Chapter 1
Introduction

Elizabeth P. Quintero, Larisa Callaway-Cole, and Adria Taha-Resnick

Abstract It is urgent to listen to and collaborate with people in our communities and schools who have experienced migration, exclusion, and desperation about their families' safety. In this book, our intention through the study of leadership in early childhood teacher education is to stress the importance of stories as both authentically participant-documented information and activist research methodology. We unapologetically, through this qualitative work, focus on leadership issues in early childhood while stressing the connections to other areas of work in higher education leadership. And we promote this collaboration with co-researchers who are wise with personal and communal experience in migration issues around the globe. In our unconventional way, we show that leadership in higher education is our goal, and the connections to this will become more explicit as we proceed both theoretically and conceptually. We engage with many different groups of learners, across time and places. The stories live like roots, woven together, deep underground. Our stories, too, are like this. We each come from different places, experiences, and backgrounds, yet our stories and paths have crossed, weaving us together as collaborators, and more often than not, as co-conspirators.

Now, more than ever, it is urgent to listen to and collaborate with people in our communities and schools who have experienced migration, exclusion, and desperation about keeping their families safe. Leadership from these co-researchers is currently in our communities and the relationships develop naturally and can flourish through leadership in early childhood education, family education, and all of us in the villages of our difficult times.

1.1 2020 Context: A Global Pandemic and a Global Outcry Against Injustice

Public health, social justice, education, and access to all of this are in crisis. What will we do? Regarding educational access for new students from migrating families in southern California in 2020, the coordinator of a tutoring program for refugee

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and immigrant children in public schools communicates her frustration about how the COVID-19 pandemic and school closings are detrimentally affecting our most vulnerable students. She says, "THE GAPS KEEP GROWING!" She's really talking about all the gaps—the achievement gap, the gap in the implementation of remote online teaching, the accessibility to equal education gap, the poverty gap, the health-care gap, and the serenity gap. She documents some of the children's comments as she visits families and tries to support them.

> The Internet isn't working, and my screen keeps freezing. I don't know my username or password. What time are my teacher's meetings? I have to wake up by 8:30am? What do you mean, 'school started?' My computer doesn't have any sound. The whole screen is in another language! I don't understand the assignments. My computer won't charge (M. Smith,[1] personal communication, 2020).

She explains to us that after beginning the tutoring program 11 years ago as a response to the educational challenges for refugee students, distance learning emphasized the challenges even more. She explained that many of the students are lost and their parents struggle to support learning online. The tutoring team members are working overtime to help solve each problem that arises. She says, "We won't give up" (M. Smith, personal communication, 2020).

And these challenges with online schooling are, of course, affecting our teacher education students studying to become early childhood and general education leaders. Many of our adult students (to be described in their own words throughout this book) are not privileged to have living situations where they can "work from home" to complete their university work. There are issues of connectivity, and by the way, how does one study from home or work from home when there is no home?

This urgent time in our history is about justice, and with the acknowledgment that many migrating families and refugees in our country languish in detention centers awaiting action on their asylum requests, many families in recent years have received permission to live in our cities and towns. They do their best to try to support their families and to integrate into our society. Yet they have mountains of obstacles to overcome—especially in a time of pandemic and social, racial unrest.

"Barad (2007), a feminist theorist, is known particularly for her theory of agential realism. In agential realism, realism is not about something substantialized and fixed or demarcated. Realism instead emphasizes that intra-active agentiality has real effects—effects that become ingredients in new and always also open-ended intra-active agencies" (Nielsen, 2020, para. 4).

Barad's conceptualization points directly to our complicated times in which we do need to breathe life into justice anew.

[1] Names changed to protect privacy.

She says:

> Justice, which entails acknowledgment, recognition, and loving attention, is not a state that can be achieved once and for all. There are no solutions; there is only the ongoing practice of being open and alive to each meeting, each intra-action, so that we might use our ability to respond, our responsibility, to help awaken, to breathe life into ever new possibilities for living justly. The world and its possibilities for becoming are remade in each meeting (Barad, 2007, xi).

A small, local volunteer tutoring group in southern California is doing its best to respond to one community's urgent needs with the aim to live justly. The coordinator writes:

> Despite these challenges, we are beginning to see small victories. Older siblings are stepping up by tutoring and setting up Zoom meetings for their younger siblings.
>
> We have a fourth-grade student who is teaching his peers how to access the programs and apps they need. One of our most timid students is speaking up and asking questions at his teacher's Zoom meetings. Several students are asking for more homework packets from us. One student who has been here for less than two years has begun turning in her online assignments! These moments are what keep us going (M. Smith, personal communication, 2020).

The governor of California works to advocate justice for immigrant families and students. On June 3, he issued a proclamation declaring June 2020 as "Immigrant Heritage Month" in the State of California. The proclamation addresses the intersection of our raging needs for justice on multiple levels. The text includes:

- The ties that bind immigrant families to California are part of the fabric of our state. During Immigrant Heritage Month, we honor and celebrate the many and varied contributions of immigrants who came to this country to work hard and give a better life to their children.
- Many immigrants who call California home are working on the front lines of our fight against COVID-19—providing lifesaving care in our hospitals, teaching through distance learning, serving our most vulnerable loved ones in skilled nursing facilities, maintaining the food supply chain, and more. Tens of thousands of these essential workers are DACA recipients who are serving crucial roles throughout our communities during this unprecedented crisis. We recognize the essential contributions they make to protect our health and safety and keep life moving forward…

The governor reminds us that:

> Immigrant Heritage Month is a time to remember that nearly all of us can trace our heritage to another nation. Half of all children in California have at least one immigrant parent. We must never forget that we are here because our ancestors boldly chose to believe in the promise of this place. California will always stand up for our newest Americans and support those who are beginning their next chapter in America. During Immigrant Heritage Month and every month, let us continue to recognize and celebrate the immigrants of the past, present and future, as we live out the meaning of "e pluribus unum" – out of many, one (Newsom, 2020).

In this book, our intention through the study of leadership in early childhood teacher education is to stress the importance of stories as both authentically participant-documented information and activist research methodology. We unapologetically, through this qualitative work, focus on leadership issues in early childhood while stressing the connections to other areas of work in higher education leadership. And we promote this collaboration with co-researchers who are wise with personal and communal experience in migration issues around the globe. In our unconventional way, we show that leadership in higher education is our goal, and the connections to this will become more explicit as we proceed both theoretically and conceptually.

Through our experiences and our study with myriads of co-researchers, we have used story in order to change perspectives on the value and assets that migrant and refugee families bring to higher education and education in general. And thus, we show that this necessitates changes in our approaches to inclusivity, learning, and leadership across other fields of study as well. Refugee and migrant student experiences are critical to our perspectives overall as we work to address multiple social issues, educate students, and prepare professionals toward innovative justice approaches. We believe that our approach counters the status quo and pervasive deficit perspectives and reliance on a dominant culture worldview. In other words, this is a book about higher education, early childhood education, migrant narratives, place-based learning, and leadership in ECE. Furthermore, we see and offer stories not only as our research methodology but also as pedagogy for early childhood education and to all educators studying in higher education.

It seems that our current times have highlighted the entanglements of crises and oppression throughout the world, historically and currently. How on earth can we deal with it all? How can we not? We, authors, have related stories through our love and respect for people we've shared experiences with over time and we have entangled stories with each other as we strive to do our work. As in art and literature, stories encompass entanglement overtly and covertly. We submit that stories may be the most effective way to move forward to action.

For example, in our collaborative research, stories of fact and imagination have been shared. Telling stories and giving and receiving stories have been forms of intergenerational engagement and examples of generative collaboration. This has catapulted us to a new trajectory in our research. These webs of influence have led us to consider the necessary synergy of place and pedagogy that must be considered in the day-to-day engagements and experiences in the lives of children and adults in their worlds of living and learning. The day-to-day stories of children and their teachers show that a framework of story—personal stories, imaginary stories, historical stories, and other types of story—has promise as a way for adults and children to collaborate on teaching, learning, and research.

Furthermore, we give voice to storying because it is not only documentation and pedagogic practice, but storying gives voice to the strengths of migrant and refugee families, who in spite of their struggles in impossible circumstances are willing to share their knowledge and wisdom through participation with us in the education of their families. They are crucial to building a better and more equitable new-normal.

We hope the readers will become inspired to broaden their ideas and circles of leadership.

We are so very interconnected as this horrible pandemic continues to remind us. All through the months of April, May, and June of 2020, many national and state leaders gave us vital statistical information about how to maintain safety and protect our families, our communities, and ourselves. One of the specifics of the safety guidance has been the importance of mask-wearing. The leaders appealed to all of us to "wear the mask" to protect each other. They explained over and over again that wearing a mask protects people we meet from any germs we might have, and that others of us wearing our masks protects him from our invisible germs. "It's about respect," Governor Cuomo said (CNBC Television, 2020). This appeal and documentation of proven research about virus spread are reminiscent of Scottish educator and pioneer of children's rights, AS Neill. He always explained to children, families, and educators during decades of activism that freedom is not license (Neill, 1966). The complexity of the simple statement was communicated to young children in many free schools all over the world as… you may do whatever you choose to do as long you're not hurting or bothering anyone else.

At Neill's Summerhill School students convened in regular meetings to discuss and process possible solutions for infractions to the school rules. Over the years at a free school where I worked, I heard wise and heartfelt suggestions about what to do when a peer "is being mean." These education-in-process actions often are led by children. And, I thought of it once again recently when Mayor Brown of Compton, California discussed her constituents, which consist of over 90% people of color and essential workers, and said to her interviewer and the broader television audience, "Our affluence doesn't give us the privilege to put other people's health at risk" (MSNBC, 2020).

1.2 Dear Reader: Your Invitation to Participate

We value your stories and experience. Please think about and discuss these questions wherever you can:

- What work are you doing that makes a difference working toward a more just education system and just society, right now? (especially relating to our sisters and brothers who've come to a new home)
- What work and wisdom do people we are working with bring to the task?
- What do you see, hear, and witness that shows the importance of this work?
- Are we confident in our allies and fearless about our obstacles?
- Who are our allies?
- Is it an advantage that migrating people bring with them their home languages, their personal and family histories, and their formal education and lived experiences?
- What are our obstacles? Policy, politics, poverty, fear, or exhaustion?

Our research shows:

- Story presents new knowledge and challenges potential in complex, interrelated ways. Stories connect history, the known and the unknown, to current times
- Stories have the potential for shaping policy
- "Behind every statistic there is a story" (Quintero & Rummel, 2014)

Questions we have asked research collaborators:

- What do we learn from the people involved in this story? What makes them change and grow? (characters)
- What is the relationship of the real-world setting to the people acting in it? How does place affect what happens? (context)
- What are the opportunities and conflicts generated in these site-based stories? How are they analyzed? Are they resolved? (drama)
- In what ways are endings new beginnings (findings)?

One of our mentors, Katherine Nelson (2009) encouraged collaboration. She proved through extensive research that:

> Personal memory begins to expand from the episodic past to the unknown future…narratives lay out many of the secrets of social life, including motivations, successes, failures, deception, and generosity. Imagination is aroused by these different life stories" (p. 248).

1.3 Conceptual and Experiential Reasons that Story Makes Space for Our Voices

We continually search for ever-inclusive theoretical frameworks and the potential for new possibilities for leadership in higher education programs and research that includes participants' past knowledge and current lived experiences (Parnell & Quintero, 2019; Todd, 2016). The late poet Alarcón lauds the experiences of multinational, multilingual learners through his poetry.

> "I carry my roots with me all the time/Rolled up I use them as my pillow/
> mis raíces las cargo siempre conmigo enrolladas me sirven del almohada"
> from: Carrying our Roots/llevar a nuestras raíces (2005, p. 3)

He was born in Los Angeles, California, and considered himself "bi-national" because throughout his entire life he spent time in both Mexico and the United States with extended family, friends, and colleagues. The songs and stories he heard from his grandmother, as well as experiences he had growing up, inspired his poetry. He highlighted this bi-national life in his poem, "Carrying our Roots/llevar a nuestras raíces,"

This approach to learning, life, loved ones, and strife is reflected in the collaborators' contributions to the research included in this book. The qualitative examples are information about and analysis of stories of early childhood faculty members,

community activists, and children and the early childhood teacher education students working with them. The data from the stories problematize the neocolonial roots of our conceptions of children and families and the resulting learning experiences for them (Hérnandez-Ávila & Anzaldúa, 2010; Latour, 2004; Nelson, 2009; Quintero & Rummel, 2014; Sacramento, 2015). Conceptions of children and families particularly influence the institutional systems, the pedagogies, the assessments, and daily life realities, thus affecting learners who are immigrants and those who are currently migrating through uncertain global landscapes. As stated in *Refugees' Roles in Resolving Displacement and Building Peace,* family stories at every turn expose "tensions between agency and constraint, compulsion and cruel choices" (Bradley et al., 2019). It is always clear to us that personal, family, and community histories are inextricably tied to theoretical foundations and are interdependent upon contexts.

1.4 Contexts: World Migration and Our Participants

1.4.1 Carrying Our Roots

Contexts are crucial to explaining our ongoing work with our co-researchers locally and internationally. We represent varied family histories, past and present, and through situations of place we three authors and co-researchers came together with our multiple histories, experiences, and languages. Our participants are early childhood studies faculty, student teachers in an early childhood teacher education program at a state university, community activists, and the children we work with in southern California and around the world. Many co-researchers in California are bi-national (Quintero, 2017), and their histories and current lived experiences are reflective in many ways of communities around the world where intergenerational participants of two or more cultures and language groups with different economic and political histories find themselves living and learning together. Many of the collaborators in the work described here are living and studying in the Global North and yet, they bring with them generations of family history, knowledge, linguistic perspectives, and lived experiences from the Global South. Black and Chicana, feminist scholars, have argued that we must highlight, learn from, and support the strengths of children and communities of color. Pérez and Saavedra (2017) show us that by foregrounding Global South perspectives we not only fight the deficit perspectives surrounding the education of all children but we also learn from the lived realities of learners.

Furthermore, the contexts of these past few years have brought to the surface inequities, pressure points for all manner of living our lives. Parnell asks, "How can we learn from George Floyd's murder and the many precious, often unarmed, Black lives that have been senselessly lost to police violence recently in re-accumulation?" (Parnell et al., 2021, p. 3). Living in civil unrest during a strange COVID-19 pandemic, Brown and Black children and adults and their bodies continue to be in perilous times.

We all experienced new challenges and distresses during lockdowns. Immigrants experience the compounded effects of the pandemic, xenophobia, and hyper-policing of the Trump era.

> We join many voices asking, "How do we create trust, respectfully listen with co-researchers, and collaborate on risk-taking to chart new paths of agency and activism in difficult times?" We look to Robyn D'Angelo and Brittany Cooper (2018) who put Black Feminist super potency in the foreground of our continually (albeit slowly) emerging understanding of ways to ethically move forward (Parnell et al., 2021 p. 3).

This book documents three early childhood faculty in varying stages of career contexts who carry our roots with us always as we strive for justice and authenticity in early childhood teacher education, working with families and children in our multifaceted leadership work. We join groups of teacher education students in early childhood studies, who are student teaching with children (aged 3–8) in county preschools and primary schools (pre-kindergarten to third grade) and are in graduate and undergraduate university programs. Many of the adult student teachers participating in this research were first-generation college students with a large percentage of them from families and communities of migrant farmworkers (Quintero, 2017). These participants have truly lived bi-culturally with many loved ones located in Mexico and Central America. Also, many of the children in the early care and education programs in our county in California are from Mexico and Central America, and many are from Indigenous communities throughout Latin America. Some children come to school speaking the home language of their Indigenous community, and they are learning Spanish as a second language in the California community, and then they are required to learn English as a third language when they come to school. These collaborators truly carry their roots with them at all times. We have learned collectively through collaborators' storying and interpretations of their stories. This book, and the chapters within, engage with many different groups of learners, across time and places. We, three co-authors, acknowledge the commonalities and relationships among our stories and actions. These stories are entangled in ways discovered and undiscovered. The stories live like roots, woven together, and deep underground. Our stories, too, are like this. We each come from different places, experiences, and backgrounds, yet our stories and paths have crossed, weaving us together as collaborators, and more often than not, as co-conspirators.

In this book, we have something to say about rethinking higher education, especially as it relates to early childhood teacher education in multilingual contexts from a tapestry of experiences. And we believe that our leadership works with our expert co-researchers in California, and in other contexts make a strong case for using this approach across disciplines. We co-authors will introduce ourselves and the specific threads and patterns in our tapestries of experiences and leadership trajectories in later chapters.

Those of us working with our "roots rolled up" as a pillow each night (Alarcón, 2005) consider "reconceptualizing work with renewed understandings of place as grounded and relational, and as providing roots for politics that are deeply specific to place, and yet deeply connected to other places" (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 29).

Tuck and McKenzie (2015) urge a discussion about settler colonialism, "Thus, when we theorize settler colonialism, we must attend to it as both an ongoing and incomplete project, with internal contradictions, cracks, and fissures through which Indigenous life and knowledge have persisted and thrived despite settlement (p. 61)". Southern California and many places in the United States and around the world illustrate vast layers of both exploitation colonialism and settler colonialism with many complicated historical (documented and not documented) antecedents (Hinkinson, 2012). Molloy Murphy (2021) adds to the work of worlding pedagogies (Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2015) and connects to our work in early childhood. She illustrates, with her co-researchers, how children's common world relations can encourage concern and meaning in children's daily lives. In fact, Molloy Murphy documents a 5-year-old co-researcher, who after a sensitive and calm discussion between the teacher and the children about demonstrations against racism in their city bluntly stated his concrete knowledge that he had learned through being observant living his life. He said, "A police officer stepped on a man's neck with his knee. He couldn't breathe and he died" (Parnell et al., 2021, p. 6).

Speaking of cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural, and cross-national contexts, there are foundational supports for enlisting as many co-researchers as possible to share stories and knowledge. Zoe Todd (2016) maintains that:

> …the decolonisation of thought cannot happen until the proponents of the discipline themselves are willing to engage in the decolonial project in a substantive and structural and physical way, and willing to acknowledge that the colonial is an extant, ongoing reality (p. 17).

She explains that she is criticizing the silences. She reminds us that most importantly we should ask, who is doing the describing? Thus, the context and inclusion of participant voices dictate the confluence of our theoretical perspectives.

1.4.2 Theoretical Perspectives

The grounding of our research has been reconceptualizations of postmodern and narrative theoretical influences as an inclusive framework umbrella (Barad, 2014; Dahlberg et al., 2013; Freire, 1985; Gruenewald, 2003; Parnell, 2012; Parnell & Iorio, 2016; Quintero, 2015; Steinberg, 2011; Todd, 2016). A focus has been on the use of stories among faculty, community activists, children and adult student teachers, individually and collaboratively. As the stories have been shared and new stories created, they have generated theoretical questions about the confluence of frameworks of study and work regarding the collaborations of children and adults. Our ongoing analysis reveals findings that support past research about the importance of story and has given new insights to the deep level at which stories address children's strengths and needs (Quintero, 2015) and the importance of family history, past and present, and the generative power of community.

The qualitative participation and data collection methods of the ongoing research have included participant observation in classrooms and community contexts, field notes, transcriptions of informal interviews with children and families, student–teacher research journals, and artifacts of learners' work samples during their interactions, their play, curriculum negotiations, and collaboration on self-reflection about learning and action. Through narrative inquiry, the data have been analyzed by categories of information that emerge, particularly as they related to the influences of the story in various forms on learning, meaning-making, and leadership with the foci guided by critical theory (Freire, 1985) and other postmodern reconceptualizations and postfoundationalism (Dahlberg et al., 2013) leading to matters of fact (Latour, 2004), matters of concern (Latour, 2004), and most recently to the work of Todd (2016) as she illustrates, highlights, and brings front and center the research demands of today, thus reminding us of the eons of wisdom passed to us from Indigenous scholars. She points out that we unconsciously avoid engaging with contemporary Indigenous scholars and thinkers while we engage instead with decades-old ethnographic texts or 200-year-old philosophical tomes.

In terms of connecting the ongoing research to the ongoing pedagogy, through our focus on storying—the personal and the collective—the faculty, community activists, the children, and their student teachers have led the research, documenting through an integrated curriculum, and the experiences of young children in the context of their communities. There is historical richness through various layers of the personal and collective stories that have emerged. Collaborators have engaged in family-focused activities for school and home using folk tales, historical legends, Indigenous languages from their communities, and art projects throughout the communities in dynamic and ever-evolving situations.

The thinking about research contexts within the Global South and Global North border crossing, and our lived experiences, led us to revisit Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), one of our long-standing muses for our work,

> To survive the Borderlands
> you must live sin fronteras
> be a crossroads (p. 195)

This idea of living without borders and being a crossroad brought us to Taylor and Giugni (2012) who have rethought fundamental assumptions about early childhood work and guided us to consider Common Worlds. They highlight,

> As adults and children, we live in a world that is increasingly characterized by mobility and displacement, coexistence with difference…. More than ever before, the question of living together has become a most pressing and confronting political and ethical question (p. 109).

This study led us to Latour (2004) who urges "…rather than foreclosing upon what might constitute the commonalities of the 'common world', an understanding of common worlds as worlds in the process of 'progressive composition'" (p. 222). In other words, this research illustrates a focus on relations as generative encounters with others and shared events that have mutually transformative effects.

We, as participants, the faculty, the community activists, and the adult student teachers and children and families we work with, in the United States and globally, *do not want* our learning or education to be detached from ourselves. To reiterate, many collaborating student teachers in California are first-generation college students from families of migrant farmworkers. Many children in the county are from families of farmworkers with 44% of households reporting language use in the home as "other than English" (Ventura County Office of Education, 2015). In addition, given the life experiences of carrying our roots, participating teacher education students, and the refugee crisis that has unfolded worldwide over the past few years, it is not surprising that in our ongoing research and study we constantly make connections with the families and children in dangerous migration situations. As we approach our work daily in programs that serve children and families, we feel concerned for the children and families in refugee camps (and worse situations). We ask the question, "What happens tomorrow?" [the day after relocation] as do many policy advocates around the world (Migration Policy Institute, 2015). The question, of course, is often asked as we work with migrant students in California, and thus, the discussion and inspiration for action worldwide circles back in synergistic ways.

1.4.3 Evolving Findings

Throughout the analysis of findings in all categories, there have been vivid illustrations of family history, critical perspectives of place, and Conocimiento theory (Anzaldúa, 2002), culture, language, and disruption of child development theory (Nelson, 2009) that we had been concurrently studying in university coursework. Nelson's (2009) research originated in the Global North; however, it provides alternatives to the traditional developmental theory that focuses on presumed innate abilities and the assumptions of child and adult forms of cognition and static stages of development. Her framework offers an account of social, cognitive, and linguistic development in the first five years of life. She argued that children be seen as members of a community of minds, striving not only to make sense but also to share meanings with others. Nelson (2009), who described herself as a contextual functionalist, researched meaning-making and memory in children. She stressed that children are "… components of an integrated system…" (p. 186) and she maintained, "…stories bear directly on the problems of different minds, different selves, and different times that are central to the child's emerging understanding of the world…" (p. 172). At the same time, this individual meaning-making is integrated into the contextual world of people, places, and events in the child's life. The theory supports our participants, and many families around the world, in transition from the Global South who proudly carry their roots to a variety of contexts in the Global North. The contextual worlds of people, places, and events are sometimes a complicated mix of struggle, fear, and pain along with being close with loved ones, new friends, and sometimes places to play.

This social understanding between the self and others identified by Nelson suggests a third space for education and human interactions and connects directly to the theoretical stance of Gloria Anzaldúa. Anzaldúa's Conocimiento Theory is described as "…an overarching theory of consciousness…all dimensions of life, both inner—mental, emotional, instinctive, imaginal, spiritual, bodily realms—and outer—social, political, lived experiences…" (Hérnandez-Ávila & Anzaldúa, 2010, p. 177). Both Nelson's (2009) approach and Anzaldúa's theory of Conocimiento relate to personal history, meaning-making within the contexts of self, family history, and lived experience. The ongoing storying and re-storying in our findings illustrate this.

For example, through the dynamic cycles of student teachers and children interacting and sharing stories about interests, friends, and passions, it became clear that both the young children and the student teachers were dedicated to creating, documenting, and playfully collaborating on stories throughout this research. In the study, stories of fact and imagination have been shared. Telling stories and giving and receiving stories have been forms of intergenerational engagement and examples of generative collaboration. This has catapulted us to a new trajectory in our research. These webs of influence have led us to consider matters of concern (Latour, 2004) and to the necessary synergy of place and pedagogy that must be considered in the day-to-day engagements and experiences in the lives of children and adults in their worlds of living and learning.

1.5 Building on Leadership Through Intergenerational Stories and Deeper Analysis

Our findings generated a new theoretical journey that has pointed to the depth, breadth, and frequency of the story as a complex framework for many aspects of leadership, curriculum, meaning-making, and learning. The day-to-day stories of children and their student teachers have shown that a framework of story—personal stories, imaginary stories, historical stories, and other types of story—has promise as a way for adults and children to collaborate on teaching, learning, and on research. Through this framework of intergenerational story, we found participants who are living in the Global North were, of course, influenced by located study, forms of knowledge, policy, and politics, which are heavily influenced by Eurocentric modernity (Grosfoguel, 2008). Yet, we have seen vivid examples of influence coming from the Global South through family histories, multiple sources of knowledge (Freire, 1985), and examples of transformative actions that were reflected in the work of Latina/o artists whose work we had studied for years (Anzaldúa, 2002; Hérnandez-Ávila & Anzaldúa, 2010; Romo, 2005). This knowledge continually appears in our complex findings in the teacher education students' and children's stories. Therefore, we have generated new research questions that have laid the groundwork for the ongoing qualitative study that led to more disruptions and reinterpretations.

The idea of "carrying our roots" from one world to another creates a third space where the "roots" become a metaphorical "pillow" to support us throughout our lives. Some examples are highlighted through the following excerpts of findings that are categorized according to themes that arose again and again.

This text will explore the following evolving research questions:

> In what ways do learners—across generations—create, build upon, and reinvent each other's stories to make new meanings through consideration of family history, multigenerational knowledge, and experiences?
>
> In what ways do learners' stories offer new possibilities through leadership that connects Global South knowledge with Global North contexts?
>
> In what ways is it possible to use this framework and methodology in higher education to promote systemic consistency in promoting social justice that is generatively inclusive?

A web of relationships, family histories, and stories—both factual and pretend—compile the evidence supporting effective ways to educate teachers and the children we work with. Children are the consummate explorers, questioners, and listeners. They weave their webs of connection to others in their families, communities, and worlds. They don't live or grow in a bubble and they don't sit in school and study to be adults…they are experts at being in the moment. For children, living, story, and learning co-exist. All children, from all backgrounds and histories, learn through their stories while engaging in play and other daily activities. They experience development in multiple domains and engage in multidimensional learning when given the opportunity and encouragement. And I learned years ago that family strengths, and the stories that contextualized these strengths, could be used to generate authentic research and to build curricula that are relevant in many ways for all generations of learners. And currently, mid-COVID-19 pandemic and global demonstrations for racial justice, it is hopeful to revisit the small local, tutoring program in southern California that documents tangible acts of respect and care that keep us from despair.

The director, during mid-pandemic, sends the volunteer team a heartfelt message:

> We appreciate your time and energy in helping our students progress. We know that little by little, *they will succeed*. Half of the battle is believing in themselves. This is where you come in. You build our kids' self-esteem. You cheer them on. *They sense that you believe in them.* And that is what matters. Then, they will start believing in themselves (M. Smith, personal communication, 2020).

This sentiment and documentation mirrors Barad's (2014) work on diffractive practice. Children recognize they are valued when others pay attention to their experiences. This is dramatic for children migrating with family. Diffractive practice (visual documentation) provides engagement.

Our research through story has documented a wide range of examples. In 1995, Hmong families in bilingual family literacy classes created books, in Hmong and English, with stories of family histories. They created audio tapes of the stories in Hmong and English. And more recently in 2020, in California, a 4-year-old from Africa draws and explains, "The squiggles show the plants growing; this is the desert, and these are the mountains. My mom misses the mountains."

Alarcón (1999), who wrote bilingual poetry for children, called books "oversized passports" that enable us and encourage us to dream (1999, p. 14). And in Faith Ringgold's *Tar Beach* (1996) and *Aunt Harriet's Railroad* (1995), the character, Cassie, uses her imagination and her stories which nourish her to overcome oppression and limitations. Children, through their play, especially when immersed in an environment of literature and art, can provide us with voices and perspectives of possibility.

1.6 Leading and Learning through Story where Histories, Cultures, and Languages Meet

By attending to both the sense of engaged participation and the sense of opposition, intellectuals can explore the possibilities for action. Said (2000) reminds us of the assumption that even though one can't do or know everything, it must always be possible to discern the elements of a struggle or problem dialectically, and that others have a similar stake in a common project. He reminded us that at least since Nietzsche, the writing of history and the accumulations of memory have been regarded in many ways as one of the essential foundations of power. Many of the students today in schools around our country have exquisitely complex stories of going and coming. They have gone from a home country for a myriad of reasons, and they have come to their new country with a multitude of experiences.

In addition, what is sometimes missed by scholars is that those who adopt Freire's theories must be aware that it is not made up of techniques to save the world. Instead, he felt that "…the progressive educator must always be moving out on his or her own, continually reinventing me and reinventing what it means to be democratic in his or her own specific cultural and historical context" (Freire, 1997, p. 308). We, with co-researchers and teacher education students, address what such understandings might mean for creating environments for learning and for developing practice both inside and outside school.

The families, children, and teachers who share their wisdom in this book wear the mantle of expert. We have used the ideas of trusted educators in various related fields to guide the work and set a frame for the expression of the findings in each chapter. Through the human layers of story that result in complex intellectual issues are addressed. The data from this qualitative research have been categorized into themes which fall into categories addressed by the questions below in chapters that follow as we work to support each other in world migrations and our global migration from what was our world reality—flawed as it was—to a herculean task of "building a better, more inclusive world" after the current pandemic, the current economic crises, and yes, current racial and social injustices that are intertwined everywhere like a knotted, tenacious throughline of pain.

- How do we as citizens of the world support the people and their children during and after migration to critically address their needs? How can we learn about

ways that "Place" tells stories of local and regional politics that are sensitive to the particularities of where people actually live?

- How, as scholars, can we observe and participate in cultures different from our own? How can we observe the layers of power relations, culture, access, and possibility while maintaining respect in all situations? How do we promote activism and avoid voyeurism?
- How do studies of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality (that are of concern to contemporary critical scholarship) become situated within geopolitical arrangements and relations of nations and their inter/national histories?
- How do acculturation and language acquisition become impacted by the process of aligning new societal expectations and requirements with previous cultural norms, individual perceptions, and experiences preeminent in immigrants' lives?
- How can we focus on the importance of people telling their own stories (reading the world) in a place where people may be both affirmed and challenged to see how individual stories are connected in communities to larger patterns of domination and resistance in a multicultural, global society?
- How can we place these complicated findings into practical and hopeful programs?
- (Quintero, 2009)

I have maintained for decades that we educators rethink ways to utilize and build upon families' varied histories as a way for schools to include families and their strengths in the educational process. I say this not from a negative perspective but a positive one. This could be done in many ways. For example, did you know that children from Somalia have vast amounts of knowledge about and interest in camels? Decades ago, in Minnesota, I met a Head Start teacher who learned this by accident and proceeded, with the help of children and their parents, to develop a six weeks unit based on learning about camels. I think of her and the camel activities in her class often, and this very day in 2020 in a zoom interview, Minnesota Congresswoman, Ilhan Omar gave wise and focused thoughts on a particular issue, but my eyes couldn't leave the tapestry pillow decorating the chair in her room—it was a gorgeous camel!

Did you know that in these times a Hmong woman who does not read or write in English can recite, through traditional storytelling of folktales and legends, 2000 years of the history of her ancestors? She and her women classmates in a bilingual family literacy project made audio and picture books for their children and grandchildren to document their history. These stories, all our stories, stand on the strong and caring elders in our histories and hopefully will guide us through difficult times.

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