates his personal experience immigrating from Honduras to the United States. He described the many dangers he witnessed and encountered as he crossed three borders. At the celebration, he stood behind the podium and shared his powerful piece with all girls, mothers, fathers, and invited guests. He read:

Hola soy Valente,
Un emigrante Hondureno:
Emqaque un par de camias, una gorra, unas fotos, y mil recuerdos,
En una pequena mochila.
Me despedi de mis seres queridos y parti de mi tierra Honduras.
Con la intencion de llegar a los Estados Unidos de Norte America.
Sabia que necesitaria mas que valor, savia que en ves de encontrar
El sueno Americano podria encontrar la muerte, son tres fronteras las que cruse,
Por tres paises anduve indocumentado, tres veces tube yo la vida que arriesgar,
Por eso dices que soy tres veces mojado, en Guatemala y Mexico me icierno prisonero
Por no portar identificacion.
En Centro America dada la situacion economica, social, y politica, para muchos no tenemos
Otra solucion abandonar nuestra patria y tal vez para siempre., cinco millas recorri,
Puedo decir que las recuerdo una a una, viajando en auto bus, en ferrocarrial, y caminando dia
Y noche en medio de montanas, laderas, y decierto, enfrentando muchos peligros y desafios,
Algunos no logran alcazar el llamado sueno Americano. Por que se quedan en el camino,
Ya sea mutilados por la bestia [ferrocarril] o mueren de ipotermia o por insolacion devido
A las tenperaturas implacables del decierto. Y todo esto por buscar
Mejores condiciones de vida aqui en el pais de las oportuidades.
Aun no soy de aqui por que mi nombre no aparese en ningun archivo."
Atte: el imigrante (writing artifact July 12, 2016)

[Hello I am Valente, an immigrant from Honduras.
In a small backpack I carried a couple of shirts, some pictures, and a thousand of memories.
I said goodbye to my beloved ones and I left back my homeland in Honduras with the intention to reach the United States of North America
I knew I would need more than just courage, I knew instead of finding the American Dream I could find death. Three borders I had to cross over, three countries I had to go through as an illegal. Three times I had to risk my life.
That's why people say I am "three times mojado," in Guatemala and Mexico they arrested me because I didn't have an identification.
Because of the economic, social, and political situation in Central America, many of us we have no choice than abandoning our nations, perhaps to never see them again. Five miles (sic) I traveled. I can say I remember each one of them, traveling on a bus, train, or walking day and night across the mountains, slopes or deserts, facing many dangers and challenges.
Some of us cannot reach the American Dream. Many stay behind along the road, mutilated by "La Bestia" [a train called The Beast] died of hypothermia or

> insolation because of the desert's relentless temperature. All of this looking to get a better life here, in the "Country of Opportunities"
> I am not from here yet because my name is not recorded in any file.
> Sincerely: the immigrant] (writing artifact, July 12, 2016). [1]

In Valente's letter, he described the hopes and dreams that he brought with him on his journey for a better life. He gave a firsthand account of the risks and dangers that he encountered on his way to the United States, including seeing many who, like him, were in search of a new life, meet death.

In an interview with Valente, we talked about "El Imigrante." He explained why he wrote the piece and its significance. He said:

> **Valente:** … Esa fue una... Pues es una historia real de que yo la viví, y así como yo la viví, la han vivido miles y miles de personas que migran de los países hasta acá, Norteamérica. [… that was a… a real story lived by myself, that's the way I lived it, and also it is like thousands and thousands of migrant people here in North America.]
>
> **Tracey:** Sí. [Yes.]
>
> **Valente:** Y unos, pues con suerte de poder llegar con bien y otros que pues, lastimosamente, no alcanzan a llegar a... por muchos motivos. [And some of them are lucky to get here and others sadly cannot get here…because of many reasons.] (interview, August 14, 2016).

Valente explained that in his piece he wrote about his journey to the United States from his homeland of Honduras is "una historia real" (a true story) that he lived and that many have lived and continue to live, with some arriving safely and others not. Valente's story is one example of the ways that Somos Escritores opened up a supportive space for girls and their parents to write and share their most personal stories.

[1] Parts of Valente's writing contain lyrics and ideas from the song "Tres Veces Mojado" by Los Tigres de Norte (2002). The song is from their album *La Reina del Sur*.

In the second week of Somos Escritores workshops, girls and their mothers and fathers reflected upon and wrote their "Scar Stories" (Nelson, 2004). These are the stories from our lived experiences of the wounds we carry with us both physically and emotionally. In these scar stories are also stories of growth, learning, and healing. Alma, Blanca's mother, wrote about the many scars that she carries with her from her childhood and now as an adult. She wrote:

> Las cicatrizes q lleovo en mi cuerpo tambien se quedaron en mi alma pero es esta la misma alma que las a tranformada, al igual que las rosas tienen espinas. Son como las memorias q me hacen recordas q' no hay sol sin oscuridad.
>
> [Scars I have on my body are also printed in my soul, but that same soul has turned them, just like roses has to have thorns. They're like memories that remind me there's no sun without darkness.]
>
> A lo largo de mi vida he tenido varias cicatrices. Esas que no se ven el cuerpo pero si en la mirada. La primera fue cuando mi madre murio. Era yo una niña pero se marcho cuando más la necesite y sin poder decir q' la Amaba y escuchar un Aequiero d ella.
>
> [I've got many scars through my life. The type that you can't see on your body, but you can notice them in your eyes. The first one was when my mother died. I was a child, and she left when I needed her the most without saying that I love her so much and without hearing "I love you" from her.]
>
> Despues hube muchas cicatrices que deja con mis hermanos con sus palabras q hierren más q un puñal pero esas quedaron atras.
>
> [After that I've got many other scars left by my brothers' words, who hurt me more than stabbing on my body, but those are left behind.] (writing artifact, June 14, 2016)

At the end of her scar story, Alma describes what she learned about all of these experiences and the scars, left on her body, that she carries with her. She concluded:

> Despues me di cuenta q eso solo eran el principio o las q preparoran para las que venias, esas solo me hicieron más fuerte...y mas valiente.
>
> [Finally I realized those scars were only the beginning for the ones that came later. They only made me stronger… and braver.] (writing artifact, June 14, 2016).

The third space that was coconstructed with and for girls and their parents facilitated and opened up space for writers to share stories from their lived experiences. For the girls and parents who wrote and shared in Somos Escritores, the stories that they lifted onto the page were stories of experiences that resided in their hearts—and for the first time were being made public. Their stories of love, loss, journey, triumph, struggle, and hope—always hope—were given wings in this space.

Socially Conscious Girls

Living in "la herida abierta" (Anzaldúa, 1987), the open wound, in a state that politically bleeds red, creates many tensions and contradictions in the lives of girls and parents who participated in Somos Escritores. The historical and political impact of harsh anti-immigrant policies (Abrego & Menjívar, 2011), English-only policies (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; García, Lawton, & De Figueiredo, 2012), an ethnic studies ban (Delgado, 2013; Romero, 2010), and restrictive curricula that often assume a need of remediation (Arias & Wiley, 2013) impact the many institutions that the girls and their parents navigate on a daily basis. The girls and their parents uniquely experience these mandates and laws at the intersections of gender, immigrant status, education, and language identities.

Due to their positionality as Latina adolescent girls and their intersecting identities, Rocky, Reyna, Blanca, and Elizabeth have a "perspective from the cracks," (Anzaldúa, 1987), a heightened sense of the political influences on their lives and the lived realities of their families, friends, and communities. They are concerned with many social injustices and inequities, specifically naming racism, immigration, animals, pollution, and teen health. With access to technology, at their fingertips, through social

media platforms, like Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter, the girls have access to current events and news in real time. As they engage with a variety of perspectives, they are instantly alerted and learn about events as they are happening. This immediate access to news and the physical location in which they reside create a heightened sense of awareness.

For educators, this critical awareness, their "perspective from the cracks," from the many spaces and worlds they navigate, providing girls with access to "permeable curriculum" (Dyson, 1993), can provide them with rich teaching and learning experiences. Through the intentional facilitation of "permeable curriculum," girls would be provided with an important platform to critically engage in the exploration of the social injustices and inequities in which they are most passionate. This would allow for the fluid movement of their many practices, knowledges and ways of knowing to flow across spaces in ways that would support their evolving consciousness and literacies.

These findings are represented in an interview with Blanca. As I sat with Blanca at a Starbucks on a Sunday afternoon in July, she discussed what she wanted society to know about girls her age. In our conversation, she talked with me about how she believed, from her personal experiences, that society viewed them (girls her age) as not "caring" and unengaged because they think "[w]e're caught up with our phones too much." She said:

> "And we know... We are not blind to what is happening to the world 'cause we're always on our phones and Snapchat, which has CNN and cosmetology and all the little things, and whatever big thing that's happening, no matter if it's like a gaming thing or like a beauty thing, it would still show up and we do care what's happening in the world" (interview, July 17, 2016).

According to Blanca, girls their age are using their phones to gather minute-to-minute information on what is happening in their communities and in the world in order to engage.

In the same interview with Blanca, we talked in great detail about her concerns for the world. I asked her, "What things matter to you that are happening in the world?" She responded:

> "Animals...the world like racism, all that stuff. But, it just gets me mad like how things are actually happening like this and …how people argue of like simple things like how they say, "Pray for Paris…." Which is…that's not gonna do anything for anything like…that's just bringing awareness, but actually doing stuff. Just saying that is not gonna make a change. You know? And, how people argue how uhhh cuz of the gorilla thing. How they say, "Killing the gorilla was the right thing." When those gorillas are going extinct and humans are not. (interview, July 17, 2016)

In the first part of Blanca's response she discussed some of the issues that are happening in the world that are important to her. She named animals and racism, expanding more in depth, in this part of our conversation, about her concern for the treatment and disregard for animals, as living and breathing creatures who also inhabit our world and their possible extinction. She discussed the difference between "bringing awareness" to the issues impacting our world and "actually doing stuff." She believes that "just saying [things] is not gonna make a change."

In the next part of her response, she continued by discussing her fear for our planet and the loss of all the resources that She, the Earth, provides humans and all of Her creatures. As she discussed her concern with me, she cried. She said:

> … Yeah…it's just not right…it makes me like mad and frustrated…pollution and stuff like that is…getting me mad. Like, every day I see how a new animal is going extinct or how like certain things are just ruining the world and it's…it's not right …how we were once animals, too, and if someone was killing our habitat that is the same thing this happening with animals and just everything.

> And, it's not right. And, it just scares me how one day we might not have water or all this stuff that we have now. So yeah…it's really emotional for me. More than anything in the world and I just …that's why I want to take some sustainability to actually make a change in the world 'cause that is what I really want to do with my life. It's what actually…to actually stop bad things. So yeah…" (interview, July 17, 2016)

Blanca ended her response by discussing the action that she wants to take to "make a change in the world." She offered a way that she could be part of the solution by taking sustainability courses "to actually make a change in the world." In taking action, she was "mov[ing] silence into language and action" (Lorde, 2007).

On a Friday afternoon in October, Elizabeth's mom, Ruth, invited me to her house to interview her daughter. We chatted at the kitchen table while enjoying cinnamon cookies. Elizabeth told me that she liked to write, especially about herself and the racism she saw in the world "'cause it's very important." I asked, "What other things matter to you that are happening in the world? She responded:

> **Elizabeth:** Umm… the president. How he's gonna change. He's gonna be president for four years. And, already it's affecting …
>
> **Tracey:** How so? What do you see happening?
>
> **Elizabeth:** Umm… it is affecting our society. How people you know like…you know like when people 'cause the only people you see outside working are the Mexican people. And, he wants to get them out of here.
>
> **Tracey:** Yeah.
>
> **Elizabeth:** 'Cause white people aren't gonna be sweatin' 'cause they're used to being inside working inside. AC. And, Mexicans always work really hard to keep the yard cleaned and the AC and stuff. (interview, January 27, 2017)

Elizabeth discussed her concern with the election of the new president and the impact she was already witnessing happening throughout the country. She was concerned for what the next four years will bring as she stated that "it's already affecting…" people.

Elizabeth specifically named the impact on the Mexicans whom the president "wants to get out of here" even though they "always work really hard."

In my conversations with both Blanca and Elizabeth, we discussed their concerns for the issues impacting their communities and the world. They want to make this world a better place and are working to bring awareness to the issues that concern them the most.

Raising Chicas Fuertes/Raising Strong Girls

Valente, Samuel, Alma, and Rose are raising chicas fuertes [strong girls] by providing their daughters with a solid foundation to pursue their passions and accomplish their goals. The girls' parents encourage them to take advantage of the many opportunities that are offered to them. They sacrifice a great deal for their daughters to have success. They work tirelessly, both at work and at home, to meet their daughters' personal, social, and academic needs. In their interactions with their daughters and in how they are raising their daughters, they all try to give their daughters freedom to be strong, independent girls. They are not only parental figures, they are protectors.

Parents are raising their girls to be fuerte [strong] and to let the world know who they are and what matters to them. They are teaching their daughters, with examples from their own lives through their actions, stories, words, and "pedagogies of the home" (Delgado Bernal, 2001). Pedagogies of the home are the "communication, practices and learning that occur in the home" and are linked to cultural ways of knowing and being and used as strategies to navigate oppressive spaces and to resist" (p. 624).

The importance of these teachings, these lessons, these ways of knowing, is evident in the ways parents describe their hopes and dreams for their daughters. They are

also evident in the ways that parents described how they viewed their role [papel] as a parent.

During semistructured interviews with Valente, Samuel, Alma, and Rose, they talked at length about how they viewed their role [papel] as a parent and how they viewed their daughters. In addition, they discussed what they envisioned for their daughters' futures. All mothers and fathers were open, honest, and eager to share about their daughters and reflect on their role as a parent.

On a bright and sunny summer afternoon in August, I met Valente at his house to talk with him. Standing on his doorstep, trying to stay in the shade of the roof, I knocked on his door. Immediately, the house came alive with the sound of multiple dogs barking from behind the door. About a minute later, Valente opened the door, greeting me with a big smile, and invited me inside the living room to sit down on the couch. Valente's wife, Victoria, and Rocky joined us from the back room. Victoria came up to me, shook my hand, and gave me a warm hug, offering me a glass of water before sitting down on the sofa, where her daughter was seated, directly across from me in the same room.

The four of us sat in the living room and talked about work, the workshops, the hot summer days, and Rocky's plans for the upcoming school year. After 20 minutes, Victoria and Rocky excused themselves and left the room. Valente invited to me into the kitchen to sit and talk. Sitting at his kitchen table we talked a little about his childhood and his job, but most of the conversation was focused on his relationship with his daughter and how he viewed his role as a parent and father.

> **Tracey:** Sí, sí. Claro, claro. ¿Y cómo ve su papel como padre? [Yes, yes. Of course, sure. And how do you feel about being a father?]

> **Valente:** Es un poco difícil, principalmente aquí, porque uno aquí tiene que trabajar y pues hay dos cosas: trabaja, descuida los hijos o no les dedica tiempo a los hijos porque el trabajo... pues también se adquieren deudas mes a mes y pues también hay que cubrirlas. [It is a little bit difficult, mostly here, because we have to work and that situation forces us to take only one of two choices: working and leaving our kids alone with no time to dedicate to them because of the work… and if you choose not to, you can acquire debts month after month and you know you have to pay them.]
>
> **Tracey:** Ajá. [Yes.]
>
> **Valente:** Pero nos sacrificamos para atenderla a ella y pues estar pendientes de ella, sí. [But we make sacrifices to take care of our daughter and be there for her, yes.] (interview, August 14, 2016)

Valente explained the tensions and contradictions that he navigates as an immigrant parent raising his child, aquí [here] in the United States. Scholars working with and for Latino/a students and families have noted these tensions that Valente shared to describe the many skills and strategies that parents utilize to survive and thrive while ensuring their children are happy and healthy (Delgado Gaitan, 2001; Valdés, 1996). He also described the sacrifices made on a daily basis to work and make money for basic necessities and survival while also attending to the emotional well-being of his adolescent daughter. He continued by telling me about his relationship with his daughter. He said:

> **Valente:** Oh, pues tenemos una muy buena relación porque nos comunicamos... los consejos. Le digo que todo lo que ella... esté ocurriendo con ella que nos... Que me la comunique, que hablemos cualquier problema que tenga o cualquier situación que ella pueda estar en peligro que a mí me la cuente para yo poder estar pendiente sobre ella. Y también como tratar de evitar que caiga en drogas o que caiga en otro tipo de cosas que no le traen nada bueno para su bienestar. [Oh, we have a very good relationship because we communicate with each other… we give her advice. She can share with us everything about her life… everything that is going on… she can tell us, we can talk about any problem she's having or any situation she could face or be in danger. She has to tell me so I can be by her side, watching over her. Also how to avoid falling into drug abuse or anything like that, things that aren't good for her]. (interview, August 14, 2016)

Valente talked about having "una muy buena relación" (a very good relationship) with his daughter, Rocky, because they communicate with one another. It was important to him that she know that he is there for her to listen to any problem that she may be experiencing. He wanted Rocky to realize that she is "strong," while at the same time recognizing that she can be open and honest with him.

Later in our conversation, Valente expressed to me how he sees his daughter and his hopes and dreams for her. He said:

> **Valente:** Yo creo que mi hija va a llegar muy lejos. Como dije al principio, que es muy aplicada en sus estudios y yo la veo que sí va a llegar muy lejos y va a ser una profesional, que también va a ser parte de este... ¿cómo le digo? ... de un futuro mejor y una buena profesional. Queremos que ella sea una profesional de bien y esperando la carrera que ella escoja... esperamos que llegue a la universidad y que se gradúe y que la carrera que escoja, que sea una ayuda para los demás también. [I believe my daughter is going to achieve many goals in life. As I said first, she is very smart, studying and I can see her reaching out professional success, she is going to… how can I say that?... getting a better future and being a good professional worker. We want her to become a professional who does good by choosing the career she likes… we hope she'd get to the university and graduate in the area she chooses, so she can help other people, too]. (interview, August 14, 2016)

Throughout our entire conversation, Valente continued to talk about how he works to not only provide for his daughter and wife, but also to be someone that she can come to for support and guidance, no matter what she experiences.

I met with Samuel at a Starbucks near his house. We sat outside in the hot sun for a couple of hours, drinking iced coffee while trying to stay cool. Taking a long drink of his coffee, he talked to me about he viewed his role as a father, not only to Reyna but to all three of his children. I asked him, "How do you view your role as a father?" He answered:

> **Samuel:** Ummm…somebody that is there for them, not just an authority figure just but somebody they can count on they can you know if they need advice they

> can come to. I'm basically…umm an all-around kind of guy I guess like I don't know how to explain it like somebody that is not there just to be your father and when you need me I'm there. I'm there 24/7.
>
> **Tracey:** Yeah.
>
> **Samuel:** Not just when you need me. I'm there ups and downs and and if something happens I'm always going to be there to take care of you. (interview, August 7, 2016)

Samuel discussed viewing his role as a father as more than "just an authority figure." He is "an all-around kind of guy," a father who will be there to support, nurture, and take care of them, in all situations, no matter what. He continued:

> **Samuel:** Um, if somebody is going to take care of you it is going to be me so and you know teach you to respect yourself. That you are valued. Never less never sell yourself for less.
>
> **Tracey:** Mmm hmm
>
> **Samuel:** You know. Stuff like that. You know just be somebody that they can that like if the world fails them that at least I'm always going to be there for you. Yeah, that they are always going to have me in their corner. So they can always feel safe like you know I don't care my dad is right there. (interview, August 7, 2016)

Samuel expanded on how he described himself as being "an all-around kind of guy" by explaining that he wants his kids to know that "if the world fails them at least I'm always going to be there" to take care of them. He wants his kids to know that it is important to respect themselves and that they are valued—they are enough.

> **Samuel:** And, that's that's that's how I see it. Somebody like uhhhh like somebody that's there for them all the time. Not just to scold them or stuff like that.
>
> **Tracey:** Like a protector.
>
> **Samuel:** Yes, yes, that is what I see. A protector. (interview, August 7, 2016)

Samuel views himself as more than a father to Reyna and his other children. He wants them to know that he is there for them to listen and to offer advice. He wants all of his

kids to realize their true value, and that they are enough. He works to make sure that they feel safe, and that no matter what they know that "my dad is right there." He is in their corner. Always.

Samuel continued by talking specifically about his relationship with Reyna. He said:

> **Samuel:** Ummm it's … like really easy going like she you know I have like this she has like this confidence. I know a lot of things she won't tell me cuz sometimes she'll be embarrassed, but I feel like she feels comfortable in talking to me. She's already talked to me about a lot of stuff. So she's always feels comfortable with that. So, so um…. it's not like we don't have I don't think we have a relationship where it's really rocky. I think I feel like she's… I'm always there for her. So if she ever needs advice she can come to me. Like she feels comfortable around me. Like telling me stuff and everything.
>
> **Tracey:** Yeah.
>
> **Samuel:** That I'm not going to judge if she wants to tell me but she just needs to talk to somebody…. she knows that she knows that I'm not gonna start you know scolding her or stuff like that. That I'm just going to listen to her and make it make her feel that it's going to be alright.
>
> **Tracey:** So help her figure things out.
>
> **Samuel:** Yes, instead of doing it for her.
>
> Tracey: Yeah.
>
> **Samuel:** Yeah, so we have I think a pretty cool relationship. So, yeah. (interview, August 7, 2016)

Samuel's relationship with his daughter Reyna is based on the importance he places on being there for her and being that person that she can talk, without judgement. He remembers the challenges and things that he experienced as a teenager and tries to make sure that his daughter knows that he is there to support her and help her figure things out.

Both Samuel and Valente's participation at Somos Escritores and their involvement in their daughter's personal, academic and social lives disrupts the cultural

and gender norms of machismo (Cabrera, Aldoney, & Tamis-LeMonda, 2013; Taylor & Benke, 2005). The term *machismo* usually refers to the role assumed by Latino males "as head of household in place of their roles as father and husband" (Taylor & Behnke, 2005, p. 3), As illustrated by their words and actions, Samuel and Valente's construction of fatherhood is complex and evolving and inclusive of the intersecting roles of provider, protector, friend, confidant and number one fan. The complexity in the ways that Samuel and Valente are defining themselves as fathers can inform educators and teacher educators of the fluidity of parenting identities to disrupt monolithic and gender normative views of mothers, fathers and parents (hooks, 2015). A new view can inform the ways in which we create family involvement spaces and the goals of such programs, to include the identities and ways of knowing by both fathers and mothers.

I interviewed Alma on the same day that I interviewed her daughter. We sat in front of Starbucks near her home in the southern part of the city, right before a monsoon storm, and talked about being mothers. During our conversation, in describing her view of her role as a mother, she shared with me her very personal story about enduring an abusive relationship with Blanca's dad and finally finding the strength and courage, in her daughters, to leave this toxic relationship to make a better life for herself and her daughters. She shared:

> **Alma:** Porque todo lo pasado, esas cosas que... que... Digamos que no fue sufrimiento; fue pruebas que te ponen. Porque ya no la veo como... Ya no me hago la víctima porque sí, fue un perido de mucha violencia doméstica pero no... Yo no sabía que era parte de una violencia doméstica porque, desafortunadamente, nuestra cultura... en nuestra cultura se vive mucho... Es muy bonita nuestra cultura pero dentro de la cultura se traen esas creencias que no te dejan crecer. [Because of many things in the past… those things that… let's say it wasn't suffering; they were tests that life put on you. Because I don't see them like… I don't feel a victim anymore, but yes, it was a time of so much domestic violence but… I wasn't aware I was part of it because, unfortunately, our

culture… in our culture we live this a lot… our culture is so beautiful, but there are beliefs that don't let you grow as a person.]

Tracey: Sí. [Yes.] (interview, July 17, 2016)

Alma shared the abuse that she endured from her husband and how this abuse was part of a larger cultural issue that normalized it. From this experience she learned that this "wasn't suffering," but "tests," and from these tests she learned and grew. She continued by talking to me about moving to the United States. She said:

Alma: Entonces pues yo pensé que era normal; muchas cosas que... ¡Uy! Y cuando llegué a este país y muchas cosas... Yo amo mucho a este país porque en este país yo siento que agarré mis alas para volar, ¿no? A lo mejor mi situación migratoria no es... un estatus legal todavía no tengo bien pero tengo las alas para volar y me siento libre. En este país me siento libre. En mi país no. No tenía... No me sentía con esa libertad. [So I thought it was normal, many thing like… Oh! And when I arrived to this country and many things… I love this nation so much because I feel that I used my wings to fly when I got here. Am I right? Perhaps my migratory situation isn't… a legal status yet, but I have my wings to fly and I feel free. In this country I feel free. In my country I didn't feel like that. I hadn't… I didn't feel with that freedom.]

Tracey: Sí. [Yes.] (interview, July 17, 2016)

In this part of our conversation, Alma described how she felt that by choosing to leave her home country and come to the United, that she now had "wings to fly" and "feel free." She continued by sharing how she finally made the decision to start anew, start fresh. She said:

Alma: Una estadística más era, ¿no? Y es triste darte cuenta de eso. Y muchas veces por miedos no quieres... porque te han dicho que siempre te tienes que quedar con tu esposo o que debes de aguantar muchas cosas. Pero un dije: "No..." Un día decidí salir con mis hijas yo sola; otra vez dejar todo y volver a empezar. Y no fue fácil pero lo he hecho, y no sigue siendo fácil pero la vida es así. [One more statistic number I was ¿was I? And is sad to realize about that. And so many time because of the fear you don't want to… because they have told you must stay with your husband and should bear many things. But I said to myself: "No…" One day I decided to go out with my daughters, only by myself; leaving everything behind and starting all over again. It wasn't easy but I had made it, and still it isn't easy but life is like that.]

Tracey: Sí. [Yes.]

Alma: Yo estoy muy contenta porque yo veo a... Lo que mi inspira son mis hijas a salir adelante; las dos. [I am very happy because I see… what inspires me to keep going are my daughters, both of them.] (interview, July 17, 2016).

In all her struggles, and the "tests" placed upon her, she feels "free" and "very happy." It is not only this new feeling of freedom and independence, but the inspiration of her daughters to keep her moving forward.

Valente, Samuel, Alma, and Rose are raising "chicas fuertes," strong girls. They want their daughters to have opportunities beyond the ones that they were afforded. They are raising their daughters to stay connected to their cultural traditions and linguistic practices, although at times this is a struggle. They try to nurture in them "pedagogies of the home" (Delgado Bernal, 2001) as strategies to help them hold on to who they are and where they came from to use as tools to blaze their own trails

Parents came to Somos Escritores with varying levels of formal educational experience and diverse family arrangements. They were raising their daughters in different family structures, including single-parent and nuclear family homes and mixed-status homes. Valente, Samuel, Alma, and Rose are working hard to ensure that their daughters have opportunities and a life beyond the one that they could imagine for themselves (Collins, 2000). They are not silenced by level of formal educational attainment or immigrant status. They are navigating borders and institutions for their families.

Third Space

In this section, I draw from Kris Gutiérrez's (2008) theorization of "third space" to answer the following question: How do daughters, mothers, fathers, and facilitators

work together to create a bilingual community of writers, a "third space," where stories and ways of knowing are used as a resource for teaching, learning, and writing? Data analysis suggested an array of practices vital to creating and sustaining a third space (Gutiérrez, 2008) *with* and *for* Latina adolescent girls, their mothers, and their fathers to share their stories, voices, experiences, and ways of knowing.

Gutiérrez (2008) describes third space, as a collaborative "social environment…in which students begin to reconceive who they are and what they might be able to accomplish academically and beyond" (148). As Gutiérrez points out, it is a (re)mediation of space, not a remediation of people, in which the "concrete and material practices" that are part of the fabric of the environment mediate what counts as knowledge, expertise, and literacy. Somos Escritores is a "social environment" that was coconstructed *with* and *for* not only Latina adolescent girls, but also their mothers and fathers. In the work of the UCLA Migrant Student Leadership Institute, Gutiérrez's theorization is inclusive of the collective work of facilitators from the university and the migrant students who attended the program. The third space that was coconstructed at Somos Escritores extends to include the parents as important and vital participants alongside their adolescent daughters.

Practices and Activities

As discussed in the work of Garcia and Gaddes (2012), Gutiérrez (2008), Jocson (2005), Muhammad (2012), and Wissman (2011), the activities and practices of Somos Escritores stemmed from the lived experiences and ways of knowing of the girls, mothers, and fathers who participated in the space. This space was influenced by the writing workshop philosophies of Nancy Atwell (1987) and Donald Graves (1983),

which allows for extended time and space (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001) to be utilized for the crafting and sharing of texts in multiple genres and the centering of voices, experiences, and stories. These approaches, along with the mentor texts, facilitator models, and reflection practices, worked together to invite girls and their parents to draw on their personal histories to create texts based on their experiences to share with their parents and those who were part of the space.

Mentor texts. The use of mentor texts (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2007) and related practices and activities at Somos Escritores workshops resulted in significant findings as the girls and their mothers and fathers generated their own texts. As suggested by David Kirkland (2008), we made intentional decisions in selection of mentor texts that we introduced in workshops to ensure that the texts and writings connected to their lived experiences and realities. We invited the voices and stories of Luis Rodriguez, Pat Mora, George Ella Lyon, Sandra Cisneros, Shel Silverstein, and Francisco Alarcón into workshops (For a complete list of texts, digital and print based used in workshops, see Appendix B). These texts were used as entry points into discussion, sharing, and writing of personal stories. They illustrate the potential of a carefully selected text to open up powerful and transformative writing and becoming.

During the first Somos Escritores workshop, we asked the girls and their mothers and fathers to introduce themselves through drawing by responding to the question, "Where are you from?" (De donde eres?). This drawing was an invitation to begin to build community, but also to invite girls and their families to reflect on who they were and what they envisioned for their futures.

After discussion based on their drawings and their introductions to one another in response to the question, we took this to writing with two mentor texts, "Where I'm From," written in English by George Ella Lyon (1999), and "De Donde Soy Yo (Where I'm From)," written in a blend of English and Spanish by Levi Romero (2008). Both of these poems are about the many people, places, and moments that have shaped the lives and ways of knowing of the authors, and provided a good foundation for reflective and creative writing and thinking of our own pasts and possible futures.

In Reyna's "Where I'm From" poem, she expanded upon her introduction of herself from her drawing by describing the influence of music, her community, family, and friends on her life. She wrote:

> I'm from the cold floor beneath my barefeet
> I'm from the headphones where I'd
> Often listen to my "emo" music
> As my parents would say.
> I'm from pan dulce, café, y novelas
> On cool Sunday mornings.
> I'm from the school where I've had my
> long term friends.
> I'm from forever—changing piercings and hair dye
> I'm from the tattoos I'll probably never get.
> I'm from the large moons and bright
> Stars at 3 a.m.
>
> I'm from rowdy school buses with constant fights.
> I'm from the family of whom love me very much.
> I'm from the land of the proud and brave.
> I'm from who I made myself to be. (writing artifact, June 7, 2016)

In Reyna's poems, she explores the people, places, moments, and memories of her life their influence who she is and who she is becoming. This mentor text that was introduced at the first workshop provided Reyna with a concrete example that she could use as a tool to not only begin to reflect on her personal history, but also model her own writing.

In an interview with Reyna, we explored these influences in greater depth. She discussed her love of music, especially Twenty One Pilots, inspiring her to follow her dreams and make a difference in the world. Her family is supportive and "always together" no matter what, especially recently due to a loss of their dear uncle and brother. Reyna has attended the same school with the same set of kids since she entered kindergarten and she's "grown to know them pretty well." And, although they've had their ups and downs, she said that as a group they "had a sudden realization that we're all going to high school next year," and become supportive of one another in new ways. Reyna introduced all of these ideas in her poem and builds upon them throughout each Somos Escritores workshop.

Another example of the ways that mentor texts were used in workshops as a practice that supported the coconstruction of a third space is the author biographies that each girl, mother, and father wrote for the final author celebration. These author biographies would be read at the final author celebration to introduce each participant.

At the workshop prior to the author celebration, we provided girls and parents with examples of author biographies written by published authors of children's and young adult literature. We gave them bilingual examples from Alma Flor Ada, Duncan Tonatiuh, and Rene Colato Laínez. After reading and discussing what we noticed in each biography and brainstorming what we would include in our own, girls and parents wrote their own biographies.

At the author celebration, Samuel handed me the author biography he had written. It said:

> Samuel R. was born in Phoenix, Arizona to Mexican parents. Being raised in a Mexican-American household molded him into the person he is today. He grew

> up surrounded by 5 brothers and one sister. Even though he grew up poor his spirits have never faltered. Family values has played an important part of his life. Losing his father at a young age made him see the world in a different way. It open up his eyes to how harsh life can be. But along the way he also learned how beautiful it can be. He understood that you have to see the beauty in everything. Just recently he lost his younger brother but having a loving and supporting family has helped him get through it. Samuel is not known for any literary accolades but he has raised 4 beautiful kids. He oldest daughter Reyna is such a talented, smart and artistic person. His son Loreto is really smart but heeds to learn to tap into that potential. His youngest daughter Arely is such a beacon of light. Her spirit and energy can light up anyone's life. His youngest son Gael is so full of life that he gives everyone hope. Those are his masterpieces his pride and joy (writing artifact, July 5, 2016).

The author biographies that were shared as mentor texts in Somos Escritores provided an example for Samuel to organize his reflection on his personal history to write a piece that reflected who he is and to describe his "masterpieces."

The texts introduced in the workshops provided a foundation for inviting girls and their parents into writing by connecting to their lives and inviting their experiences and ways of knowing into the workshop as valuable tools to mediate learning, writing, and sharing. In expanding upon Gutiérrez's (2008) theorization of third space, David Kirkland (2008) states, "In this space, texts are variable, emerging out of students' lives, and English teachers are reflective practitioners, entering students' lives to develop the capacities and dispositions needed to facilitate a process of critical thought and reflection" (p. 69). The mentor texts introduced in the space acted as a tool to mediate reflection of personal histories and collaboration, allowing for texts to emerge from the lived experiences of girls and their parents, which was important in the coconstruction of a third space.

Modeling. Modeling proved to be a productive entry into writing and sharing of stories from lived experience. As facilitators shared their own stories, the participants

seemed to grasp the concept clearly and to compose and tell stories from their lives, stories that became an important part of space and led to rich discussions and further storytelling. Whatever drawing, writing, and sharing we invited girls and their parents to do, we also did ourselves. We modeled our writing in a variety of ways, either writing in the moment alongside girls during writing time, or, if we were in charge of presenting a certain component, preparing ideas or a brief piece prior to share and talk through in front of girls and their parents. The sharing of our own writing through modeling our writing was an important practice that was part of all Somos Escritores workshops. From our experiences working with youth and families in writing workshops, both in classrooms and after-school spaces, we believe in sharing "authentic modeling" with our writers, that is, not only modeling our own writing, but also mentor texts (Gallagher, 2011). Modeling writing is an important way we have found to support and encourage the writing in of our students and families and to build confidence and stamina in writing. It makes us learners, thinkers, and most importantly writers alongside our students and their families.

The three of us wrote each week, but also took turns leading and modeling our own writing to the entire group. The topic of the second Somos Escritores workshop (June 14, 2016), was Scar Stories (Nelson, 2004). At this workshop, girls and their parents were invited to reflect on the physical and emotional scars that they carried with them and write the story of the scar, what they learned from the experience, and how they have changed from it.

Prior to the workshop, I spoke the facilitators about who would model and share their scar stories. Alexa agreed to write her scar story to model for the group. She wrote a physical scar story. This scar story modeling yielded writing products that inhabited the

third space. For example, Alexa followed up my scar story by sharing her physical scar story. She wrote about the scar on her left knee that she got while playing with the neighborhood kids, who were all boys. She read:

> On my left knee, there is a scar. It is nickel-size and puckers out from the surrounding skin like a bit of a popped balloon. The tissue is glossy, light pink and wrinkled; it is still smooth to the touch after nearly two decades. Not all scars are happy, but I wear mine like a badge of honor. My scar pays homage to the first and only time I sustained a sports-related injury.
>
> It was a sunny afternoon the summer after my fourth-grade year. I had been cursed to live in a neighborhood where all the kids my age were boys, so I often spent my days outside, playing games, hunting for creatures, and trying to prove that I could keep up with the guys. There was Mikey Anderson; he was the leader and my next-door neighbor. And then there was Luke and Tristan from down the street, and of course my two younger brothers Micah and Drew. All of them teased me mercilessly all the time just for being a girl.
>
> On this day, we were playing street hockey at the end of the cul de sac. The cul de sac was a new addition to our neighborhood. A construction crew had built the road and there were plans to build new house here, but for now it was an empty. A large paved area at the end of the street, where no cars would go rushing by, this had seemed like a perfect spot to set up our game.
>
> "Pass it to me! I'm open. I'M OPEN!" I called. I had my hockey stick poised in the ready position and was just waiting for someone to hit me the puck. Mikey passed it to me. I reacted instantly, caught the puck with my stick, and make a quick dash to the goal. WHAM! The puck shot into the net! Goal!
>
> Only I was excited by my victory score that I forgot to break and skated right over a patch of gravel that had been left on the road from the recent construction. Just as I raised my arms over my head to celebrate, I fell. A large rock lodged in my knee and pulling it out there was a deep cut that gushed blood. (writing artifact, June 14, 2016)

Alexa finished her piece by sharing how this scar changed how she viewed herself as someone who could be tough and play with boys. She concluded:

> Though the fall hurt a lot, I didn't want to look like a wimp in front of the guys, so I popped myself back up on my feet immediately. Because of my injury on that day, my knee was bandaged up tightly. The funny thing was, even with the bandage and the limp it caused me to have, I always felt that I walked a little straighter from that day on. Around the guys, I was no longer just a girl. My scar reminded me that I could be tough, and with it I stood a little taller, a little prouder. (writing artifact, June 14, 2016)

At the conclusion of Alexa sharing her physical scar story with the group, Elizabeth asked to see her scar. She laughed and proudly showed Elizabeth and anyone else who wanted to see her proud scar.

Following Alexa's modeling, girls and their parents wrote their own scar stories. Girls shared with their parents. Then, they were invited to share with the entire group. Samuel volunteered to share his scar story with the group. It was about cutting his leg on a tree branch and keeping the accident from his parents. Sitting at his table, he read:

> Well there this tree in this big empty field behind our house. We would always climb it and play on it. Well one day after school I went back to play myself. I was high up in the tree and the branch I was stepping on broke. When I feel I stabbed myself on the back of my thigh. It was in 2 inches deep. The only thing that helped me was that I was still holding on to another branch or that piece of tree would of went in pretty deep. I pulled myself up and walked home, or limped home. I didn't tell my mom or dad because they probably would of spanked me and then not let me play over there anymore. She found 3 days later at a party. I was wearing white pants and all of a sudden I had this big red mark on the back of my leg. She freaked out and asked me what happened. By then I told her everything. She was mad but relieved that it wasn't something more serious. (writing artifact, June 14, 2016)

At the conclusion of his story, Samuel finished by sharing what he learned from this experience and the importance of being open and honest with his parents. He read:

> I love my scar. It teaches me that you should always be careful and always tell your parents even though they might get mad at the end of the day, they still love you. (writing artifact, June 14, 2016)

Samuel ended his piece with a reflection of his scar and the realization of the importance of being open and honest with parents because in the end they will always love you. "I learned that throughout life we constantly get emotional and physical scars. It helps us build character it defines us. It is what makes us, us. Every time you look at them it reminds you who you are" (writing artifact, June 14, 2016).

The modeling of writing by facilitators acted as a vehicle to level the playing field in the workshops that sometimes exists in family involvement spaces. Rather than simply giving directions to families to participate in drawing and writing activities, facilitators opened themselves up to families through the sharing of their own stories, encouraging families to do the same without fear of ridicule, as evident in Samuel's piece.

Writer reflection. Each Somos Escritores workshop ended with a writer reflection. This part of the workshop invited girls and their parents to think about the work we had done as a community of writers during the workshop and reflect on their thinking, learning, and extended discussions.

Reflections took on multiple forms. Sometimes they were either written or verbal. The written reflections took the form of a quickwrite on a Post-It or scratch piece paper or a handout with questions that the facilitators prepared prior to the workshop. The general questions were: What did you learn? (Qué aprendiste?) What did you learn about your mother/daughter/father? (Qué aprendiste de tu madre/hija/padre?) What did you learn about yourself? (Qué aprendiste de ti mismo?) These reflections acted as tools engage girls and their parents in continued discussion of workshop topics while providing a vehicle for writing and sharing in future workshops.

Girls and their parents reflected on their own learning and understanding of themselves. After the end of the first workshop, Elizabeth said, "I learned that I have a future ahead!" (writing artifact, June 7, 2016). Rocky's reflection focused on her writing and how others related to her, "What I learned about myself is that I add my own personal feelings and hobbies into my writing yet other people can still relate" (writing artifact, June 7, 2016). And Blanca reflected on her experience during the entire

workshop, saying, “My experience here today interesting and made me like really think” (writing artifact, June 7, 2016). These reflections were written and shared aloud, and sometimes expanded upon through discussion with others at follow-up workshops.

The reflection at workshops also turned to the thinking and learning that occurred in response to hearing the stories of their daughters, mothers or fathers, either their own or the stories of others. After the second workshop, “Scar Stories,” Samuel reflected on what he learned about his daughter after hearing her scar story. He wrote “that at her young age she already has her scars. They always be with her. Also she is stressed and she young” (writing artifact, June 14, 2016). Elizabeth heard the details of her mom’s cancer through her scar story and reflected, “I learned that my mom has been through a lot in life” (writing artifact, June 14, 2016). These reflections illustrate new insights and new ways of seeing, really seeing, a daughter, mother, or father.

As Valente reflected after listening to a letter written to him by his daughter, Rocky, about what it is like to be a teenager and what she wants him to know, he reflected: “Me siento satisfecho con la evolucion y pensamientos de mi hija” (I feel satisfied with the evolution and thoughts of my daughter (writing artifact, June 21, 2016). As they did for other workshop participants, Valente’s reflections served as a way for him to make sense of writing and feelings that surfaced through the discussing, writing, and sharing of stories from his lived experiences.

Participation Structures

Somos Escritores workshops consisted of a variety of participation structures that operated as entry points into writing and participation into the workshop. In the coconstruction of a collaborative third space, the role of participation by girls and their

parents is important, but how they participated in the space is of equal importance. The participation structures that were created as invitations for girls and parents to read and write their lives were intentionally planned and organized by facilitators. As Gutiérrez (2008) asserts, "Through the orchestration of participation in a rich set of carefully designed, ecologically grounded practices, we can regulate the occurrence, frequency, and difficulty of specific problem-solving environments, as well as the form of mediation available" (152). The design of Somos Escritores and the use of writing workshop philosophies supported the use of individual drawing and writing, discussion, and sharing as carefully planned participation structures necessary for the coconstruction of a third space.

Individual drawing and writing. At each Somos Escritores workshop ample time was allotted for individual crafting of stories. One participation structure that was part of workshops to invite girls and parents into reflecting on and thinking of their personal experiences was time for individual drawing and writing. All workshops included time for girls and parents to enter into crafting stories through drawing and writing. The use of personal drawing and writing as a participation structure provided girls and parents with time throughout the workshop to reflect critically on their lived experience in order to begin to piece them together through different modalities.

At the first workshop, girls and parents drew a picture in response to the question, "Where are you from?" At the second workshop, they labeled a body and heart with their physical and emotional scars. The third workshop, drawing in the form of symbols, was used to label a mask with how girls and parents saw themselves on the inside and how society viewed them on the outside. At the fourth workshop, prior to writing a letter to

one another, girls and parents drew a picture of how they viewed their parents when they were children. Each of these drawing activities was followed by discussion and then writing.

At the fourth workshop (video, June 28, 2016), "What It's Like Being a Teenager," we invited the girls and their parents to draw a picture of how they viewed their parents when they were younger children. Everyone drew a picture of their parents with interesting details that told a story of what they remembered and what stood out in their memory.

We showed our drawings to each other and discussed the memories that they evoked. Holding his drawing up with his left hand and pointing at it with his right hand, Samuel said, "I can still remember the way my dad's hands looked. Dark, rough…hands that did a lot of hard work." Valente had a tough time sharing his piece with the group, becoming emotional, he shared, "Recuerdo de mi padre que era muy trabajador entiendo comor un excelente padre que se esforaba por darme le que estaba a su alcanse, cariñoso y comprensivo" [I remember my dad was a hard worker. He was an excellent father who always did his best to give me what we could. He was so caring and comprehensive] (video, June 28, 2016).

After sharing our drawings, girls and their parents wrote about their parents. Rocky used her drawing to write her piece. She wrote:

> I saw my parents as hard workers. They both constantly work all day and barely any rest. What I came to understand about my parents is that they both want what is best for me no matter how tired and stressed they are. What I want my parents to know is that there will always be someone better than me and that I will learn at my own pace in order to understand. (writing artifact, June 28, 2016)

Rocky's drawing of her parents showed them happy and smiling. This writing shows a juxtaposition of them being "tired" and "stressed." This is expanded on in her writing.

Drawing allowed for different entry points into participation in the space. It was a tool that mediated reflection of lived experiences with great detail. It also allowed different creative processes to come to the forefront and for girls and parents to begin to tell their stories through different modalities.

Discussion. Discussion was a critical practice in Somos Escritores that provided opportunities for growth through the sharing of ideas and perspectives that may have been new or historically silenced in different spaces. Throughout each workshop, various discussion structures were in place. The discussion structures that were part of Somos Escritores created spaces for the discussion of topics that were important to their girls and their mothers and fathers.

Within these discussion spaces, girls and their parents often entered into conversations that were tenuous and full of contradictions as they negotiated and tried to make sense of new ideas and fully communicate their perspectives. It is in these discussions, these spaces of "intense struggle," that growth was possible, not only for girls, but also for their parents. Bakhtin (1981) wrote that an ideological becoming occurs from within the spaces riddled with moments of tensions, contradictions, and "intense struggles" between and "among various available verbal and ideological points of view, approaches, directions and values" (p. 364).

For example, in the fourth workshop (video, June 28, 2016), we read "Teenagers," by Pat Mora (2000), a poem about children moving into the teen years and the changes in family dynamics. After reading it in English and Spanish, we asked girls

and parents, “What did you think? [Que pensaste?] What did you notice? [Que notaste?] Girls and their parents first discussed the questions with one another, and then we discussed them as a group. During whole-group discussion, Samuel shared:

> It makes me think about my own kids…and that, they are all young and come to you and want to be around you. And, then…the next thing you know they lock themselves in their rooms with their thoughts. When they come out they are different, you know them, but then at the same time they are strangers. (field notes, June 28, 2016).

This discussion led to reflection on what it is like to be a teenager, now, for the girls, and back in the day, for the parents. After discussion and drawing, girls and parents wrote a letter to one another about what it is like to be a teenager.

During this same workshop (video, June 28, 2016), Samuel and Reyna had a discussion in front of the entire group about Reyna’s goals. She had just finished reading her piece aloud to the group. In her piece, she wrote about the stress and anxiety that she feels as a teen in pursuing her long-term goals, which include starting a band. She explained how the only way to make a difference or make goals happen is if you are an adult, which she believed is why so many teens try to grow up so fast, so that they can push toward their goals and get what they want more quickly.

Following her reading, Reyna and her dad, Samuel, engaged in a tense discussion in front of the group about what she wrote about in relation to her goals.

> **Samuel:** That is why you should have shorter goals.
>
> **Reyna:** But, it takes time to create a band.
>
> **Samuel:** It’s like…like catching lightening in a bucket. I mean…you can’t put all your…you know just always focus on that, focus on that ’cause I mean not everybody…everybody hopes to start a band, and you know and become famous and you know it’s not going to happen so you have to be realistic…You know? Be open to everything...If you just focus on that before you know it you are gonna be too far ahead and you’re not gonna be able to do something else. If you want to

> do something that's fine, but you always have to have a plan for your goals 'cause you always 'cause just because you have one goal, even if you hit it, you always have to make other goals and other goals. That's how you grow. (video, June 28, 2016)

In their discussion, Samuel gave advice to Reyna to encourage her to be open to multiple possibilities for her future. He wanted her to be mindful of how she focused her time and energy in achieving her goal, to think about being open to many options.

As they continued to discuss Reyna's goal of starting a band, the tension buildt. Reyna tried to tell her dad about her goals. She said:

> **Reyna:** I have multiple goals….
>
> **Samuel:** That is why have to make goals for right now…so just because they are goals or later on, you could make goals for now to motivate you. Let's say, "You know what…this weekend I'm gonna go out and see if can join this group and help the poor." There is a lot of things that you can do now to help you grow as a person. Just not goals in the future. Just because during the future you need to do things now that are gonna help you grow. You just need to open your eyes to a lot of things, you just can't focus on one thing.
>
> **Reyna:** You know I've always wanted to be in a band since I was little.
>
> **Samuel:** Nobody's saying, nobody's telling you not to be, but you just can't focus on one thing. You can be in a band…but, don't like say, "Oh, I'm gonna be in a band, that's all I want to do." 'Cause you can't be close minded like that cuz if you are you're not gonna grow
>
> **Reyna:** Well, that is what I want to do. (video, June 28, 2016)

Samuel continued to try and help Reyna to expand her focus on being in a band, to explore other short time goals. She was insistent on trying to get her dad to understand that being in a band was something that she had always wanted to do with her life.

He responded:

> **Samuel:** That is what I'm telling you. It's like catching lightening in a bottle. You can't you just can't just hope that's gonna happen to you. You have to be realistic with life. That's what I'm telling you. That's why I'm here…to let you know I'm supporting you, but also let you know that, let you know that what the truth is. Cuz I'm not going to be one of those parents that praises you like, "Yeah, you can

> do this." You can do it, but I'm not gonna tell you that's what's gonna happen 'cause I don't want you to, if it doesn't happen you're gonna be like "why didn't you tell me?" I'd rather be hard on you 'cause I want the best for you. (video, June 28, 2016)

Samuel explains to Reyna that he supports her in the goals she wants to pursue, but at the same time he is going to be honest with her. Their conversation ends with Samuel telling Reyna that he would "rather be hard on you 'cause I want what is best for you."

The intentional discussion structures that were present in Somos Escritores served multiple purposes in the coconstruction of third space. The discussion in workshops mediated the sharing of stories by providing girls and their parents with the opportunity to discuss ideas before and after writing. Discussion structures worked as important tools to support girls and their parents in problematizing tensions and contradictions that occurred during workshops when "sensitive topics" emerged. These discussions, "zones of contact" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345) in which conflicting ideas and perspectives emerged, the times that "what we think as an individual is not the same as some aspect of the official doctrine of our larger world. It is those moments of struggle that we develop our own ideologies" (Ball and Freedman, 2004, p. 7).

Sharing. Each Somos Escritores workshop ended with an author share. This was a time for girls and parents to share a line, a part of their entire piece they had drafted at the workshop. In addition to this time, there were multiple opportunities throughout for girls and parents to share their thinking, drawing, and writing and to hear of the experiences of others. This sharing proved be a powerful tool in the coconstruction of a third space.

At the fourth workshop "Speaking My Truth: What It's Like Being a Teenager" (June 28, 2016), the girls and their mothers and fathers read and discussed the poem

"Teenagers" by Pat Mora (2000). This poem is about the teen years of a child and the changes that occur during this time, and is a reflection of the parent reminiscing on the teenagers' childhood. After the discussion, the girls and their mothers and fathers reflected on their own lives, focusing specifically on their teen years. As adults, the parents reflected back in time, and the girls, currently living in the moment as a teen, reflected upon their current life situation. With the poem as an anchor and the guiding question, "What was it like being a teenager? What is it like being a teenager?" [¿Cómo es ser adolescente?], each girl, mother, and father reflected and responded to this by writing a letter to one another about what it was like/is like being a teenager today, or, in the case of each mother and father, the past.

Working alongside each other, but writing independently, everyone wrote a letter or in a genre of their choice in response to this question to their daughter or parent. After writing their letters, girls, mothers, and fathers read their writing aloud to one another. Seated side by side and facing one another, Samuel and Reyna read their writing aloud to one another. In Reyna's writing, she reflected on her experiences as a Mexican-American teenager and the stress that she encounters, as well as the issues of concern that she views as important to making this world a better place. She read:

> A teenager now is way different from how it was back then…teenagers want their privacy, be alone with their thoughts, they're being thrown under the bus due to excessive amount of pressure, you have to be under one label or any label, but no matter what, there will always be labeling. Our excessive fear of being accepted weighs us down, but our hopes usually can't come until we're older which gives us the need to grow up to get our goals faster. Without having to worry about labels." (writing artifact, June 28, 2016)

Throughout her entire letter, Reyna described the pressures and "excessive fear" she and her peers felt to be accepted based on the labels ascribed to them by their peers and

society based on their appearance, their style, and their individual interests. In this short excerpt from her letter about being a teenager today, she addressed this fear and the realization that there was a desire to grow up quickly to "get our goals faster," thus realizing their true potential and their life on their own terms.

After Reyna finished reading her letter, her father, Samuel, read his writing. He wrote a letter to his daughter sharing his experience as a teenager. He read:

> Dear Daughter,
>
> I enjoyed going to school to hang around with my friends. Coming home and watching cartoons. Then going outside to play until dusk. Being around my family and friends made me happy. I would get sad if I got a bad grade or if my day didn't go as planned. What gave me hope was that I was young and had a whole life to live. I worried about school and doing good and also not having what I wanted like the new Super Nintendo. The best thing were my friends and brothers. Worst thing was when something at school didn't go as planned. I envision being a lawyer and helping my mom financially. I want to let my daughter know I am here for her 100%. She [will] never disappoint me. (writing artifact, June 28, 2016)

In his letter to his daughter, Samuel described the things he enjoyed as a teenager, including the best and worst parts of this time of his life.

This workshop opened up space for Reyna and Samuel to reflect on their lives and their experiences as teenagers, then and now. Although the times are different, the experiences and concerns intersect based on social and historical moment in which they had these experiences.

Sharing provided a crucial springboard for meaningful reflection. Throughout Somos Escritores, girls and parents shared a variety of stories form their lived experiences and reflected on what they learned from this sharing. For example, in Samuel's written reflection (writing artifact, June 14, 2016), he reflected on what he learned from hearing his daughter's story. He wrote that he had learned "[t]hat [Reyna] at

her young age she already has her scars. They will always be with her. Also she is stressed out even though she is young." In Samuel's hearing his daughter's story of her scars, a story he hadn't previously heard, he learned about what she was dealing with as a teenager.

Sharing also provided a means for building solidarity and finding out that others face the same problems. After Reyna shared the piece quoted above that mentioned the "excessive amount of pressure" that she felt due to labels that society placed upon her and her friends and subsequently heard from the other girls and parents, she reflected on what she had learned from others: "What I learned, what surprised me is that there are people going through what I go through and not just me" (writing artifact, June 28, 2016).

The sharing that was part of the intentional design of Somos Escritores was critical to the coconstruction of a third space. The sharing of our stories was an important tool to open up space to hear stories for the first time and to learn from one another about who we are, what matters to us, and what we envision for our futures. These structures worked collectively as tools to mediate the coconstruction of third space.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS

> The very *act* of writing then, conjuring /coming to 'see,' what has yet to be recorded in history is to bring into consciousness what only the body knows to be true. The body—that site which houses the intuitive, the unspoken viscera of our being—this is the revolutionary promise of "theory of the flesh;" for it is both the expression of evolving political consciousness and the *creator* of consciousness, itself. Seldom recorded and hardly honored, our theory *incarnate* provides the most reliable roadmap to liberation" (Moraga, 2015, p. xxiv)

On a Sunday in March, I met with families for a follow-up Somos Escritores writing workshop. This is the second "reunion" workshop that we have had since our final author celebration in July. Per the request of girls and their parents, we have continued to come back together to write and share stories. These workshops are a time to reconnect and catch up with one another about our daily lives—not only our challenges, but also our many successes.

At this last workshop, girls and their parents were invited to reflect and write about the things in which they believe. After jotting down a list of the things they believed in that guided their lives, they wrote about them. Sharing first with partners then with the large group, Rocky and Valente shared their entire piece aloud. First Rocky read her piece:

> I believe in temporary hair dye because I feel like it represents a good kind of change. I dyed my hair towards the end of eighth grade mainly because I just wanted to. But, now I feel like dyeing my hair, I am changing in some way, yet, I can always come back "home" when it washes away. By dyeing it, I am going out of my comfort zone, but then I'm back in my bubble when it goes away. (writing artifact, March 12, 2017)

When Rocky finished reading her piece, she talked about how she is exploring dyeing her hair either blue or purple for the last months of school. She is embracing the temporary change this will bring to her look as she continues to embrace the many changes, challenges, and freedoms of a high school student.

After Rocky shared, Valente volunteered to share his piece. He read:

> Yo creo en si mismo [y] en mi familia. Creo en si mismo porque Dios me guía, me da sabiduria para seguir Adelante y saber y tener confianza que mañana sera un día mejor. Creo en mi familia por que ellos son mi pilar de soporte, son mis felicidad, por los cuales me hacen sentireme fuerte y seguir Adelante por que sieto ser su ejemplo (writing artifact, March 12, 2017) [I believe in myself and in my family. I believe in myself because God is guiding me, he gives me wisdom to keep going and to know and to be confident that tomorrow will be a better day. I believe in my family because they are the foundation of my trust, they are my happiness, they make me feel strong and don't give up because I want to follow their example]

After Valente read his piece, we talked about the strength that he gets from the belief he has in himself and the love of his family, as they are his "pilar de soporte" (pillar of support).

For six weeks, I had the privilege of learning from Latina adolescent girls and their mothers and fathers as we drew, wrote and shared stories from our lived experiences in Somos Escritores workshops. Their stories illustrated the importance of familial and community support, the power of positive self-definitions and the naming and claiming of realities and the healing that is possible when space is created to share our lives with others who honor us in receiving the gifts of our words and experiences. From our collective sharing of stories, I learned about who they are, what matters to them and what they envision for the futures and the intentional practices that are necessary for creating and sustaining a Third Space where the sharing of stories and coalition building is possible.

The work of the girls and mothers and fathers in Somos Escritores can teach us, how to open up spaces that builds off their rich experiences, knowledge and wisdom to create more inclusive schools, classrooms and opportunities for family involvement. Through analysis and continued reflection and discussion with the girls and families, I offer recommendations to educators, teacher educators and scholars based upon our collective experience in Somos Escritores. I recommend the following:

1. (re)envisioning our classrooms to provide students with a safe space for writing and sharing
2. (re)designing our writing curriculum to center the lives, voices, experiences, interests, and stories of our students
3. (re)imagine teacher preparation programs to be ground in lived experiences of students, families and communities
4. build relationships with Latina adolescent girls and families in the coconstruction of third spaces where families feel safe to accept invitations to participate in sharing their stories within their own families and across families

In the following sections, I offer implications for teachers, teacher educators and families working to create more just and equitable family involvement. Within a CFE (Delgado Bernal, 1998), these recommendations are based on the considerations and insights of the girls and parents who I learned from in Somos Escritores.

(Re)envision Classrooms to Create a Safe Space for Writing and Sharing

In Somos Escritores writing workshops, facilitators worked with the girls, mothers and fathers to create a safe space for the writing, sharing and telling of personal stories. According to Holley and Steiner (2005) safe space is a classroom space where

students feel comfortable amongst their peers to engage in open and honest conversations, examine their ideological beliefs and values, express their opinions about a variety of topics and challenge each other in their "ideological becoming" (Bakhtin, 1981). Safe spaces can be full of discomfort, tensions and contradictions, as "being safe is not the same as being comfortable" (p. 50). From the very first workshop, where girls and their parents gathered, as acquaintances, the facilitators encouraged and supported the sharing of all words, ideas, ideas and experiences uttered in the space.

An important part of each workshop was the reading and reviewing of the Somos Escritores agreements. The Somos Escritores agreements were non-negotiable ways in which we would live and be in the space as we shared, wrote and told our truths. There were three agreements. They were: freely share stories and ideas, risk taking and engage with challenging topics in a supportive environment [compartir libremente historias e ideas, toma riesgos y entablar temas dificiles en un ambiente de confianza]. In Rocky's post survey reflection, she wrote about the amount of sharing that she did in Somos Escritores versus how she shared in school. She wrote, "I think I participated more in We are Writers than I have at school. Knowing that whatever I shared in We are Writers is safe, I felt comfortable to share thoughts out loud" (post survey, July 12, 2016). Our agreements were read and reviewed at the beginning of each workshop to remind us of how we would be together in Somos Escritores, thus opening up the space for the writing and sharing of our stories. These agreements were beneficial as they assisted in the creation of safe space. Agreements are one example for teachers to consider in (re)envisioning classrooms as safe spaces.

It takes time and care to nurture and create a safe space. In a conversation with Sally, one of the Somos Escritores facilitators, she discussed the Somos Escritores space and how it was coconstructed to be safe for the sharing of stories, which can be scary and leave one feeling vulnerable. She said, "I kind of think the first part of it…was writing alongside the participants. And, then when it came to sharing, one of us tried to share first. And, there was always an invitation for people to share if they wanted to and there was never judgement or intimidation if they didn't want to." Sally believed that the writing and sharing that facilitators engaged in alongside families was critical in creating a safe space. In addition, she points out that girls and their parents were not required to share, it was their choice. As advised by Fletcher and Portalupi (2001), writers of all ages need time, space and choice to write about what matters to them. We can learn from the girls and families in Somos Escritores that choices matter in the construction of a safe space, and this can easily be infused in existing classroom structures.

Girls and their parents were given the choice to share each week and this provided the opportunity to learn about each other more deeply about our shared goals, dreams, struggles, hopes, hurts, loves and fears. In receiving each other's stories, girls, their parents and facilitators realized that we were not alone in our lives, others in the world, and in the room, shared similar experiences. Rocky wrote, "I felt relieved that someone else feels the same way I did as to being a teenager" (reflection, July 28, 2016). Similarly, Reyna explained in a writer reflection, "what surprised me is that there are people going through what I go through and not just me" (reflection, July 28, 2016). Alexa discussed what she learned from sharing in Somos Escritores, she said, "All of it [the sharing] has helped me learn about others, too, and better understand

connections/differences between generations" (post survey, July 12, 2016). Not only the choice to share, but the actual share proved to open up new understandings and a safe space where we realized that we are not alone in our lived experiences, and this is revolutionary.

These examples from Somos Escritores can be helpful to teachers interested in fostering a safe space in their classroom communities. In fostering a safe space teachers can reflect on classroom agreements and how to create these with students to utilize for building common ground for the cultivation of a safe space. Teachers can also work alongside their students to share and model their own writing, thinking and risk-taking in order to become part of the community in a new way. In addition, providing opportunities throughout the day for students to have choice in writing and can begin to shift the classroom dynamics in important ways. Through these practices students can be encouraged to take risks and to share more freely over time as the community is strengthened and trust is gained by others.

(Re)design Writing Curriculum to Center the Lives, Voices, Experiences, Interests, and Stories of Our Students

The experiences and stories of the Latina adolescent girls who participated in Somos Escritores illustrated that they were socially conscious girls determined to create positive self-definitions of who they are and were becoming. Rocky, Reyna, Blanca and Elizabeth care deeply about the world that they are living in and want to make a difference in it. Throughout the program, each of them talked and wrote about different social issues impacting the world for which they are passionate about changing --animals, the environment, racism, immigration, body image, mental health, drugs and the many

uncertainties of the next four years under the Trump administration. As educators, listening to these concerns that the girls discussed and their motivations for making a difference in the world can be important entry points in (re)designing writing curriculum to center the lives, voices, experiences, interest and stories of our students.

Kirkland (2008) suggests, educators and scholars must "situate English Language arts (ELA) in the lives and realities of today's youth…[with] texts emerging out of students' lives" (p. 69). It is important that educators make intentional choices as to the texts that are brought into the classroom and curriculum that is created *with* and *for* our students. In reflecting on what this means, we as educators and scholars can ask ourselves, how are we providing our students with meaningful teaching and learning that stems from their lived histories and experiences? In what ways are we creating opportunities for students to critically engage with their world through reading the word and the world? (Freire, 1970)

One consideration for (re)designing and contextualizing our ELA classroom curriculum to emerge from the lived realities, experiences and concerns of our students is through Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). According to Camarotta and Fine, "YPAR provides young people with opportunities to study social problems affecting their lives and then determine actions to rectify these problems" (2008, p. 2). As students engage in critical inquiries and reflections on the conditions of their lives and their worlds, youth learn about the structural and material inequalities that are manmade, and, through reflective praxis, find ways to change these conditions. At its core, YPAR is student centered and student driven, with critical inquiries emerging from students' lived experiences. YPAR is a revolutionary teaching and learning experience for youth and

adults, and including it in our classrooms can support the growing consciousness of our students.

The girls in Somos Escritores are socially conscious and deeply aware of the social injustices and inequities impacting the conditions of their lives and those of their family, friends, and the larger world. Although aware and offering solutions, at times they feel at a loss of how to make the changes they view as necessary due to their age, educational level, gender, and financial resources. In an interview, Blanca discussed these contradictions between caring and being aware while at the same time feeling as if she could not make a difference. She said:

> We are not blind to what is happening to the world 'cause we're always on our phones and Snapchat, which has CNN and cosmetology and all the little things, and whatever big thing that's happening… it would still show up and we do care what's happening in the World… I feel like a lot of girls are not able to do certain things to change the World even though we want to. But we're like... 'Cause if people say like education is like the most powerful key... But I view it as like money is really power... 'Cause money like is a big advantage but education is also a bigger advantage. So it's like money and education are like tied down (interview, July, 17, 2016.)

This example provides insight into the concerns of the girls in Somos Escritores: they are conscious of the social injustices and inequities impacting the world, but lack the agency to make a difference.

Implementing YPAR in the classroom through an interdisciplinary approach could support the girls, and all students who may share similar concerns and feelings, in the exploration of the social injustices and inequities in which they are most passionate. A transformational and revolutionary outcome of YPAR is that it "teaches young people that conditions of injustice are produced, not natural; are designed to privilege and oppress; but are ultimately challengeable and thus changeable" (Camarrota & Fine, 2008,

p. 2). Conducting critical research that stems from their lived realities can act as a vehicle to support the girls in discovering concrete ways that they can begin to make a difference and continue to advocate for change. This research will also provide them with models of others who are doing or have done the work to bring about change in the world. These models can work to give them concrete examples of how they may make a difference and increase their agency in doing so. This transformation can be possible for all students in ELA classrooms in safe spaces supported by caring adults and peers.

(Re)imagine Teacher Preparation Programs to Be Grounded in Lived Experiences of Students, Families, and Communities

My own teacher preparation experience was site based and grounded in the lived experiences of students, families, and communities. This experience helped to cultivate in me the "essential dispositions, knowledge, and skills" (Villegas & Lucas, 2002) to work with culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms and schools. One component that was missing from my own experience and that I have observed as absent in many programs is field-based and practicum experiences working with students and families in family involvement spaces. (Re)imagining teacher preparation programs to include participation of preservice teachers in "cross-cultural community-based learning" (Sleeter, 2001) with students and families in family involvement spaces like Somos Escritores can be transformative for everyone involved.

Somos Escritores is an example of an intentionally organized family involvement space that can provide preservice teachers with an opportunity to engage in "cross-cultural community based learning" (Sleeter, 2001) through engagement with families in the writing, drawing, and sharing of stories from their lived experiences. According to

Sleeter (2001), "cross-cultural community-based learning involves learning about a community that is culturally different from one's own by spending time there, equipped with learning strategies such as active listening and guidance in what to observe" (p. 563). The practices of Somos Escritores, although intentional, can provide teacher educators with ideas on how they may organize an experience like this for preservice teachers to engage with families and communities.

Teacher educators can apprentice preservice teachers into working with families and communities by providing them with strategies and hands-on opportunities to work in the field. This approach would weave together theory and practice, providing preservice teachers with hands-on experience working with families to organize and facilitate an experience that is culturally relevant (Ladson Billings, 1995) and culturally sustaining (Paris, 2012). Providing preservice teachers with multiple opportunities to engage with families throughout their training can help to disrupt "deficit views" (Valencia, 1997) of students and families for historically marginalized homes and communities. In addition, these experiences can provide preservice teachers with insight into how students and families from backgrounds different from their own experience learning, which can inform our pedagogies in powerful ways.

Build Relationships With Latina Adolescent Girls and Their Families in the Coconstruction of Third Spaces Focused on Family Involvement

Through my previous work *with* and *for* families in family writing projects, and in this current project with Latina adolescent girls and their parents in Somos Escritores, I'm reminded of the importance and the transformational power of building and nurturing relationships with families. Scholars working with families in various educational setting

and communities have pointed to the importance of building authentic relationships that are based on confianza (Valdés, 1996), mutual trust, and the amount of time it takes to cultivate such relationships (Delgado Bernal, Elenes, Godinez & Villenas, 2006; Delgado Gaitan, 2001; Valdés, 1996).

Somos Escritores was a transformative third space (Gutiérrez, 2008) where relationships developed over the span of the workshops. In creating third spaces (Gutiérrez, 2008) and second classrooms (Campano, 2007) with and for Latina adolescent girls and their parents it is important to be mindful of how we coconstruct the space as to not unintentionally privilege the languages, literacies, cultures, practices and ways of knowing over another. First, coconstruction of family involvement spaces must reflect the practices and ways of knowing of girls and their families (Ada, 1988; Allen, 2007; Auerbach, 1995; Delgado Gaitan, 1994; Early & Flores, 2015). In Somos Escritores, the texts that were selected and the topics that we wrote about reflected and were relevant to the lived realities of the girl and their parents. As the workshops progressed and relationships were strengthened, the tentative schedule evolved to reflect our growing understandings and address topics that had been brought up in conversations. Through critical reflection of the way in which we work to create spaces with and for girls and their families, this can work to have a positive or negative impact on the relationships, as it can send the wrong message.

Another important way to build relationships with families is to enter family involvement spaces as learners of the lived experiences and ways of knowing of our students and their families. We can learn from the "funds of knowledge" research (Moll, et al., 1992/2005) conducted in the southern part of the state the power of taking an

ethnographic approach to families. This approach can serve to expand our view of families from unidimensional to viewing families as multidimensional—and complex (Moll, et al., 1992; Quicho & Daoud, 2006). This multidimensional view of families exposes the social, historical, and political influences of their lives to uncover the structural and material forces at play in their lives, helping us to find ways to deconstruct them in order to reconstruct them in transformative and powerful ways.

This study explores the lived experiences and realities of Latina adolescent girls (grades nine and 10) and their parents in "la herida abierta" along the U.S.-Mexico-Border. Although the findings provide rich qualitative insights into who they are, what matters to them, and what they envision for the futures, they may not be generalizable across all Latina adolescent girls or to adolescent girls of different cultures, languages, or ways of knowing. Four girls and their parents participated in Somos Escritores, providing thick, rich data; however, such a small group can also provide a limited view that a larger group could illuminate. In addition, I recommend continued study and coconstruction of a space like Somos Escritores at a school site.

Future research that will stem from this current study of Somos Escritores includes a second iteration of the study to take place at the same university for a weeklong workshop series. This study will continue to explore the lived experiences of Latina adolescent girls and their parents and who they are, what matters to them, and what they envision for their futures, but will include a second strand of research to focus on the preservice teachers with whom I will collaborate in workshops. This strand is focused on exploring their dispositions before and after the workshops and how they view the work they did and the work they will do with families in their future classrooms.

In addition, work with Latina adolescent girls in a third space focused on writing from their lived experiences and including Chicana and Black feminist texts as mentors and discussion pieces will explore the space that is created and the evolving identities and literacies of a writing collective of Latina girls.

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APPENDIX A

IRB FORMS

Somos Escritores We Are Writers
PARENTAL LETTER OF PERMISSION

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a doctoral candidate under the direction of Professor Dr. James Blasingame in the Department/Division/College of English at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to learn about you and your daughter's experiences as you participate in Somos EscritoresWe are Writers.

I invite you and your daughter participate in Somos Escritoras/We are Writers, a writing workshop for adolescent girls and their mothers. Workshops will begin on Tuesday, June 7 2016 and end on Thursday, July 12, 2016.

Your participation will involve writing short stories, poems, and essays along with your daughter. In addition, you and your daughter may be asked to participate in interviews and portions of the workshops may be videotaped. Your participation in the workshops is completely voluntary. If you or your daughter decide not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. For example, you may continue to participate in the writing workshops, but will not be part of the study.

Possible benefits for you and your daughter's participation is to learn new ways to communicate and share ideas with parents and others. You and your daughter's writing samples will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your child's name will not be used.

If you have questions concerning the research study or your child's participation in this study, please contact the research team at: James Blasingame, (480) 965-6074, ASU English PO Box 870302 Tempe, AZ 85287-0302.

Sincerely,
Tracey Flores

By signing below, you are giving consent for your daughter to participate in the study.

_____
Daughter's Name

_____ _____ _____

Parent/Guardian Signature Printed Name Date

If you have any questions about you or your child's rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you or your child have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788

Somos Escritoras: We Are Writers
Child Consent

My name is Tracey Flores. I am a doctoral candidate in English Education at Arizona State University.

I am asking you to take part in a research study because I would like to learn about your experiences while participating in Somos Escritoras: We Are Writers. I want to learn more about your hopes and dreams for your future and about the issues that matter the most to you in your life. I am also interested in learning about your relationships other girls and women.

Your parent(s) have given you permission to participate in this study.

Your participation in this study will involve writing short stories, poems, and essays along with your mother. Participation is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the writing at any time, there will be no penalty. For example, you can continue to participate in the writing workshops, but will not be part of the study.

It is your choice to participate in the study. You do not have to be in this study. No one will be mad at you if you decide not to do this study. Even if you start the study, you can stop later if you want. You may ask questions about the study at any time.

If you decide to be in the study, I will not tell anyone else how you respond or act as part of the study. Even if your parents or teachers ask, I will not tell them about what you say or do in the study.

Signing here means that you have read this form or have had it read to you and that you are willing to be in this study.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B

SOMOS ESCRITORES WORKSHOPS

Sample Writing Workshop
June 7, 2016
6:00-7:30 p.m.

Time	Activity	Materials
6:00-6:15	Check-In Pass out Materials (folders/pencils,etc.) Pizza/Snacks	Sign-In Sheet Writing materials Pizza/Snacks
6:15-6:20	Introductions	Oral by Team
6:20-6:25	Poem: The Calling/El Llamado	Copies of Poem
6:25-6:35	Draw: A Picture of Where You are From	Blank White Paper/markers/pencils/crayons
6:35-6:40	Share: Partner Share of Drawing	Completed Drawing
6:40-6:45	Quickwrite: Who would you introduce yourself to the world?	Lined paper (from folder)
6:45-6:55	Share: Introductions (at table/whole group)	
6:55-7:05	Read/Discuss: Where I'm From (English/Spanglish)	Copies of Poem Video
7:05-7:15	Write: Where I'm From/De Donde Soy Yo	Lined Paper
7:15-7:25	Share: Partner/Table Share and Read-Around of a Line	
7:25-7:30	Reflection: What did you learn?	
7:30	Questions/Next Week	
7:30-7:45	Collect Materials/Debrief	

Somos Escritores/We are Writers
Workshop Overview

Date	Task/Activity
**June 7, 2016 6:00-7:30 p.m. MU 226 Graham	*Somos Escritores* Writing Workshop #1 (Pre-Workshop Survey) *Theme:* *Where I'm From/De Donde Soy Yo: Introducing Myself to the World*
June 14, 2016 6:00-7:30 p.m. MU 246 Coconino	*Somos Escritores* Writing Workshop #2 *Theme:* *Scar Stories*
June 21, 2016 6:00-7:30 p.m. MU 246 Coconino	*Somos Escritores* Writing Workshop #3 *Theme:* *The Masks We Wear*
June 28, 2016 6:00-7:30 p.m. MU 246 Coconino	*Somos Escritores* Writing Workshop #4 *Theme:* *Speaking my Truth: What It's Like Being a Teenager*
July 5, 2016 6:00-7:30 p.m. MU 246 Coconino	*Somos Escritores* Writing Workshop #5 *Theme:* *Somos Escritores/We are Writers: Why We Write & Share our Stories*
July 12, 2016 6:00-7:30 p.m. MU 246 Coconino	*Somos Escritores:* Author's Celebration *Theme:* *"A woman who writes has power, and a woman with power is feared" -Gloria Anzaldúa: Celebrating Powerful YOU!*

Background of Somos Escritores workshops

June 7, 2016-Writing Workshop #1
Theme: "Where I'm From/Yo Soy De: Introducing Myself to the World

Background: At this first writing workshop, mothers, fathers and daughters introduced themselves to one another through the drawing and writing of a personalized "Where I'm From" poem (Lyon, 1999; Christensen, 2001). The poem, originally written by George

Ella Lyon (1999), is a mentor text that provides a concrete model for thinking about all the places, people and moments from our life histories that make us who we are and their influence on our perception of ourselves.

Outline:
Opening Poem ("The Calling" By Luis Rodriguez)
Introductions
Draw a portrait of illustrating "Where I'm From/De Donde Soy Yo"
Write "Where I'm From/De Donde Soy Yo" Poems
Share
Reflection/Closing

June 14, 2016-Writing Workshop #2
Theme: Scar Stories

Background: At this workshop, mothers, fathers and daughters labeled, discussed and wrote about their scars, both physical and emotional, and how these scars impacted their lives and what they learned from the experience of the scar (Nelson, 2004). Participants were provided with outlines of a body and a heart to label their scars. Then, they selected two scars, one physical and one emotional, to write about and share with others. Finally, participants wrote about what they learned from the experience.

Outline:
Opening Poem
Digital Clips of Scar Stories and text based samples from various websites
Discussion of Scar Stories
Labeling of Scar Stories
Writing Scar Stories
Re-Writing our Scar Stories
Share
Closing

June 21, 2016-Writing Workshop #3
Theme: The Masks We Wear

Background:
At this workshop, mothers, fathers and daughters, reflected upon and wrote about how they perceive themselves (the inside) and others perceive them (the outside). They were provided with a two-sided paper with a mask on both sides. This symbolized their inner mask and their outer mask. On each side of the mask, they wrote words, that described how they perceived themselves and how others perceived them. They wrote about the contrasts and shared with the group.

Outline:
Opening Poem ("Masks" By Shel Silverstein)
Label Masks

Share Masks
Write about the contrasts of the inner mask and outer mask
Share
Reflection/Closing

June 28, 2016-Writing Workshop #4
Theme: Speaking My Truth: What It's Like Being a Teenager

Background: Mothers, fathers and daughters reflected and wrote about what it is/was like to be a teenager, then and now. Participants were provided with guiding questions to support writing about their experiences as a teenager, then and now. After, writing and sharing in small groups, participants discussed and reflected upon what they noticed about the teenage experiences, then and now.

Outline:
Opening Poem ("Teenagers" By Pat Mora)
Quickwrite
Share
Discussion
Reflection/Closing

July 5, 2016-Writing Workshop #5
Theme: Somos Escritores/We are Writers: Why We Write & Share our Stories

Background: In preparation for the final author celebration, participants wrote an author's biography and a statement about why they write.
Outline:
Opening Poem ("En Mis Sueños/In My Dreams" By Francisco X. Alarcón)
Bilingual Author Biographies Models
Writing Time
Share
Reflection/Closing

July 12, 2016
Theme: "A woman who writes has power, and a woman with power is feared" -Gloria Anzaldúa: Celebrating Powerful YOU!

Background: Each mother, father and daughter shared a polished piece of writing to share at a potluck style celebration. Certificates of participation were awarded.
Outline:
Opening ("Feather Circle)
Introductions of mothers, fathers and daughters
Author Reading
Eat
Awards
Closing-What Next?

APPENDIX C

DATA COLLECTION

Somos Escritores: We are Writers

Participant Interview Script and Questions (Daughter)

Script

Hi, my name is Tracey and I'm doctoral student in English Education at Arizona State University. Thank you for taking time out of your day to talk to me about your participation in Somos Escritores. I am interested in learning more about your hopes and dreams, what is important to you in your life, and about your relationship with your mom. Your voice is very important, as it gives valuable insight into your experience in Somos Escritores and what matters to you as a young girl.

This interview is confidential. All responses, opinions, and views that you share in this interview will remain private and will not be shared with your parents/daughter. You can choose not to answer any of the questions if you do not feel comfortable. If you want me to turn off the recorder at anytime, just let me know.

Background:

1.) Age
2.) Grade in the 2016
3.) School
4.) How do you identify?
5.) Where were you born?
6.) What languages do you speak?

Questions

1.) Tell me about yourself. What are your interests? What are your hobbies? Tell me about your family.
2.) Tell me a memorable story about your mom and/or dad.
3.) Why is this story memorable to you?
4.) Describe the role that your mother plays in your life? Your father?
5.) Describe your relationship with your mother. Your father.
6.) How do you think that your mom views you? Your father?
7.) How would your friends describe you?
8.) What would you like your mom to know about you? Your father?
9.) How do you think society views girls your age?
10.) What would you want society to know about girls your age?
11.) Tell me about your plans for your future.

Anything else that you would like to add? Do you have any questions for me?
Thank you!

Somos Escritores: We are Writers

Participant Interview Script and Questions (Parents)

Script

Hi, my name is Tracey and I'm doctoral student in English Education at Arizona State University. I want to thank you for taking time out of your day to talk to me about your participation in Somos Escritores. I am interested in learning more about your hopes and dreams, what is important to you in your life, and about your relationship with your mom. Your voice is very important, as it gives valuable insight into your experience in Somos Escritores and what matters to you as a young girl.

This interview is confidential. All responses, opinions, and views that you share in this interview will remain private and will not be shared with your parents/daughter. You can choose not to answer any of the questions if you do not feel comfortable. If you want me to turn off the recorder at anytime, just let me know.

Background:

1.) Age
2.) Where were born?
3.) How do you identify?
4.) What languages do you speak? Read? Write?
5.) Employment
6.) School

Questions

1.) Tell me about yourself. What are your interests? Hobbies? Tell me about your family.

2.) Tell me a memorable story your daughter. Why is this story memorable to you?

3.) Describe how you view your role as a mother/father.

5.) Describe your relationship with your daughter.

6.) How do you think that your daughter views you?

7.) What are your hopes for your daughter?

8.) What would you like your daughter to know about you?

9.) What advice do you have for your daughter?

10.) How was your experience in Somos Escritores? What would you like to see change?

Anything else that you would like to add? Do you have any questions for me?
Thank you!

Post Survey (Daughter)
Preferred Pseudonym: _____ Gender: _____

Race/Ethnicity: _____ Age: _____
Home Language (circle): English / Spanish / Other: _____
Can you read or write in another language?

_____
If yes, which? _____

Did you have any experiences writing prior to joining Somos Escritores/We are Writers? Explain.

_____
_____
_____

_____
_____

What are your interests or hobbies? How do you spend your free time?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What did you learn about your relationship with your parent?

_____
_____

_____

If Somos Escritores/We are Writers was offered at your school, would you join? Why or Why Not?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How have you changed through your involvement in Somos Escritores/We are Writers?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Post Survey (Parent)

Preferred Pseudonym/ Seudónimo preferido : _____ Gender/género: _____

Race/Ethnicity Raza /origen étnico _____

Age/Edad: _____ Occupation(s)/
Ocupación(s)_____

Home Language (circle): English / Spanish / Other: _____
Inicio Idioma (círculo): Inglés / Español / Otro: _____

Can you read or write in another language? ¿Se puede leer o escribir en otro idioma? _____
If yes, which? En caso afirmativo, ¿cuál?_____

Did you have any experiences writing prior to joining Somos Escritores/We are Writers? Explain.
¿Ha tenido alguna experiencia de escritura antes de unirse Somos Escritores? Explique.

_____
_____
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What do you wish for your daughter? ¿Qué desea para su hija?

_____
_____

_____
_____

What are your interests or hobbies? How do you spend your free time?
¿Cuáles son sus intereses o aficiones ? ¿Como gastas tu tiempo libre?

_____
_____
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_____
_____
_____

If Somos Escritores/We are Writers was offered at your daughter's school, would you join? Why or Why Not?

Si Somos Escritores se ofrece en la escuela de su hija, le unirse ? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How have you changed through your involvement in Somos Escritores/We are Writers?
¿Cómo ha cambiado a través de su participación en Somos Escritores?

_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX D

FINDINGS

Category	Definition	Examples	Literature
Defining Myself	Girls stating who they are and they are not in their own words	Reyna: Yeah cuz a lot of…if you're your Mexican and you're going to high school people are going to think of you as you're not going to graduate because you're going to get pregnant and drop out. That's how a lot people view girls my age. They're like, "Oh in four years you're going to be pregnant and probably just dropped out" so why why try, why bother." …And, that's how I think society views me as just um… just mmm somebody whose who's gonna get pregnant before they graduate. And, I don't, I don't, I don't think of myself like that. (interview, July 10, 2016).	Collins, P.H. (2009). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment.* New York, NY: Routledge Classis. Muhammad, G. (2012). Creating space for Black adolescent girls to "write it out!" *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 56*(3), 203-211.
Describing My Parents	The words, actions and personalities of parents	They responded in support by saying, "we We will get you there" (interview, July 26, 2016). "They are like...my number one fans…" (interview, July 26, 2016)	Delgado-Gaitan, C. (2001). *The power of community: Mobilizing for family and schooling.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Delgado-Gaitan, C. (2005). Family narratives in multiple literacies. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 36(3),* 265–272.

Excelling in School	The ways that girls are thriving in school by **receiving good grades** and participating in clubs and extracurricular activities	"I want to become a doctor [pediatrician] which is why I'm going to Technology High." Reyna hopes that at her new school, she will meet people, who may be interested in starting a band. She dreams of pursuing passion by creating her own music, that inspires others, like Twenty One Pilots' music, to "bring power…and change to the world"	Delgado Bernal, D., Elenes, C. A., Godinez, F.E, & Villenas, S. (2006). (Eds.) Chicana/Latina education in everyday life: Feminista perspective on pedagogy and epistemology. Albany, NY: University of New York Press.
Future Goals (Envisioning Future Selves)	Girls imagining their future selves	Con mi hija... Yo con mi hija estoy súper emocionado porque nos ha resultado muy... muy buena para sus estudios. Es muy aplicada desde que empezó el kínder hasta la fecha. Siempre ha sacado unas buenas calificaciones, siempre ha sobresalido, y también a ella le gusta mucho participar en actividades de la escuela... ([With my daughter ... I with my daughter I am super excited because we have been very ... very good for their studies. It has been very applied since kindergarten to date. She has always had good grades, always excelled, and she also enjoys participating in school activities ...) ...] (interview, August 14, 2016).	Delgado Bernal, D., Elenes, C. A., Godinez, F.E, & Villenas, S. (2006). (Eds.) *Chicana/Latina education in everyday life: Feminista perspective on pedagogy and epistemology*. Albany, NY: University of New York Pres. Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* Bakhtin, M.M. (1986). *Speech genres and other late essays* (V.W. McGee, Trans.). C. Emerson & M. Holquist (Eds.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

			Ball, A. F., & Freedman, S. W. (2004). *Bakhtinian perspectives on language, literacy, and learning*. Cambridge University Press.
Interests Outside of School	The activities that girls engage in that take place out of school hours	YL, Fan-fiction, Music, Working out	Hull, G. A., & Schultz, K. (Eds.). (2002). School's out: Bridging out-of-school literacies with classroom practice (Vol. 60). Teachers College Press.
Socially Conscious Girls	An awareness from residing in "nepantla"	"Animals...the world like racism, all that stuff. But, it just gets me mad like how things are actually happening like this and …how people argue of like simple things like how they say, "Pray for Paris…." Which is…that's not gonna do anything for anything like…that's just bringing awareness, but actually doing stuff. Just saying that is not gonna make a change. You know? And, how people argue how uhhh cuz of the gorilla thing. How they say, "Killing the gorilla was the right thing." When those gorillas are going extinct and humans are not. (interview, July 17, 2016)	Anzaldúa, G. (1999). Borderlands/:a frontera: The new mestiza (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute. Anzaldúa, G. (2002). Preface:(Un) natural bridges,(Un) safe spaces.". *This bridge we call home*, 1-5. Anzalduá, G. (2009). *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*. A. Keating (Ed.). Duke University Press.

Learning About My Parents	What girls know/learned about their parents	Reyna and Blanca also opted out of their neighborhood school. They attend a K-12 public charter school, University Preparatory Academy (UPA), that is located in the downtown and is connected to the local university. In individual interviews, they explained that they had learned about UPA through their involvement with the university-sponsored program for mothers and daughters.	Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *8*(*1*), 69–91.
Making Choices for My Success	Personal choices girls are making to stay on the "right path."		Collins, P.H. (2009). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment.* New York, NY: Routledge Classis.
Revolutionary Parenting	Parenting with revolutionary love and hope	Alma: Una estadística más era, ¿no? Y es triste darte cuenta de eso. Y muchas veces por miedos no quieres... porque te han dicho que siempre te tienes que quedar con tu esposo o que debes de aguantar muchas cosas. Pero un dije: "No..." Un día decidí salir con mis hijas yo sola; otra vez dejar todo y volver a empezar. Y no fue fácil pero lo he hecho, y no sigue siendo fácil pero la vida es así. [One more statistic number I was ¿was I? And is sad to realize about that. And so many time because of the fear you don't want to… because they have told you must stay with your husband and should bear many things. But I said to myself: "No…" One day I	hooks, b. (2015). *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. (4th ed.) New York, NY: Routledge. Villenas, S. A. (2006). Pedagogical moments in the borderland: Latina mothers teaching and learning. In D. Delgado Bernal, C. A. Elenes, F. E. Godinez, & S. Villenas (Eds.), *Chicana/Latina education in*

		decided to go out with my daughters, only by myself; leaving everything behind and starting all over again. It wasn't easy but I had made it, and still it isn't easy but life is like that.] Tracey: Sí. [Yes.] Alma: Yo estoy muy contenta porque yo veo a... Lo que mi inspira son mis hijas a salir adelante; las dos. [I am very happy because I see… what inspires me to keep going are my daughters, both of them.] (interview, July 17, 2016	*everyday life: Feminista perspectives on pedagogy and epistemology* (pp. 147-159). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.