

Moving Toward An Empowering Setting in a First Grade Classroom Serving Primarily Working Class and Working Poor Latina/o Children: An Exploratory Analysis

Janelle M. Silva¹ · Regina Day Langhout²

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Abstract Empowering settings are important places for people to develop leadership skills in order to enact social change. Yet, due to socio-cultural constructions of childhood in the US, especially constructions around working class and working poor children of Color, they are often not seen as capable or competent change agents, or in need of being in empowering settings. Based on a 9-month participant observation study of a first grade public charter school classroom in central California, this paper examines how one teacher used an alternative, artist-focused curriculum to take steps to facilitate a more empowering setting for her working class and working poor students, most of whom were Latina/o. We illustrate how this teacher worked to implement the components of an empowering setting within her classroom space: community building, peer-based support, meaningful roles, and shared leadership among her students. Student and teacher interviews are also used to triangulate findings. Implications include providing ways to assist young children as they become social change agents.

Keywords Empowering setting · Children · Elementary school · Working class/working poor · Latina/o

Introduction

In the USA, due to socio-cultural constructions of childhood, schools and adults often teach children that they are followers because they are not ‘old enough’ to lead (Durand and Lykes 2006; Langhout and Thomas 2010; Van Sluys 2010). This is

✉ Janelle M. Silva
jmsilva@uw.edu

¹ University of Washington, Bothell, 18115 Campus Way NE, Box 358530, Bothell, WA 98011, USA

² University of California, Santa Cruz, CA, USA

especially the case for working class and working poor students and students of Color,¹ who are viewed by dominant social groups as being in need of discipline rather than as being community leaders (Hayward 2000; Langhout 2005). This state of affairs is in contrast to adults from a variety of backgrounds, however, who are sometimes encouraged to participate in settings (e.g., churches, neighborhood organizations) where they develop skills needed to work within diverse populations to facilitate social change (Maton and Brodsky 2010; Warren and Mapp 2011; Zimmerman 2000).

Creating empowering settings, or settings that foster collaboration and skill development, for young children, especially young children of Color and children from working class or working poor families is important too, given the social issues they face. Specifically, schools can be empowering for young children by aiding in skill development, critical awareness, and the ability to work across difference for social change. Yet, a vast literature indicates that schools hinder students' voices and are not structured to foster an empowering setting (Delpit 1995; Hayward 2000; Langhout 2005; Sarason 2004). Subsequently, classrooms can maintain the status quo rather than upend it, which means that students, especially students of Color and those from working class and working poor backgrounds, are likely to experience school as disempowering (Delpit 1995; Hayward 2000; Langhout 2005; Sarason 2004). It is therefore important to examine ways that elementary school classrooms can be more empowering settings for children, given the dearth of examples in the literature. For this study we ask, what are the steps one white first grade teacher in a working-class and working poor, primarily Latina/o community took to facilitate a more empowering classroom? This study therefore seeks to trouble dominant socio-cultural constructions regarding childhood and children of Color, as well as dominant classroom practices.

First, we describe the process of creating an empowering setting, followed by what empowering settings look like for youth, and possibilities for empowering classrooms. We then describe the current study, including context and methods. Next, we document the steps taken in a classroom to move toward an empowering setting and connect these steps to the literature. We include a negative case analysis to describe the limitations of the implementation practices in this classroom. Finally, we end with conclusions and implications.

Creating an Empowering Social Setting

Empowerment is 'an intentional, on-going process centred in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources' (Cornell Empowerment Group 1989, p. 2). As empowerment theory (Rappaport 1981; Zimmerman 2000) suggests, and as

¹ Hurtado (1996) argues that Color refers to a specific experience and identity that has been stigmatized or made glorious. This social construction makes it as meaningful as linguistic, tribal, or religious groups, all of which are capitalized. Accordingly, the word Color is capitalized when it applies to a specific ethnic group. Because white refers to many ethnic groups, it is lowercase.

extensive literature reviews (Maton 2008; Wandersman and Florin 2000), early research (Kieffer 1984), and later multi-site studies (Maton and Brodsky 2010) demonstrate, individuals and groups can undergo processes that change their view of their social world and their social environment.

Bringing an empowering settings framework to the elementary school literature can create a theoretical foundation or roadmap for implementing various tools, activities, and processes into the classroom. It also has the potential to unify many studies in a parsimonious way: under four factors. Furthermore, this framework, if appropriate (which is what this study is designed to explore), can assist teachers and researchers with discerning which factors they might be missing with their classroom practices and interventions. We suspect missing aspects are likely to be those that are incompatible with dominant socio-cultural constructions of childhood (i.e., having multiple and meaningful roles, and shared leadership, which will be described momentarily).

Although the empowering settings literature has focused largely on adults, and more recently, on adolescents, it is an important starting point for this examination due to the breadth and reliability of findings. Specifically, individuals develop skills that help them implement change in empowering settings. Characteristics of an empowering setting include: a culture of growth and community building, opportunities to take on meaningful and multiple roles, peer-based support, and shared leadership committed to individual and group development (Kieffer 1984; Maton 2008; Maton and Brodsky 2010; Wandersman and Florin 2000; Zimmerman 2000). Each characteristic is taken in turn to show to the *process* by which an empowering setting is created. These characteristics can be assessed against a setting that serves primarily working class and working poor Latina/o students to discern similarities and differences, which is the goal of this paper.

Culture of Growth and Community

Without a sense of community that seeks to nurture the growth of its members, a setting cannot be empowering (Zimmerman 2000). Fostering a culture of growth and community building is therefore foundational to an empowering setting (Maton 2008; Maton and Brodsky 2010; Zimmerman 2000). Community is defined as settings where people interact, engage and share a common interest or “identity” based on shared connections (Rappaport 1981). Creating a sense of ‘we,’ which develops positive relationships and collective feelings among members, can do this. Individuals then explore their surroundings and seek support among the collective. This support allows individuals to ‘grow’ and discover their potential. As settings shift, it is the community aspect that strengthens the bonds among the individuals as they undergo the empowerment process. A “sense of growth and community” is essential for group members to feel supported as they begin to take on “meaningful and multiple roles”.

Meaningful and Multiple Roles

Once a community identity is established, members take on meaningful, multiple roles (Maton 2008; Zimmerman 2000). Group members holding significant roles and wearing ‘numerous hats’ can further foster group belonging. Members develop self-efficacy as they realize their contributions are needed to further the group’s objectives (e.g. obtaining resources, building relationships; Kieffer 1984; Zimmerman 2000). These roles are especially critical for members who are from subordinated groups that are often not given the opportunity or privilege of taking on such roles. For example, in the case of our study, children are often not allowed to take on roles in the classroom that seek to improve the classroom environment (e.g., deciding on classroom disciplinary actions, developing the class project). When given an opportunity to take on such roles, individuals can see how their membership and involvement is critical to the goals of the group, further solidifying their sense of community.

Peer-Based Support

Peer-based support is vital to an empowering organization (Maton 2008; Maton and Brodsky 2010; Wandersman and Florin 2000; Zimmerman 2000). Receiving positive feedback and having someone listen is critical to maintaining group cohesion. Although Zimmerman (2000) notes that peer-based support is important to maintain group competency, he does not mention how support goes beyond skill development. Kieffer (1984), however, highlights emotional support throughout the empowerment process. Emotional support can be key for historically subordinated group members (e.g. people of Color, children) who face more obstacles from social structures and in the case of children especially, are not viewed as able to provide support. Peer-based support, however, is fundamental to group cohesion and meeting group goals. Furthermore, we agree with Kieffer (1984) that this support goes beyond skill development and includes emotional support that further strengthens all previous aspects of an empowering setting.

Shared Leadership

The final characteristic of an empowering setting is shared leadership (Wandersman and Florin 2000; Zimmerman 2000). Groups can designate multiple leaders or rotate roles so more individuals have control over the resources that affect them. Sharing leadership is essential in order for each group member to have an opportunity to take on the meaningful and multiple roles that define empowering settings. For members from subordinated groups, especially children, *not* sharing leadership opportunities can reinforce the oppression they experience in other aspects of their lives, working against the sense of community and support that has been created initially. It is important to note that some argue that clear, structured roles are essential (Wandersman and Florin 2000). When in the leadership role, individuals use their growing awareness of social/structural barriers to understand their own position or role in producing change. Combined, these four characteristics create an

empowering organization for its members, who extend their beliefs that as a collective, they can facilitate change (Wilke and Speer 2011).

In Practice: Empowering Youth-Based Settings

Research suggests that the characteristics of an empowering setting are also important in youth (generally adolescent) contexts. Engagement and leadership are associated with youth's group identification, commitment, and community identity, which comes from a culture of growth and community; increased skill development from having meaningful and multiple roles; and self-efficacy and agency via peer-based support and shared leadership (Brown 2002; Johnson and Campbell-Stephens 2010; Laguardia and Pearl 2009; Larson et al. 2004). In an examination of civic learning courses in public schools, Llewellyn et al. (2010) concluded that schools should prepare students for the “ambiguities” of civic service; that is, students should be learning how to use their knowledge and skills to be participants in social change. Moreover, Wood et al. (2009) found that increased responsibility of youth group members amplified their commitment to and identification with the group. They examined 108 high school youth participating in 11 programs. The youth became more responsible within the group, and their self-efficacy and empowerment extended to other contexts (Wood et al. 2009). Additionally, researchers have found that youth engaged in shared leadership are likely to identify with the group's mission (Zeldin 2004).

Empowering Elementary School Classrooms: A Possibility?

Classrooms have employed critical learning frameworks with young learners, and these classrooms have some similarities with empowering settings (Brown 2002; Schultz and Coleman-King 2012). For example, Schultz and Coleman-King (2012) illustrated how allowing fifth grade urban public school students to draw on their personal knowledge when using multimodal storytelling projects increased student participation, particularly for students from immigrant communities, who comprised 20 % of the students in the classroom (the other students were mostly African American and Black). From an empowering settings framework, this is an example of developing a culture of growth and community. Similarly, teachers can promote student efficacy by creating spaces where students work together and therefore teach one another cooperatively. Specifically, in a fifth grade classroom, the teacher was a ‘community organizer’ through creating opportunities for students to develop relationships and work together toward shared goals (Putney and Broughton 2011). The students at this school were mostly Hispanic (50 %) and White (29 %) and the public school was in a partnership with a local university. With respect to empowering settings, this is an example of fostering peer support.

Although we could locate other studies that mapped onto the empowering setting facets of developing a culture of growth and community, as well as peer support (e.g., Jennings and Mills 2009), we had more difficulty finding studies that

illustrated the factors of meaningful and multiple roles, and shared leadership. Additionally the studies that mapped onto the first two factors tended to be in schools that were connected to universities (e.g., public magnet schools started by professors and serving mostly middle class students, public schools in partnership with universities). One exception indicated that third through fifth grade African American and Black students at a public urban school were sometimes given roles that they identified as meaningful, but that these roles were given in smaller settings within the school (e.g., lunchroom, bathrooms), and not often in the classroom (Langhout 2004). As previous research suggests, empowering settings have been created in ways that have benefited mostly older children from various socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Yet, the process of how these settings have been developed and have shifted within the academic year has not been made explicit in these studies. Although we see the outcome for the students, little is known about the structure(s) put in place to obtain these results.

Current Study: An Empowering First Grade Classroom

There is a paradox in attempting to foster an empowering setting when the overall structure is meant to undermine it (Gruber and Trickett 1987), as is often the case in classrooms—especially those that serve students of Color (Delpit 1995; Langhout 2005; Sarason 2004). These structures, when overlaid with dominant constructions of childhood that position children as not yet capable of understanding social problems (Epstein 1993), make classrooms an unlikely place to consider empowering classrooms, and for these reasons, makes the classroom of particular interest to us.

Because of restrictions often placed on public schools, we argue that empowering classrooms are more likely found within flexible schooling structures. Indeed, the literature reviewed in the previous section demonstrates that this is the case. Another more flexible structure is the community-based charter school. Although most charter schools are corporate run, a small subset are community-based. Corporate charter schools tend to be top down, employ practices that exclude many students from attending, and have no better outcomes (and sometimes worse outcomes) than traditional public schools (Ravitch 2011). Much less is known, however, about community-charter schools. Some argue that, when created with community input, they can be responsive to community needs (Ishimaru et al. 2011). These classrooms may provide teachers with more freedom regarding their classroom organization and curricula.

Even with the depth and breadth of the empowering setting literature, there are still several gaps within the literature. Research on empowering settings primarily focuses on youth and adult spaces, not children's places. Furthermore, less attention has been given to the emotional support and mentorship relationships that are, according to Kieffer (1984), central in developing an empowered self. Moreover, few studies have incorporated an empowerment framework into their analysis of student growth (Brown 2002). This paper addresses the following research question: What are the steps one white first grade teacher in a working-class and working

poor, primarily Latina/o community took to facilitate a more empowering classroom? A systematic analysis of one classroom can provide information about the applicability of these processes to other classrooms. Specifically, thick description about one setting can provide details that others can use to assess for similarities and differences across settings, helping others determine which aspects may or may not be applicable or transferable to other settings (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Method

Setting: Strawberry Fields School (SFS)

Teacher Profile

Ms. Monet, the classroom instructor, was a 53 year-old heterosexual middle class English-speaking white woman who had been teaching at SFS² for 6 years and had previously been a special education teacher at a private school for 12 years. Her pedagogy was dedicated to fostering ‘critical thinking’ in her students through a curriculum anchored in diversity and discussions of social action. She integrated the histories, cultures, and narratives of different groups into her curriculum. The primary author selected this school and classroom based on a pilot study she conducted at SFS in which several classrooms were observed. SFS was selected for the initial pilot study based on its student body (primarily Latina/o) and mission to fostering diversity and justice; classrooms that showed a commitment to diversity and justice were part of the criterion for the pilot. During the initial 10-week pilot study, the researcher observed how Ms. Monet went beyond the state-mandated curriculum to create an empowering setting. She elected to centre further research on this classroom to provide a more in-depth and long-term analysis of how this environment can serve as a model for other classrooms. Therefore, the sampling method was criterion-based, in that the researcher identified Ms. Monet’s classroom one that integrated diversity and social justice, and deemed it information rich (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Researcher Profile

During this 9-month participant-observation study,³ I was a 25 year old heterosexual, middle class feminist Chicana graduate student. I was as an active member in the students’ learning. Families received a letter regarding my participation, and Ms. Monet informed the students that I would visit their class weekly for the academic year to help, participate, take notes on what they learned, and ask them questions about their activities. I asked students to refer to me as Janelle and not Miss Silva, as

² All proper names have been changed.

³ This section is written in first person to reflect the voice of the first author, who was the participant observer for this project.

I hoped they would consider me an adult friend. Unlike other adults, I joined students on the rug for reading time, sat next to them for projects, played with them at recess, and ate lunch with them.

The Classroom

The first grade classroom had twenty students: 11 were Latinas/os, 6 were white, and 3 were biracial (two were Latino and white, one was Asian and white). Ms. Monet's room was adorned with posters of famous artists, singers, composers, dancers, and authors covered in the curriculum. The remaining walls were adorned with student paintings, sketches, poetry and stories. There were four learning centres along the walls: reading, language arts, math, and science. Student desks were arranged in groups of four, each consisting of at least one female student and one student of Color.

SFS was established as a public community-based charter school (grades K-8) for the arts. The student population reflects Ganar City, a working class and working poor community where many families are employed in agricultural work, on California's central coast; most students identify as Chicano/Latino (77.2 %, with 54.3 % of Mexican descent) or white (California Department of Education 2007). Sixty percent of students qualified for reduced or free lunch (California Department of Education 2007).

As a charter school, teachers had some freedom over how they incorporated the arts into the classroom. Teachers produced one significant art project per year or made smaller projects throughout the year. In this classroom, the teacher produced one major class art project each year, and students also created an art project each week. Teachers had access to the same art supplies (e.g., paint, canvas, paper) and technology (e.g., computers).

Fieldnotes

This 9-month study employed participant observation and interviews. During the 2007–2008 academic year, the primary author spent Fridays in Ms. Monet's classroom. Given that Ms. Monet used Fridays to discuss that week's projects, classroom interactions, and course lessons, that day appeared to offer the most fruitful overview of the classroom. Additionally, field notes were collected other days (including during school sponsored events and class field trips) to observe how the curriculum might have differed. Observations included attention to curriculum material and interactions. Although the researcher was not in the school daily, fieldnote-based research is not defined by length of time; rather, it is oriented toward cultural interpretation (Emerson et al. 1995).

The fieldnote process was two-fold and consistent with Emerson et al. (1995) and Fetterman's (1998) recommendations, which are also designed to address trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Observations included 'jottings' and direct quotations to facilitate memory. When something occurred that was particularly significant, an informal member check with those involved (e.g., students, teacher, adults) was carried out to ensure fieldnote accuracy. Immediately

after leaving the school, jottings were turned into fieldnotes, which detailed observations, activities, and conversations. Two weeks after the initial observations, the first author re-read fieldnotes and added critiques (in brackets). Data were triangulated with student and teacher interviews to ensure credibility (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The first author also used reflexivity to denote any researcher motivation and/or interest in the data. For noteworthy incidents, the researcher engaged in member checks to establish confirmability (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

Student Interviews

Of the 20 students, 18 had parental consent for the interview, held at the end of the school year. Students were interviewed in dyads ($n = 9$) to allow for deeper dialogue (Clark 2005). Each interview was audiotaped and transcribed by the interviewer/researcher (mean length of interview was 45 min). The interview consisted of three sets of questions, each pertaining to the curriculum and classroom setting.

Teacher Interview

Ms. Monet's interview occurred at the end of the academic year and was audiotaped and transcribed by the researcher. It had three sections, assessing her opinions of public education and policies that influence curricula. For this analysis, the topic of teaching was examined. Twelve questions assessed Ms. Monet's views on her teaching practices. Specifically, she described her classroom and curriculum. She also addressed how her classroom contributed to learning. Finally, she answered what she hoped her students would gain from her curriculum.

Coding

We deductively applied Zimmerman's (2000) framework to better understand how a teacher can employ empowering practices in a teaching environment and with young children. Inductive coding was also utilized to capture unanticipated themes (Emerson et al. 1995). Fieldnotes were coded line-by-line by the first author, as she was most familiar with the research site (Corbin and Strauss 1990). A random portion of these data (25 %) were independently coded by a trained undergraduate research assistant who was unfamiliar with the setting. Cohen's Kappa was 86.71 %. Although this data analytic approach crosses scientific paradigms for assessing validity, we chose this hybrid method of coding (having an insider and outsider code data and assessing inter-rater reliability) because some may view the researcher as sufficiently embedded in the setting (thus of the opinion the insider view to be adequate for coding), but others may not (thus of the opinion that these data should be subject to an outsider perspective). See Appendix A for the codebook and examples.

Results and Discussion

Empowering settings include four specific characteristics: a culture of growth and community building, opportunities to take on meaningful and multiple roles, peer-based support, and shared leadership (Zimmerman 2000). No single factor equates to empowerment; rather, the processes work in tandem to construct an empowering classroom. Each characteristic, as implemented by Ms. Monet and her students, is described in turn. A negative case analysis is provided, which further nuances the results and conclusions.

Community Building with the ‘Community Chest’

The first process in establishing an empowering setting is to build community, which provides members with a sense of ‘we,’ thus allowing identification with the group and its goals (Maton 2008; Maton and Brodsky 2010; Zimmerman 2000). This sense of ‘we’ is especially important for children of Color and working class and working poor children, who are often pushed out of school due to white middle class structures of schooling (Delpit 1995; Hayward 2000; Langhout 2005). A community identity also supports community engagement as members develop new skills and cultivate relationships. Moreover, this process can foster cooperation rather than competition, which may be important for closing the cultural gap between home and school for children from more collective cultural communities that prioritize cooperation (Brown 2008). Ms. Monet created a structure so all those in the classroom could establish community via a ‘community chest,’ which was Ms. Monet’s solution to ensure an equal access to educational resources for her students. Ms. Monet often included a parent letter in weekly homework packets explaining that they would be completing a class activity and asked if families would donate items (e.g., paper, science project materials, art supplies, pencils). Although the letter was intended to help the students from working class/poor families, she structured the letters to suggest that everyone would use the materials. The chest not only ensured equal participation and access to resources, but also created a sense of ‘we.’

If you’ve noticed, there is a lot of diversity in our families when it comes to income level. Some students come to class with the newest things and brag about their birthday parties, and others can’t [because of income]. As a school of the arts, there are a lot of activities that go on and, because we are first grade, we do a lot of projects to engage the students. I don’t expect that everyone can afford the same thing, but I want them to at least have access to similar things. That’s why I ask families to help out, so they can all participate and no one is left out... We are a community, and I want them to know that and that their child might also need to borrow something from the box [chest] one day, so they should help out. And the families that can’t, that’s okay too. We are all in this together and their child can participate because we all help one another out. (Fieldnote, 19/10/2007)

The Science Fair provides an example of how the ‘community chest’ helped build community. The Science Fair was a school-wide activity, so all students were required to participate, regardless of access to materials or parental supervision. To ensure full class participation, Ms. Monet provided students with a list of ideas. Her letter stated that, ‘students can use class supplies.’ On the day of the Science Fair, several students conducted experiments she suggested and used items from the ‘community chest.’

Seven students selected an experiment from the list provided by Ms. Monet and used some of the supplies in the class. Not one student questioned why they chose to do a pre-selected experiment rather than find one on their own, nor did they ask why they used class supplies. As Faith was setting up her experiment, I asked her to tell me about it.

Faith: It’s a volcano and you add baking soda to make it erupt.

Janelle: Was it hard to do?

Faith: No, ‘cause Ms. Monet gave us the directions and my parents helped.

Janelle: Have you ever done an experiment before?

Faith: My sister was supposed to do one last year, but we didn’t have money to buy stuff, so she didn’t. But Ms. Monet gave us ideas and things [to use], so it made it easier for me and my parents to do this one, ‘cause we had everything [we needed]. (Fieldnote, 4/4/2008)

Without suggestions and access to supplies, Faith might not have completed the experiment and may have been excluded from participating in the Science Fair with her peers, an activity that was often celebrated at the end of the year as a “class favorite” (Fieldnote, 4/4/2008). This was further echoed in the student interviews at the end of the school year.

It was cool cuz we all did it. We all had something to show. Some classes only had a few things and you visit and it wasn’t that fun. But all of our desks had projects. That was fun. (Mark, Latino)

Our class had a Science Fair! We did! That was the best day cuz we all learned stuff and made things and taught all the other kids that came in. We shared science. (Mimi, white female)

Like last year, my sister didn’t have a project because we didn’t have anything to make science with at home. And she was really sad cuz she didn’t have anything on her desk to show people. But the chest had things and I made my volcano and it was AWESOME! It exploded everywhere. And we all had our stuff on our desks. Like me and Stevie and everyone did. (Faith, Latina)

We showed everyone how smart Ms. Monet’s class is! Everyone had a project and we all shared. We were the only class that had that. And if you didn’t have a project, you could make a volcano. And if you didn’t have volcano stuff, you could borrow from the class. And then you had science. And we all had something. It was super neat. (Jaclyn, Latina)

As the field notes and end of year interviews demonstrate, the community chest helped increase students' identity with their classroom community because everyone was able to participate in the Science Fair. This sense of 'we' was especially important to build for the Latina/o students and the working class and working poor students given their social locations. As feminists of Color (hooks 2003) and community psychologists (Rappaport 1981; Riger 1993; Zimmerman 2000) suggest, individuals enter particular social settings on an 'unequal playing field.' Members of dominant groups (e.g. white, male, middle class), have more financial, educational and political resources, providing them with more power than those from subordinated groups (e.g. of Color, women), which then often creates boundaries between the in group and out group. For example, a working class Latino might not be able to participate in a group activity, like the Science Fair, because of financial restraints, whereas his white middle class female peer does not have this constraint. This difference in access could feed into dominant narratives that working class and working poor families and families of Color do not take school seriously (Delpit 1995), thus stigmatizing these students and families, making it difficult for them to feel part of the 'we'. By having materials made available in this case, and with the help of her parents, Faith was able to participate in this activity and appears not to have been stigmatized for having to utilize the 'community chest'. This example illustrates how a culture of growth and community building can be done with young elementary school students. It goes beyond knowing that they belong to a certain classroom (e.g., "we are in Ms. Monet's class") to show how aspects of a classroom can be adjusted to support students and encourage classroom involvement. The 'community chest' is one way that teachers can facilitate a sense of community in their classrooms while also meeting the educational needs of their students.

Meaningful Roles and Belonging Through Recycling and 'Being Experts'

The second process within an empowering setting includes opportunities for members to hold meaningful roles, which provides them with a deeper group commitment and promotes a sense of belonging (Kieffer 1984; Maton 2008; Zimmerman 2000). Children often have little agency in the classroom (Langhout 2005), so providing them with meaningful roles allows them to understand their value to the group (i.e., the classroom). Furthermore, these roles facilitate students being the subjects of action and responsibility. These roles are often not available to students from subordinated groups, so it is especially important that such roles are available to them (Hayward 2000).

Ms. Monet provided students with the opportunity to adopt meaningful roles during the integration of recycling and composting into the curriculum, and the students heartily took up these roles. A community member visited the classroom and educated students on how waste (e.g. banana peels) could be used to feed worms in a compost bin that would sit outside their classroom. Students were encouraged to feed waste to the worms after lunch. Waste collection became part of the daily routine.

As we were lining up for lunch, Matt turned and shouted, ‘Wait! We forgot the bucket!’ He ran back up the ramp and came out with the bucket that was used to collect leftover food items for the compost project...During lunch, Matt placed the compost bucket at the end of the class lunch table. As the students ate their lunches, they would walk up and place their banana peels and apple cores in the bucket... ‘You know what, Janelle? It’s better that we feed them, ‘cause they eat it, or else it will just go to waste and hurt the earth.’ (Fieldnote, 27/9/2007)

The compost project taught students why recycling is important and how to get involved. The project also entrusted students with meaningful roles. Students created the compost pile, collected lunch scraps, and placed the items in the bin. Students also alternated roles weekly, allowing all to gain the skills needed for success.

Many students took the skills acquired from this compost project and encouraged their families to compost, teaching them what they had learned. A week after the compost lesson, Dorothy’s mother informed the researcher how they were now starting their own pile.

Dorothy was just so excited about the project and it was all she could talk about...all the time. If someone ate an apple or there were old carrots in the fridge, she would tell us how we could use this to feed worms. It didn’t take long for her to convince us to start a compost pile, and she really took charge. She showed us what to buy and how to keep it going-I was really impressed. She loves being in charge [of the pile] and showing us what to do. (Fieldnote, 13/10/2007)

Dorothy’s multiple roles extended beyond the classroom. Whereas most children might be responsible for chores like picking up their toys, Dorothy created the composter role. She created this additional role after having it in the classroom. This type of extension beyond the classroom may be more likely in Latino families given that, in some cultural communities, children are already integrated into the family and hold important roles (Gutiérrez and Rogoff 2003).

Ms. Monet also provided students an opportunity to hold meaningful roles through the ‘panel of experts.’ Again, students took up this opportunity. When a new artist was introduced weekly, Ms. Monet assigned that artist to a group that was responsible for keeping track of events in that artist’s life, how their art contributed to knowledge of social structures and events, and in researching additional information about that artist. On Fridays, the ‘panel of experts’ would answer peer questions. During student interviews, the interviewer asked what they thought about the ‘panel of experts’.

It’s really neat...I get to share facts and tell everyone what I know. And then when they have questions later, I can answer because I was on the Monet panel. (Alisha, white female)

My favourite part about the panel was that during the week, when people couldn’t remember what Marion [Anderson] did, I was able to help them. I felt like I was...I mean, I am a part of my class, but I like the panel ‘cause it really

made me feel like I was helping out and that everyone could see’, ‘hey, she’s got stuff to offer’ and I felt like, I dunno, I felt more like a member [of the class]. (Jaclyn, Latina)

Alisha and Jaclyn commented on how the panel allowed them to be an ‘expert’. Although being on the panel seemed beneficial to Alisha, a white female student, and Jaclyn, a Latina student, note the differences in their responses. Alisha pointed out that being on the panel meant that she knew facts, which might trouble socio-cultural constructions of children (Durand and Lykes 2006) or girlhood (Mikel Brown 1999). Jaclyn, however, said that the panel showed others that she had something to offer and felt more connected to the class, illustrating how this activity fostered a connectedness with her peers and solidified her classroom value. This community building is central for students typically ‘Othered’ in classrooms because it shows their value to the group and establishes their intelligence (Delpit 1995; Kieffer 1984). These kinds of experiences may counter other schooling experiences that serve to further subordinate students of Color (Langhout 2005). Empowering settings, therefore, can reconfigure setting structures by providing all people, including those from subordinated groups, with multiple roles to strengthen community identity and commitment (Maton 2008; Zimmerman 2000); the compost project and the panel allows students to take on meaningful roles, share their knowledge with their peers, and develop a sense of belonging and collective identity as they took action in the world. These roles held deep meaning in Ms. Monet’s classroom and were taken seriously by all her students. Rather than assign typical classroom roles (e.g., attendance taker, line leader, etc.), Ms. Monet selected roles that were essential to the everyday functions of her classroom. The success of the educational lessons and class project were dependent upon the students completing their roles. This created a level of investment in her students and further strengthened their classroom identity. These results are especially important because they provide an example of how opportunities for meaningful and multiple roles can be made available to and taken up by first graders who are Latina/o and/or working class/working poor.

Peer-Based Support Through Voicing and Listening

Peer-based support, the third process important to an empowering setting, enables group members to strengthen connections and cohesion among themselves by providing positive feedback to one another (Maton 2008; Maton and Brodsky 2010; Wandersman and Florin 2000; Zimmerman 2000). Support also creates opportunities for members to nurture each other’s skills and increase their beliefs that they can participate in community improvement (Kieffer 1984). These aspects seem especially key for students of Color and students from working class and working poor families who have not historically been supported by hegemonic schooling structures (Delpit 1995; Hayward 2000; Langhout 2005; Sarason 2004). Ms. Monet facilitated peer-based support by constructing spaces for students to listen to each other, and students did just that. Students were often asked to share experiences regarding social issues such as discrimination and poverty, as well as personal topics

like birth and death, thus facilitating their subjectivity. Ms. Monet encouraged critical reflection and taught the value of listening and offering support.

I spend the first semester really trying to ground the students with basic information about different groups, because I know they come in with a lot of assumptions based on their families, the media, what they hear, and I want them to know that those are most likely wrong. And they are hurtful. But I don't want to tell them that they are wrong for thinking or knowing those things, because I don't want to close them off from learning and being open. I just want them to be interested and to follow me down the path I am trying to take them. As we get to the second semester, I start to discuss harder issues, like discrimination, privilege, and inequality. I really try to emphasize how these are not things in the past, but that these things also happen now, and who we are as people means that we experience these things differently...I use their own experiences...to inform what is going on and ask them to draw comparisons between what we are learning and their own lives...I want the knowledge to come alive, or, I mean, for them to see how a person's experience is important in how we look at things and that we need to recognize these experiences because they are forms of knowledge too. (Interview, 4/6/2008)

The connections between social issues and community were evident in student reflections between Diego Rivera and Pablo Neruda. Neruda's poems describe the loss of natural resources and civil unrest in his native country, Chile.

As the students gathered on the rug after recess, Ms. Monet started to read to them from the biography of Pablo Neruda. The book showed newspaper photographs of war, struggle and civil marches that took place in Chile and influenced Pablo's art. As the students were listening...several started making connections between the messages that Pablo depicted in his work and that of Diego Rivera.

Matt: It's like Diego, Ms. Monet! Diego also painted stuff that the people in charge [the government] did not want everyone to see.

Ms. Monet: That's true, they are connected that way.

Faith: Yeah, and they also both showed like, regular people, the people who worked in the fields, not the fancy people.

Jaclyn: The poor people.

Ms. Monet: That is right. Both Pablo and Diego showed the people and the struggles that the government did not want others to see.

Neena: That's not right.

Ms. Monet: No, it's not, but it does happen.

Matt: We should make a painting that shows what is really going on here [Ganar City]!

Mark: Like, like what's happening with the farmers and nowhere to work.

Ivey: Or like not having jobs for the grown-ups [grown-ups], like my dad.

Neena: And my mom too, she has no job and it makes things hard cause money don't grow on plants [trees].

Ms. Monet: As a class?

Adam: But I don't like to paint (pouting).

Matt turns to Adam and gently rubs his back: That's okay, we could have two groups—one who paints and the other who writes poems, cause you are really good at that, and so are a lot of other people (Adam smiles).

Faith: A Pablo group and a Diego group!

Robbie: Yeah! Then everyone can do what they are good at [paint or write poems] and we can do it together.

Ms. Monet (smiling): Sounds like a plan. (Fieldnote, 25/1/2008)

The students understood that, like Rivera, Neruda's poetry reflected that social injustices present in Chile primarily affected subordinated groups ('not the fancy people...the poor people'). Matt's response to Adam (i.e., creating a class painting and poems) is a solution illustrative of how students nurtured each other's skills in order to work as a collective. Moreover, students were also 'taking power' via their shared-decision making, an effect of Ms. Monet's ability to create an empowering classroom. By not excluding peers, students increased their cohesion. This is especially significant as Adam is Latino, making him a member of a historically subordinated group that is often excluded. By the students taking the initiative to develop two aspects of the project—the painting and the writing—Adam was able to use his skills and be included within the classroom structure. For students like Adam, having his peers listen to him and provide support also meant students in the class who may have been excluded from the original plan could now actively participate.

Students also offered peer-based support on a personal level. Peer-based support includes emotional work that nurtures individuals (Kieffer 1984; Schultz and Coleman-King 2012). If students are to share experiences, they must be emotionally supportive of one another to maintain cohesion. Mikey, a white male student, returned to class after a 2-week absence, due to the deaths of his father (from cancer) and his younger sister (from heart problems). Ms. Monet addressed the issue of death.

I don't want them to think that it [death] is not painful or just something that older people experience. Mikey is a part of our class, our community, and I want them be sympathetic and to empathize with him...he should feel that this is a safe place for him to talk about his feelings and we [the class] should be willing to listen. (Fieldnote, 18/4/2008)

Before Mikey's return, Ms. Monet informed the students of his loss. She asked them to be 'respectful and kind, and have an open heart' because he was in mourning. Upon his return, Ms. Monet used a book on death to help students understand what Mikey might be experiencing.

Ms. Monet told them, 'This week has been a sad week, with Mikey's sister and father dying. Have I read to you all from the *Lifetimes* book? I think we should read from that to honour Mikey's sister and father and to talk about loss.' The story depicts several images of what things die and when (mostly nature and animals). It ends by saying that humans also die at different times from

different things, and we should be grateful for the time they are here, because that is the circle of life. ‘Let’s all sit here and close our eyes and send good thoughts to people that we love who are no longer living.’ Silently, they all shut their eyes and did not make a sound. ‘Now let’s turn to one another and give a hug or a handshake to be thankful for them.’ As they turned, Adam leaned over and gave Mikey a hug. ‘I am sorry about your sister and dad,’ said Adam. ‘We [referring to the class] are here for you.’ (Fieldnote, 18/4/2008)

Students offered peer-based support for learning, but also for personal experiences, like family members dying. Although Zimmerman (2000) defines support in an empowering setting in reference to skills members bring to the group, it is also important to build community by acknowledging experiences and how these might affect overall group performance (hooks 2003; Keedy and Drmacich 1994). Moreover, Mikey’s experience illustrates how empowering settings can be beneficial for all students, not just those from subordinated backgrounds. In this case, Mikey may have learned that his classroom community wanted to support him. Adam reinforced this message through words and by hugging him. This kind of connection and support may be especially beneficial for boys, given that masculinity socializes men to deal with grief by being angry, stoic, and/or empty (Creighton et al. 2013). Being connected to his class may offer alternatives for Mikey. For these students, supporting one another by acknowledging the skills each brought to the classroom and the personal struggles they faced, was essential for strengthening their group identity and fostering an empowering setting. As Kieffer (1984) suggests, peer-based support goes beyond skill development and this is particularly important in elementary school classrooms where students are developing skills related to collaboration and across social groups. Moreover, Ms. Monet inviting students to participate in this way, and students taking up the invitation, may reduce the cultural divide between home and school for Latina/o students; some Latino cultural communities place value in community support and harmony (Gaines et al. 1997; Trumbull et al. 2003). Peer-based support that both validates students personal and cultural experiences can strengthen the sense of community in a classroom.

Shared Leadership with a ‘Class Mayor’

The final process for an empowering setting is shared leadership (Wandersman and Florin 2000; Zimmerman 2000). Sharing leadership makes members accountable and increases cohesion. Also, being a leader can increase members’ sense of value to the group (Keedy and Drmacich 1994; Wandersman and Florin 2000; Zimmerman 2000). Furthermore, shared leadership has the potential to help students mutually govern their group because they can understand and learn from other people’s perspectives. Based on our literature review, it is infrequent for students of Color, and working class and working poor students to be given leadership roles in classrooms (but see Langhout 2004 for an exception). In the current study, however, students shared leadership through the role of ‘class mayor’. Each day, a different student was the ‘class mayor’ and in charge of changing the calendar, taking the

attendance sheet to the office, helping organize class activities (e.g. preparing snack), and settling conflicts. Each student was the ‘mayor’ at least once a month. For Ms. Monet, the mayor role incorporated students in decisions and solutions.

I think the mayor is really important to my classroom, to their learning...It is usually the teacher who makes the rules, enforces them, and resolves conflict. I don't think that's right, because my decision shouldn't be law and there should be flexibility depending on what happened and why. By letting each student be the mayor, they are given a sense of power to make decisions...I mean, it could go either way [bad or good] but they always are very thoughtful and considerate of one another, and try to hear both sides before making a decision. I mean, they just don't side with their friends, but they take the role very seriously. And I think that has to do with the fact that the mayor changes each day, so they could find themselves as the one in the middle of the conflict...and they really think of us as a community, and want to make decisions that are best for everyone. It helps us work together. (Fieldnote, 21/9/2007)

The mayor promotes an empowering setting by allowing students to take on meaningful roles and shared leadership (Wandersman and Florin 2000; Zimmerman 2000). Students confirmed this interpretation in their interviews.

It's fun [being mayor]! But not like, fun, 'cause you, you know, things that real mayors do, like make unfair rules and stuff, but because we get to have a say in what happens in class. Like, one time when I was mayor, I got to help Larry 'cause he was saying mean things, and usually you get punished and lose [recess], but I decided he should write an apology. Taking away recess don't help him, and this can. (Adam, Latino)

Being mayor is good because Ms. Monet lets us decide on how to solve our problems, and we don't get mad at each other, 'cause we all learn from it and the mayor is [a] different [person] every day, so we all get to be a leader. (Faith, Latina)

Being class mayor facilitated student leadership. Students viewed their time as mayor as an opportunity to play a role in contributing to the classroom dynamic. Fieldnotes and interviews reveal no instances where students ‘abused’ their role. Each student understood and respected the role and those in it. This might have been the case due to the emphasis on community harmony in many Latino cultural communities (Gaines et al. 1997; Trumbull et al. 2003).

Students viewed the mayor role as two-fold: an opportunity to lead by helping with activities and through resolving conflicts. For example, during an incident where Stevie and Jack were name-calling, it was the job of the class mayor, Dorothy, to resolve the conflict.

Stevie and Jack had been at odds with one another all morning, shoving each other to get out of the way or saying things under their breath. Stevie had just received the books he had ordered from the school book drive and was raising them in the air for [all] to see.

Stevie: Look! How cool is this? (Waving a book) Don't you wish you had this one?

Jack: No one wants to see your books, Stevie.

Stevie: You're just jealous 'cause you didn't order any.

Jack: Naw, the books you ordered are stupid.

Stevie: No they're not! They're not! You just wish you had your own and you can't so that's why.

Jack: No, they are stupid and no one wants to see them.

Stevie: No, you're stupid! You're a stupid face!

As their...argument continued, Ms. Monet...told the boys to go outside and resolve their problem with the class mayor, Dorothy. After about 10 min...the three of them came back.

Ms. Monet: So what did you decide, mayor?

Dorothy: We decided that they each needed to say they were sorry for hurting each other's feelings and to shake hands.

Ms. Monet: Anything else?

Dorothy: Jack and Stevie are going to write a letter apologizing to each other and write one thing that they like about each other, cause they are friends. And then Stevie is going to put his books in his backpack, 'cause they are for at home reading and not for school. They said that would make it okay.

Ms. Monet: Sounds like a good resolution. (Fieldnote, 15/2/2008)

The mayor role facilitated student agency. In many classrooms, teachers resolve conflicts. In Ms. Monet's class, the mayor resolved conflict through discussion. Students were therefore in a leadership role traditionally regulated to adults. Furthermore, this student involvement grants agency because they determine solutions to their problems (Rappaport 1981; Zimmerman 2000). To reinforce this facet of an empowering setting, it was essential that Ms. Monet supported student decisions. This approach taught students to play a pivotal role as members within their classroom (Rappaport 1981). As with having meaningful and multiple roles, shared leadership opportunities are essential in the creation of an empowering setting. In the case of the elementary classroom, having roles that serves as central components to the structure and growth of the classroom provide students with a unique experience to truly "shape" their environment. Furthermore, by the teacher validating her students' decisions, she was reinforcing the importance of their role in the classroom and as a member of their community.

Negative Case Analysis

Ms. Monet's implementation did not always foster an empowering setting. There were some instances where students viewed this process (i.e., community building, meaningful roles, peer-based support, shared leadership) as 'stifling' their collective process. This arose in classroom discussions around the class mayor role. As noted, the mayor position was an opportunity for students to hold a meaningful role and shared leadership. This mayor position is also consistent with research results indicating empowering settings have clear, structured roles for members

(Wandersman and Florin 2000). During a Circle Time (a space for community building and peer-based support) discussion, however, students started to question if they needed the class mayor and considered an alternative process.

Robbie: Ms. Monet, why is there still a mayor?

Ms. Monet: Well, the mayor helps us work out our differences and holds us accountable.

Robbie: But if we all do that, then why do we need one?

Ms. Monet (to the class): Don't you like being the mayor?

Neena: It was fun, but now I don't wanna.

Mimi: Me neither.

Ms. Monet: Why not?

Matt: Can't we just talk about things during Circle Time? I want to do that.

Adam and Jaclyn: Me too.

Ms. Monet: But the mayor is an important part of our class! Think about our city—what would happen if we didn't have a mayor? What would happen if we didn't have anyone to lead us?

Matt: But we can work together. We don't need the mayor anymore.

Students: Yeah.

Ms. Monet: Well, in this class we have a mayor. And that is how it works.

The students give each other side glances and some put their heads in their hands, looking defeated. (Fieldnote, 14/3/2008)

As the year progressed, students saw the mayor role as less critical. Rather than have one student in charge, they wanted to use Circle Time to resolve disagreements collectively.

This moment marks an occasion where students questioned the structure of classroom governance. Ms. Monet seemed invested in maintaining the process she has created, although students request a collective design, rendering a single leader unnecessary. Ironically, although Ms. Monet was invested in fostering an empowering setting in her classroom, this analysis also illustrates the high level of control she enacted in her classroom, by defining roles and expectations without the input of her students.

Therefore, what this negative case analysis makes visible is that Ms. Monet was open to children's participation in the ways that she has found beneficial based on her experiences with teaching. She was less open to the children deciding the structures that enable their participation. This important distinction has been described as a cause of tension in various empowerment-related projects, where researchers, or more powerful others, maintain control of how those who are subject to the intervention can participate (Dworski-Riggs and Langhout 2010; McMillan 1975). The researcher or more powerful other might struggle with implementing "best practices" and attending to needs and desires at the local level, especially when these are conflicting. Given this tension, it might make sense to prioritize a set of values over a set of empirically validated practices, as this might lead to processes that are more contextually grounded (Biesta 2010).

In this case, Ms. Monet connects the mayor role to broader city governance forms, disallowing change, and also maintaining a structure that she had used in past years and likely found successful. Yet, governance and decision-making structures should be open for debate when the goal is to create an empowering setting, especially for young people (Langhout et al. 2011; Nasir 2003); how decisions are made provides lessons in civic engagement, participation, and who controls resources (Sarason 2004). Because of Ms. Monet's positioning, she may be unaware of ways to practice collective democratic governance. For example, some students may come from cultural communities that utilize indigenous governance practices [e.g. Mayan structures (see Speed 2007)] and may have suggested collective governance councils to resolve conflicts during Circle Time. It may have been instructive to change the conflict resolution structure, with students and the teacher assessing the outcome of different models. The group may have altered or retained the initial model. In sum, questioning assumptions of what is appropriate for resolving conflict is important in critically thinking about governance. Ms. Monet's support of this process may have promoted new ways for the entire class to consider community building, meaningful roles, peer-based support, and shared leadership. It is worth noting, however, that even when the explicit goal is to create an empowering setting, governance structures are rarely questioned (Langhout et al. 2011). In this way, Ms. Monet's insistence on following the structure she has created is not, unfortunately, unique.

Conclusion and Implications

Based on the empowering settings literature (Kieffer 1984; Maton 2008; Maton and Brodsky 2010; Wandersman and Florin 2000; Zimmerman 2000), Ms. Monet had taken many steps to create an empowering classroom for her students, and the ways that her students responded showed their eagerness to take up the roles made available to them. Most empowering settings are implemented with adults; this study illustrates that characteristics essential for an empowering setting for adults (community building, meaningful roles, peer-based support, shared leadership) are also appropriate for young children, with a few adjustments. This study highlights the importance of emotional support within an empowering setting. Perhaps everyone needs higher levels of emotional support, but this need is made visible through researching this process with young children. Additionally, even young children should be able to act on the boundaries of their participation, or the structures that determine how they can and cannot participate.

The intended outcome for group members within an empowering setting is to facilitate individual empowerment (Wilke and Speer 2011; Zimmerman 2000). Yet, Western views of childhood position this group as unable to be active community members. Evidence of this viewpoint includes our difficulty with locating articles where elementary school children of Color and/or from working class/working poor families had meaningful, multiple roles in the classroom, or where they were able to be leaders. Therefore, one might ask why teachers should even attempt to create an empowering setting. An empowering classroom teaches children how to participate

as civic actors in a space, and teaches the skills to create change in other settings (e.g. creating a home compost pile). This classroom structure can facilitate agency and self-efficacy for children; both are important for empowerment. This study illustrates the process that one teacher took in her classroom to move toward a more empowering setting for her first grade students, who were primarily working class and working poor, and Latina/o. Subsequently, teachers can use this study as a set of guidelines for implementing structures that may need to be in place to facilitate this process. Moreover, this study shows how these settings differ from those created with older students or those from privileged backgrounds. Although the goal is to facilitate individual empowerment, this paper was not designed to determine if these first graders became empowered; rather, the purpose was to explore how the factors of an empowering setting could be implemented in a first grade classroom given that children this young are not usually viewed as social change agents (and therefore not in need of empowerment). Future research could assess levels of empowerment for young children who participate in empowering settings.

One limitation is that Ms. Monet's classroom was located in a public charter school and therefore results may not be applicable to other public school classrooms. Recently, charter schools have been criticized based on their highly selective admissions processes that often limit access to underrepresented groups (Ravitch 2011). Like most charter schools, families applied and were then interviewed by the kindergarten teachers prior to admission to SFS. According to the teachers, they sought out families that would "add" to the SFS community. How this translated to the student body and the classroom was unclear, yet the demographics of the student body were quite similar to those in the community from which students were drawn. In addition to the student population served, another possible difference between typical public schools and charter schools is that charter schools are designated with specific missions. SFS's mission provided latitude and support for teachers to incorporate the arts into their curriculum (Hinchliffe 2010). Thus, Ms. Monet had the freedom to use an alternative curriculum, provided she met state educational requirements.

Nevertheless, those in less flexible classrooms can draw upon Ms. Monet's classroom structure. Regardless of the curriculum, any classroom could start a community chest, have experts for a given topic, learn how to listen and affirm one another, and/or have a rotating mayor. This is particularly important for students from historically subordinated groups who continue to be disempowered in classrooms. Acquiring empowerment-related skills may cultivate their ability to create change (Zeldin 2004), and not only to imagine a different world, but also to gain experience in creating it. Next steps, therefore, may be to assess another classroom that shows evidence of being empowering, with an eye toward similarities and differences with these results, or to assess how these skills and lessons translated into other settings (e.g., home, neighbourhood, sports) for these children. Are these children able to be agents of change in other settings? Are those other settings transformed by their input?

Empowering settings can also increase children's commitment to work toward social causes as children and adults (Zeldin 2004). Teachers should be able to facilitate such settings in their classrooms, particularly for young children. Classrooms should

teach academics and skills for appreciating diversity and gaining access to resources to produce change. The classroom can also be a place where students question and practice different forms of governance (Laguardia and Pearl 2009; Nasir 2003). What is important to note, however, is that empowerment in the classroom setting is not an “all or nothing” process; rather, it is an ongoing process that can be most successful when teachers and students collaborate together to determine what an empowering setting looks like to them. Even in this study, the four facets of an empowering setting are implemented in ‘fits and starts.’ Ms. Monet could have benefited from relinquishing some control in her classroom by partnering with her students on the boundaries of their participation, as recommended by some researchers (Hayward 2000; Langhout et al. 2011). As Laguardia and Pearl (2009) suggest, if public schools are intended to be spaces that teach our students how to be active citizens, classrooms should be places where they acquire the skills needed to participate in a democratic society. Using an empowering classroom to develop self-efficacy, critical awareness, pride, determination, and leadership in children can help them connect to causes and work toward change.

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Appendix

See Table 1.

Table 1 Codebook for fieldnotes

Subcategory	Definition	Example
Community building (Maton 2008; Maton and Brodsky 2010; Zimmerman 2000)	Restructuring classroom activities to allow equal participation by all, not just dominant groups students; can create collective classroom identity	Lowering cost for school fieldtrips; not requiring class snacks; Providing alternative ways to facilitate equal participation; not participating in exclusionary activities
Peer-based support (Kieffer 1984; Maton 2008; Maton and Brodsky 2010; Wandersman and Florin 2000; Zimmerman 2000)	Students providing emotional support to one another and supporting each other’s skills	Teacher validating bilingualism; “Monitoring” language or physical behavior hurtful toward others (e.g. mimicking being a girl) and encouraging peers to stop; helping each other solve problems
Multiple and meaningful roles (Maton 2008; Zimmerman 2000)	Students having control over resources that affect them and providing resources to ensure everyone’s participation	Donating items to classroom for the entire class use (e.g. books); applying leadership roles to other settings
Shared leadership (Wandersman and Florin 2000; Zimmerman 2000)	Students working toward social change by participating in events or projects	Food drive participation; using the “class mayor” to help settle disputes and students being decision makers

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