

## **Sabbatical Report**

**Fall 2020**

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***The Puertas Abiertas Leadership Academy: A De-colonized approach to Re-centering the Lives of Latinx Middle, High School and College Students.***

**An introduction that includes a summary of the purpose and goals of your project:**

A primary focus of the project is to capture the voices of Latinx students who have participated in the *Puertas Abiertas* Leadership Academy (PALA) since 2002. A pedagogy, based on critical reflection and Indigenous based approaches to teaching and learning, has unearthed the voices of K-12 Latinx schooling experiences in Lane County. These voices are critical towards informing Lane County K-12 educators and Lane Community College faculty and staff, of practices and operations that serve to diminish or enhance Latinx experiences. The *Puertas Abiertas* Leadership Academy has received regional and national recognition for its innovative approaches to serving the needs of Latinx students. As co-founder for this academy since 2002, I am in the best position to present and articulate a story, based on the voices of Latinx students, about this innovative program.

Since 2002, the *Puertas Abiertas* Leadership Academy (PALA) has evolved from a summer program, into the various components that currently comprises the academy in 2020. PALA currently consists of: two high school programs (SLD 108 & SLD 109); three college classes (SLD 111,112 ,113); and one middle school mentorship program called *Ganas*. In 2021, a parent component was added to inform Latinx parents of college resources and tools to assist youth with student success in k-12 schools and college readiness. The curriculum has evolved, based on, and responsive to, the stories that students (and now parents) bring

to *Puertas Abiertas*. The curriculum has a positive impact on their self-esteem as *bicultural* Latinxs. Many educators noted a positive difference students' academic performance and school activity participation, upon their return to the high schools.

### **Subtractive Schooling**

Since 2002, *Puertas Abiertas* students have shared that the Latinx experience in k-12 school curriculum was absent, and consequently, they knew very little of Latinx contributions in the United States and the Americas. For many, if not all, *Puertas Abiertas*, was their first exposure to Latinx contributions and achievements. In addition, Latinx students encountered many diminishing experiences in schools relating to their Spanish names or perceived documentation status in the United States.

Latinx students experience “subtractive schooling” in K-12 schools, which serves to divest Latinx students of their culture and language (Valenzuela, 1999). Latinx and non-Latinx students resort to popular media and public discourses on Latinos in the United States for their learning and understanding. This understanding of Latinos is skewed, stereotypical and creates division among communities. PALA strives to unearth and present stories of Latinxs on the landscape which will serve to contend with existing falsehoods. By presenting a visible and vibrant Latinx presence in schools, all Oregon K-12 students will have a better opportunity to examine their beliefs about themselves and about others and rethink the story of Latinxs as part of the human story of courage, fortitude and survival.

### **A De-Colonize Approach to Teaching & Learning**

My experience in presenting at Latinx/ Diversity/Social Justice conferences is that my workshop is the only one that uses the term, “de-colonizing.” I do not want to reproduce a Western construct of political, legal, economic and social integration of Chicanx/Latinx communities in the Americas. For this reason, I draw on Indigenous scholars to recognize the continuing project of colonialism; a project that seems to be lost in Critical Race Theory (Grande, 2004). What if we incorporated a representation based on an Indigenous praxis and

knowledge? The effort here is not to demonize Western people, but rather, to show readers of alternative ways of approaching life, existing thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans, which may be more sustainable than our present understanding (Wildcat, 2009).

Critical theorists believe that thought is mediated by historically constituted power relations (Nieto; Bode, 2008). For example, facts as presented in school environments are never neutral and are always embedded in contexts. While incorporating tenets of Critical Race Theory, I include the work of Indigenous scholars which serve to address the limitations of Western-based representation of Indigenous peoples. This theoretical approach serves to produce a representation grounded in the voice and experience of indigenous peoples in the Americas, as a way, to contend with the colonial project of white-stream education.

Sandy Grande asks, “Is it possible to engage in the grammar of empire without replicating its affects?” Her response is a Red Pedagogy: encouraging indigenous scholars to learn and understand the “grammar,” while at the same time, developing skills to contest the empire. She states, “It is an Indigenous pedagogy that operates at the crossroads of Western theory-specifically critical pedagogy-and indigenous knowledge.” In the context of the student, Sandy Grande states, “the project of de-colonization demands students to acquire not only the knowledge of the ‘oppressor’ but also the skills to dismantle and negotiate the implications of such knowledge (Grande, 2004).”

Decolonization as a theory centers the control of representation on indigenous epistemology and ontology. Decolonization requires the disruption of white-stream education as the universal norm of knowledge, culture and language. I see decolonization as a process designed to shed and recover from the ill effects of colonization, so eloquently stated by Taiaiake Alfred’s book, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Alfred, 2009).

I draw on Indigenous scholars, in particular, Sandy Grande and Taiaiake Alfred. Taiaiake Alfred, in his book, *Wasáse, Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*, offers a relevant framework for implementing a

de-colonized approach to education. At the same time, Alfred shares a conceptual framework reflecting the idea of *Onkwehonwe*, or as Alfred presents it, “way of the original people” as a strategy for leadership and representation. For example, as a consequence of colonialism, students are conditioned with a story that is not of their own Chicanx/Latinx traditions. Consequently, students have drawn on the traditions of colonialism or the “Settler Society” to understand themselves and their place in society. This internalized understanding, according to Alfred, serves to maintain and sustain the settler society. We must inform the story of Chicanx/Latinx schooling experiences with colonialism as a central piece.

The challenge presented by Alfred describes my own dilemma in responding to a crisis of learning among Chicanx/Latinx students. Chicanx/Latinx students, graduates of a colonial system of education, which has compromised their language and indigenous cultural identity, are given voice and access to opportunities offered by the Settler. As an educator, I have focused my efforts on high school/college youth to re-connect with an indigenous heritage as a viable alternative to the rewards of the Settler Society.

Sandy Grande’s *Red Pedagogy*, speaks to the centrality of colonialism in any credible responses to the colonial project. Grande speaks of the need to put colonialism as a central piece of a Red Pedagogy. Grande states, “Thus, indigenous resistance to the grammar of empire-mixed blood/full blood/legal/illegal, alien/resident, immigrant/citizen, tribal/de-tribalized-must be examined in terms of racist, nationalist, and colonial frameworks from which it emerged.”

The “liberal dogma” that Alfred speaks of, has served to frame strategies for social justice within a framework of re-forming colonialism, but not dis-mantling it (Alfred, 2009). A Red Pedagogy, according to Grande, is one that is rooted in “the struggles of Indigenous peoples and the quest for sovereignty and self-determination.” (Grande, 2004). De-colonization requires Chicanx/Latinx students to re-center their experiences (establishing a *personal* sovereignty) as students, and as human beings, deserving of respect, dignity and honor. Towards this

end, we must engage in conversations with colonialism as a central piece of the story. This is what Grande refers to as she states, “...knowledge of the oppressor and the oppressor’s language is essential to the process of resistance.”

A de-colonized learning environment can play a vital role in a de-colonizing education project. Sandy Grande states, “...a Red Pedagogy is committed to providing...students the social and intellectual space to re-imagine what it means to be Indian in contemporary society, among them with a critical analysis of the intersecting systems of domination and the tools to navigate them.”

Framing the Chicanax/Latinx experience by derailing the Indigenous legacy serves the purpose of the colonizer. Any epistemologies, educational policies or leadership expression framed in such a construct for Chicanax/Latinxs, only serves to reinforce colonialism: Hispanic/Latino education is a form of colonized education. Utilizing the language of the colonizer, only frames the story of Chicanax/Latinxs in the context of white superiority, pejorative stereotypes sustained by white-stream media and popular culture, and falsehoods internalized by Chicanax/Latinxs. What happened to the indigenous story of Chicanax/Latinxs? Is it framed in the language of ‘conquistador’ and a linear context of having once existed, but existing no more?

Supporting an Indigenous paradigm is a research methodology distinct from that of white-stream education. An important tool of Indigenous methodology is the privileging of Indigenous over non-Indigenous testimony. The ultimate purpose is to place Indigenous peoples and communities at the center of historical narratives and to reflect their behavior and motives in terms of their own realities rather than the non-Indigenous realities that frame nearly all non-Indigenous writings about Indigenous peoples.

### **Relevance of the Project**

According to the 2010 census, Oregon's Latinx population increased 63 percent in 10 years, largely fueling the state's 12 percent

growth since 2000. In 2010, the Hispanic origin population comprised 11.7% of the total population of Oregon, numbering 450,062. In 2000, it was 8%. Overall, Oregon grew by 419,000 residents, with Latinos accounting for about 43 percent of that growth. The state's white population increased 5 percent, while Washington, like Oregon, also saw huge gains in its Latino population, with 71 percent growth since 2000—a trend that tracks other states with historically small Latino populations.

The Hispanic or Latino population, which includes people of any race, was 62.1 million in 2020. The Hispanic or Latino population grew 23%, while the population that was not of Hispanic or Latino origin grew 4.3% since 2010. The 2020 Oregon Hispanic Population is at 13.9%. In 2010 11.7% of Oregon Population was Hispanic origin. The Hispanic population rose from 24.3% to 27.7%. In 2020, the Lane County Hispanic population is 9.9%, representing a 44% increase since 2010.

In Lane County schools, Latinx students represent the largest community of color in school districts and school buildings. In many cases, Hispanic students represent double, or triple, the enrollment in school buildings of the other three communities of color *combined*. The *Puertas Abiertas* Leadership Academy is a valuable resource to respond to the growing presence of Latinx students. Since 2002, *Puertas Abiertas* has created a framework, based on the stories of Latinx students, that can be utilized to assist the efforts of schools to provide a rewarding and successful school experience for Latinx students and parents. The *Puertas Abiertas* Leadership Academy, was co-founded, and is coordinated by the Chicano/Latino Student Program Coordinator at Lane Community College.

**The goal of this sabbatical proposal is three-fold:**

- 1) Demonstrate how student voices can impact curriculum to be responsive to stories brought by Latinx students to teaching and learning spaces.
- 2) Demonstrate the effectiveness of utilizing a de-colonized approach to teaching and learning for Latinx students as shown through their reflective work and evaluations.
- 3) Create an institutional memory of the *Puertas Abiertas* Leadership by organizing 18 years of files for the purpose of presenting and articulating the evolving nature of the program. This would facilitate the dissemination of PALA to interested stakeholders as a model for responding to the needs of Latinx students in their organizations. Making this model, and creating a template which is accessible, is very important for the state-wide effort to mandate Ethnic Studies in K-12 beginning in 2019.

### **Objectives**

- To reframe the story of Chicano/Latino communities in the Oregon
- Infuse the human story of Chicanx/Latinxs students to contend with political, economic, social and nationalistic perceptions and definitions.
- Incorporate the perspectives of Chicanx/Latinx students to contend with the story of whiteness.
- To make a positive contribution to K-12 Latinx schooling experiences.
- To contend with falsehoods regarding the Chicanx/Latinx presence.
- Identify misconceptions and mis-representations of Chicanx/Latinx students.
- To make a positive contribution to in statewide equity initiatives.
- To create better understanding among educators serving Latinx populations.
- Allow a more complete understanding of Chicanx/Latinx communities to be present in the conversations taking place among educators.

- To enhance student retention and graduation of Chicanx/Latinx students in K-12 schools
- Restore the worth and dignity of Chicanx/Latinx students via a more positive and proactive representation.

**A discussion of the methods and/or processes you used to complete your project.**

I reviewed and organized, 18 years of evaluations by students who participated in the teaching and learning space created by PALA. In addition, I interviewed past participants of PALA, to assess any life-long learning lessons from their experience in PALA. These interviews will serve as a barometer to determine whether the original design of PALA is meeting the stated goals of PALA.

I utilized two leadership models to assess the effectiveness of the teaching and learning spaces created by the *Puertas Abiertas* Leadership Academy. My assumption is that students will use terminology to describe their previous schooling experiences as de-humanizing, a stripping of culture, language and historical knowledge. An additional assumption is that students will use terminology describing aspects of discovery, re-claiming and re-centering, as a result of their experience with PALA.

My claim is that students are not afforded in opportunity to know about Chicanx/Latinx experiences other than popular culture or narrow representations in k-12 curriculum. Students internalize pejorative and stereotypical assumptions about Chicanx/Latinxs that causes incoherence which impacts self-esteem and academic performance. The educational literature names this as “subtractive schooling” (Valenzuela, 1999). We need to allow for student voices to be captured through qualitative approaches. Pursuing a qualitative approach will allow freedom for students to express *in their ways*, what they are receiving from PALA.

To capture real time voices of students, I reviewed evaluations from 2007-2019 of PALA students to demonstrate the effectiveness of



using a de-colonized approach to teaching and learning. I firmly believe there is strong evidence, as shown on their evaluations, which clearly demonstrates the need for providing de-colonized spaces of teaching and learning.

Two leadership models, The Theory of Transformation created by David T. Abalos and Storytelling for Social Justice created by Lee Ann Bell, form the basis for my assessment. These two leadership models are very effective in assisting students to find their own story, and not one created for them to follow. Both models, follow similar approaches to assist individuals to understand a context for their experience as Latinx people and understand how and why societal perceptions towards Latinx populations exist. Below are the descriptions of the two models:

### **Theory of Transformation by Dr. David T. Abalos**

#### **Four Ways of Life**

##### ***EMANATION***

*Could be Positive or Negative*

A way of life in which a moment of truth or lie masquerading as the truth has become frozen, distorted or corrupted. Leadership is in the service of a fixed faith or tradition. Person is told of a truth once and for all. Emphasis on continuity and cooperation with the status quo. Live the inherited stories of our lives as final. Forbidden to create change or conflict. We cannot develop a new consciousness, creativity or new linkages to others or shared goals.

##### ***INCOHERENCE***

*Could be positive or negative*

This way of life (Emanation) dies when people are no longer willing, or able, in the face of so much breaking of established values, ideas, and relationships to deny their own experiences, ideas and hopes. There is a reality of constant rebellion and insecurity. One cannot count on any absolute meaning or loyalty of anyone. There is a need to find a story different than a diminishing experience from the story of Emanation.

This way of life could lead to a story of deformation, a story of transformation or re-create a story of Emanation that privileges oneself while diminishing others.

## ***DEFORMATION***

*Always Negative to Yourself and Others*

Diminishes our humanity and cripples our capacity. The use of physical, psychological or financial violence to the rebellious person to return to the old ways (Life of Emanation). Violence is an acceptable strategy to preserve the way of life of emanation. The way of life of deformation was available as an ally to maintain emanation. People must continue to repress, deny and destroy new ideas, feelings, intuitions and stories that question their way of life.

## ***TRANSFORMATION***

*Always Positive for You and Others*

Find the necessary vision, imagination and creativity to respond to problems. Persist in the creation of the fundamentally new. Vision must be fundamentally just and compassionate. Rejects the inherited and assimilated stories of uncritical loyalty, power and deformation in our lives. We become conscious of different stories and relationships. We prepare ourselves to choose some, reject others, and participate in creating new stories. We must empty ourselves of underlying stories practiced by the oppressor, to prepare ourselves to be filled anew by the sources of Transformation. Everything is in a process; everything is a performance.

### **Storytelling for Social Justice: Connecting Narrative and the Arts in Antiracist Teaching (Teaching/Learning Social Justice)**

by Lee Anne Bell

In Bell's typology, there are four kinds of stories: stock stories, concealed stories, resistance stories, and emerging/transforming stories. **Stock stories** reproduce racism and white privilege; they are a "set of standard, typical or

familiar stories held in reserve to explain racial dynamics in ways that support the status quo” (p. 29). The characteristics of stock stories, such as the American Dream, are that they are collectively maintained but told by individuals; they neutralize challenges to authority and validity; they can perpetuate stereotypes while “absolving” the storyteller of the charge of racism; and, thankfully, they can be destabilized. The second type of story, the concealed, shakes up the status quo.

**Concealed stories** “narrate the ways that race differentially shapes life experiences and opportunities, disputing the unblemished tales . . . propagated by stock stories” (p. 43). They are everywhere but hidden in plain view; it takes work and effort to uncover them within ourselves and to hear them in others. For Bell, stock and concealed stories are two sides of the same coin—we can examine stock stories by asking what is concealed, or we can take concealed stories and ask what they reveal about stock stories.

**Resistance stories** can emerge from concealed stories when they are documented and passed down, or they come from artists, educators, and activists who challenge racism. They have “the potential to inspire and mobilize people . . . to instruct and educate, arouse participation and collective energy” (p. 62).

What differentiates resistance stories from **emerging/transforming stories** is the fact that the latter are new; they have not been heard before. Emerging/transforming stories build on concealed and resistance stories to “catalyze contemporary action against racism . . . subvert taken for granted racial patterns and enable imagination of new possibilities for inclusive human community” (p. 75). These stories tell the experiences of people in the present and the different ways that their lives re-imagine categories, boundaries, and relationships. *Storytelling for Social Justice* acknowledges that talk, by itself, is not enough to dismantle racism.

## **Criteria for Assessment of Responses**

### **Emanation**

Responses that demonstrate the stories students brought to the program, positive or negative, about themselves or experience with schools.

**Example:** I have just graduated high school and that was biggest goal. When I graduated, I never looked at myself and say, “I’m going to college.” I never thought or talked about that. I just wanted to graduate from high school. *Puertas* has taught me that without good education, you can only get so far in life, but with an education, you can do so much. (2010)

*Before coming to PALA-Pasos, I felt embarrassed and nervous about meeting other people. I thought that this was going to be like high school and that people were going to be rude and that they were not going to understand me, but from the very first day, I felt much better.* (2015)

### **Incoherence**

Responses in which students found themselves in a different space for teaching & learning. This may reflect anxiety, doubts, confusion, a new learning, or experience.

**Example:** At first, I really didn’t enjoy the class because we did a lot of interactive activities and I felt really uncomfortable because I didn’t know anyone, but after getting to know everyone better, I began to enjoy the class more. I like how involved we were in lessons and activities and how we just did not sit around while the teacher was talking. (2019)

*Before PALA-Pasos, I did not feel as close to my people. I did not feel alone, but I did feel like I could not share the same feelings with the people that were around me. I did not know much about my culture. I felt less informed about who I am.* (2015)

### **Deformation**

Responses in which students described diminishing experiences regarding being a Latino, skin color, worth, or physical appearance.

**Example:** Before PALA, I didn’t really want to learn about my culture or where I came. The reason behind that is because I really didn’t care. I hated that I was different from all my white friends. I hated that my skin color made people see me differently. I’ve never wanted to learn about my history, I wanted to forget

about it. I didn't want to learn how to speak my language because I didn't know how to speak it correctly and when I spoke it people who knew how to speak it well laughed and told me I was dumb for not knowing how to speak I well. So I was scared and I want to run away from me: Mexican, Latina, brown, colored, Chicana, brown eyes, brown hair, and short brown girl. (2015)

*The Puertas Abiertas program is beautiful and a place in which we learn not to feel ashamed of our culture and skin color. Many times, we feel ashamed of being Latinos and in Puertas, we learn that we should not feel shame or fear for being Latinos.* (2016)

### **Transformation**

Responses in which students saw themselves in a different way that reflected positive self-esteem, personal empowerment, worth, and potential as a Latinx person.

**Example:** Today I feel proud, I feel loved, I feel accepted for who I am. I feel proud for being Latina and being bilingual. I'm proud of who I am from where I come from, and mostly for my culture. I feel loved by my peers/friends by everyone else in *Puertas Abiertas*. I feel loved and close to everyone because I can be myself and not be someone else who isn't me. I'm so happy they accepted me for who I really am. What changed me was that I learned I need to love and respect myself. I learned that I should never give up in my dreams. I should stay strong no matter what. There will always be ups and downs in life but we will make it and achieve. (2015)

*I feel stronger to continue studying because I know that, just as they did, I will be able to make it and I am going to accomplish many of my goals. Now I can go back to my school and feel that, even though I am a Latina, I can be a leader and reach everything that I set my mind to without fearing anything or anyone.* (2011)

### **Stock Story**

Responses in which students saw themselves and their Latino culture as inferior due to the story of Whiteness, and its impact.

**Example:** Before coming to PALA, I used to just think that because I'm Mexican, I couldn't do many things. That you only see white people doing but now I realize I can do the same thing as a White or any other. (2008)

*I also thought that all we can do in this country is work. (2015)*

### **Concealed Story**

Responses in which students expressed appreciation for existing information, although present, never, revealed to students. This occurred through presentations from community members or from students who felt safe to share their stories in class.

**Example:** *Puertas Abiertas* is a good program because it opens the eye of students. This program has helped me a lot because now I know that there are many ways to go to college. One of the things that surprised me the most is that I didn't know that there were so many people in our community who are willing to help us reach our dream. (2011)

*It was a great inspiration for me to see and to listen to all the stories of Latinos that have careers because that is something that I do not see in my daily life. I am very grateful for all the opportunities that have been given to me, some that I did not know existed before. (2010)*

### **Resistance Story**

Responses in which students felt empowerment to actions/changes to attitudes based on the stories shared by others who have successfully navigated a bicultural existence in predominately White spaces.

**Example:** Throughout the two weeks, I got to hear their goals and also their struggles that have helped them keep fighting for their education. The speakers were great. I liked the fact that every single one of them relate to our life stories. That even though they been through stereotypes, pain and let downs, they still had the courage to keep fighting and obtain their goals. I also like how each of them are willing to help us. I feel that even though I lost a lot of allies in high school, I obtained some new ones here at LCC. They have gave us great information that I will use to whatever motivate myself and also prepare myself to become who I need to be for not just my new school but as in life as well. (2011)

*My favorite part were all the presentations from many students and other people, I liked them all. I especially liked the stories from people that talked about our origins, culture, opportunities and values. All the topics were important for me, as were the people that shared their stories with us. It is good to know that these people have gone through many difficult moments and that, in the end, they fought and that today they are people with many talents and education. I realized that if they were able to fulfill their dreams, we should also be able to do it. Every intention can succeed if you tackle it with enthusiasm.*  
(2012)

### **Emerging/Transforming Story**

Responses in which students expressed a change for the future and an on-going commitment to change that will result in transformational experiences.

**Example:** I have learned a lot this couple of weeks about being a leader and learning to step up for a change and how to handle violence and what to do. The way I felt here and PALA made me think that school is important and not a waste of my time! I have the chance to be someone in my life and I know that I should go to school and go everyday. I feel like that's a goal for me and I want to reach that goal! (2008)

*I feel very proud to see all the students transformed in just a few weeks because I can see how they have changed and have become leaders and how they participate more actively in our community.* (2015)

**NOTE:** Responses that are *italicized* are translated from Spanish to English

### **Institutional History**

To capture an institutional history of PALA, I reviewed PALA files for the years 2002-2019, to document the evolving nature of program design and curriculum. The hope is to demonstrate how a curriculum can be responsive to the stories that students may bring to a teaching and learning environment. The historical picture outlines the challenges and opportunities in sustaining the program. This affords an opportunity to create a template of program design and curriculum that may be utilized by other entities.



I created “Snap Shots” for each year from 2002-2019. These Snap Shots follow a regular framework to highlight the essential characteristics of each year: Staff, presenters, curriculum, participants, and budget. Readers will find it easy to understand the operations of each program year. The work involved going through 18 years of files which needed to be organized before the creation of the Snap Shots. In addition to a paper record, every effort was made to create an electronic record of each year which required scanning of original documents as well as organizing existing files. It is very fortunate that the Chicano/Latino Student Program Coordinator, who was involved in this sabbatical, had possession of all the files needed to complete this project. Although the files existed, they were not organized in a way to facilitate the undertaking of this project. Although the present Coordinator had been involved since 2002, another Coordinator was responsible for the program from 2002-2005. Access to those files were limited due to the Covid environment.

Organizing thousands of pictures became another effort to capture the history of PALA. From 2002-2009, many pictures were not in electronic/digital form. After 2009, pictures from digital cameras or smart phones became more available and easier to organize. Similar to the PALA files, many pictures existed but not in an organized manner. The sabbatical allowed for all the pictures to be organized by year, however, pictures from 2002-2009 still needs to be scanned. For now, they are still in paper form but at a minimum, organized into their prospective years. For the years after 2009, it became easier to organize the photos within each year by the program operation: photos in the classroom, graduation and orientation, field trips, etc.

### **A description of the results, outcomes, and/or findings of your project.**

The results of this project demonstrate the “re-centering” of Latinx students in the *Puertas Abiertas* Leadership Academy. Through their testimonies, students shared their personal journeys of transformation. Entering a space of transformation or emerging story allowed students to assess their story of Emanation and create a new story for themselves. A new story that will allow for new opportunities (*Puertas Abiertas/Open Doors*)

never imagined before. A new story with self-confidence and worth, that will not be distracted by the stories of Emanation, Deformation or Stock Story.

Many, if not all students, came with a story of Incoherence. An incoherence with themselves as Latinx students in predominately White environments embedded with Stock stories, Emanation and Deformation. An incoherence with a perceived notion of the worth of a Latinx culture in White educational and work environments and the impact of such environments and how they saw themselves and their parents, especially those from immigrant backgrounds.

Many students came with a story of Emanation that was negative or positive. A negative emanation story of: not seeing themselves as (college) students, destined for employment suited for Latinos; not seeing themselves as leaders to be part of the school culture other than soccer or a Latino club; seeing themselves better or worse than other Latino youth because of language fluency, skin color, legal status, and placement in either ELL or Advance Placement classes. A positive story of Emanation that: reflected their resistance to lose their Spanish language/ethnic culture and strive for a more bicultural (*Spanglish*) existence; a sense of pride for their parents, many who had two jobs and monolingual Spanish speakers; optimism for a better future for themselves *and* for their parents, albeit a solitary quest.

Per the evaluations, I noticed that students who chose to write their comments in Spanish were the ones most likely to identify experiences of deformation and incoherence. It is interesting to note that quite a few bilingual students chose to write their evaluations in Spanish, rather than English. This may show a comfort level to express themselves in a language that allows for a more accurate reflection of self. I decided to italicize these comments in English to identify those that were translated from Spanish. This may give the reader an idea of a more distinct experience from those students who are able to navigate English language environments.

For the past 5 years, PALA has received more students with Indigenous languages from southern Mexico and Guatemala as their first language. Because the pedagogy used in PALA relies heavily on Indigenous ways of teaching and learning, I was pleased to see the active participation of Indigenous students in the program: something they have never experienced in teaching and learning environments in Mexico or Guatemala because they

are based on similar Euro centric constructs existing in U.S. schools. Indigenous presence and participation in PALA has served to reinforce the goals of PALA and the two leadership frameworks: see beyond the Latinx experience and enter the transformational space of all humanity and all living beings.

One change that will be incorporated in future evaluations is to have a consistent set of questions to evaluate the students' experience in PALA. One that would ask what story students brought to PALA (Emanation) and what story are students leaving with PALA (Transforming/Emerging Story). Additionally, a question to address what, in the teaching and learning space in PALA, did students experience which led to their journey of transformation.

In the evaluations, students described some features that led to their change in outlook. The presentations by community members and Latinx Lane staff were often cited as a game changer for students as they became aware of leaders in the community and on campus (Concealed Story) and their road to their careers as bicultural beings in pre-dominantly White spaces (Resistance Story). This is exactly what Dr. Lee Ann Bell presents in her Storytelling for Social Justice Model: Concealed and Resistance Stories must be present to reach the Transformation/Emerging Story stage. The community stories affirmed the concealed aspirations of students and gave affirmation to their stories of incoherence in their lives.

Another pattern noted in the responses was the opportunity to hear the stories of other students attending the program. Providing a safe space for students to share their personal stories challenged many students about their emanation story about *each other*. It appeared to be a *liberating* experience to be able to share something that has been kept inside, for fear of ridicule or retribution, that they experience in K-12 schools. This is what Dr. David Abalos is saying, in his Theory of Transformation Model, that one must empty themselves from a story of emanation that is diminishing to them and choose those parts of the story of emanation that they resonate with in a positive manner.

Above all, what created the space and opportunity for the transformation of Latinx students was a concept of *care*. Nel Noddings identifies an idea of care that is missing in today's school (Noddings, 1995). It goes beyond mere words and diversity mission statements. For the most part, Latinx PALA

students experience a value system at home that requires actions, not words, or promises. Especially homes with minimal economic resources, pragmatic actions are the most valued. PALA students, in their evaluations, often noticed the “care” that all Puertas/Pasos al Futuro staff and community members displayed in the program. This may have not been a new experience within the family, but certainly, a new experience in a school environment. Students often reflected how they are leaving the program with a new “family.”

While the project did include all the SLD 109 Summer Academy PALA evaluations, there is a need to also capture the reflective work of the SLD 108 Éxito class- a college success class taught at the high school. It was the reflective work of these high school students that first gave me an awareness of the immediate impact these classes were having on students.

The total project consists of:

- 1) A narrative summary of the years 2002-2019 detailing a PALA vision, program history/description, curricular approach, student characteristics, staff, community involvement, budget, and institutional support.
- 2) A Snap-Shot of each year, for the years 2002-2019 highlighting components of staffing; curriculum, presentations/workshops; field trips and student participants.
- 3) Testimonies by PALA students from 2007-2019, sharing their experiences and stories they brought to the program and their journeys to transformation upon leaving the program.

**A final reflection on the significance of this project to your work at Lane, your Division, the college, and your discipline.**

The sabbatical allowed me to inform the story of PALA with the voices of the Chicax/Latinx student community. Chicax/Latinx schooling experiences is limited by a framing, guided by the story of “whiteness.” Under such a story, the presence of Chicax/Latinx communities is diminished and not seen as active contributors to the narrative of the landscape, while at the same time elevating the contributions and achievements of White, European decent communities. Presenting the Chicax/Latinx experience, as part of the larger

human story that occurs throughout the world, will serve to create better understanding about contemporary Chicanxs/Latinxs.

I plan to share this work at the college in-service gatherings or any opportunities afforded through the equity lens or cultural competency efforts and any faculty initiatives to address effective teaching and learning strategies. Capturing the voices of Latinx students will assist the organization to assess its role in providing equitable service and learning opportunities—one that is informed by the concealed stories of students and not by the stock stories staff may possess. I have already been active in disseminating information on PALA at local, state and national educational gatherings. I greatly appreciate the opportunity, provided by this sabbatical, to present a stronger, and more focused, presentation of the *Puertas Abiertas* Leadership Academy curricular history, program evolution and student experiences.

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