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"Yeah, Things are Rough in Mexico. Remember We Talked About Hard Times?" Process Drama and a Teachers Role in Critically Engaging Students to Dialogue About Social Inequities in a Dual Language Classroom

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Abstract

The majority of dual language education programs in the U.S. context include children coming together with the long-term goal of becoming bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate (Christian in Two-way bilingual education: students learning through two languages. Educational Practice Report: 12, 1994; Howard et al. in Trends in two-way immersion education: a review of the literature. Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk (CRESPAR), Report 63, 2003). It is urgent that practitioners and scholars who see the value of the TWDL model continue to explore methods that address social inequities that arise in highly contested contexts such as an urban public school classroom. Drawing from a critical consciousness (Freire in Harv Educ Rev 40:499–521. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.40.3.h76250x720j43175, 1998) framework and discourse analysis methods this paper explores how one dual language teacher critically engaged students to dialogue about undocumented immigration through the implementation of process drama. Findings indicate that students will engage about social inequities when teachers facilitate discussions by pushing students for further inquiry, to provide contextual information, giving students a voice, or affirming their responses. The urgency to raise critical consciousness in two-way bilingual education contexts also emerged as these dual language programs continue to be gentrified across the nation (Palmer et al. in Theory Pract. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2019.1569376, 2019; Valdés in Harv Educ Rev 67(3):391–429, 1997; Valdez et al. in Urban Rev 48(4):601–627, 2016).

Suzanne's research examines the intersection of race, language, ethnicity, and class in the two-way dual language classroom. She recently completed a research project interviewing Latinx parents about their family language policy decisions to raise bilingual children. She teaches courses that focus on emergent bilinguals with an emphasis on issues related to social (in)equities. Each course is framed to build on the rich cultural and linguistic practices *all* children bring to the classroom.

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Introduction

Dual language education includes students from the majority language, English, and a minoritized language, such as Spanish, though there are several languages included in various models across the U.S. (see www.cal.org for a directory of dual language programs in the U.S.). The majority of dual language education programs in the U.S. context include children coming together with the long-term goal of becoming bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate. The combined English and Spanish speaking backgrounds of the students is what makes the two-way dual language (TWDL) model "two-way." Due to its popularity with upper middle-class families, the TWDL model has been on the rise in the U.S. context. Scholars have attributed the rise of TWDL models due to interest convergence (Cervantes-Soon 2014; Heiman 2017; Valdés 1997; Valdez et al. 2016). Interest convergence occurs when members of the dominant group support the interests, such as raising bilingual children or access to an equitable education in urban contexts, that have historically been the plight of minoritized communities (e.g., Mendez v. Westminister 1946; Lau v. Nichols 1974; Castañeda v. Pickard 1981) because they (*finally*) see a benefit in gaining access to a bilingual and equitable education for their children. As stated in other work (Flores 2016; Palmer et al. 2019; Pimentel et al. 2008), interest convergence by the dominant group is now the case with bilingual education.

Efforts to evaluate TWDL implementation are certainly emerging (Heiman and Murakami 2019; Henderson and Palmer in press), but it is urgent that practitioners and scholars who see the value of the TWDL model continue to explore methods that address social inequities that arise in highly contested contexts such as an urban public school classroom. Some of these social inequities include issues that affect immigrant communities and students of color such as undocumented immigration (García-Mateus 2016), gentrification (Heiman and Yanes 2018) and police brutality (Kubota et al. 2003). In theory, any classroom where there are ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse students is the ideal context for teachers and students to address issues of (in)equity. Issues of (in)equity have been documented as emerging in urban school contexts which reflect macro issues of (in)equity in society where people of color are often times silenced or further marginalized (Foley 1991; Malsbary 2014; Valenzuela 1999). This paper explores how the use of *process drama* is a viable method for examining social inequities in the TWDL model where students come together from diverse backgrounds to become bilingual, biliterate, bicultural, and, more recently, critically conscious. This case study examines the role of a first-grade teacher, Mrs. Jackson (pseudonym), in critically engaging students to dialogue about social inequities in a TWDL classroom via the use of children's literature and process drama. Therefore, the following research question guided this analysis, *What role do teachers play in critically engaging students during process drama to dialogue about social inequities? How do teachers contribute to the critical awareness of social inequities?*

The teacher's role in critically engaging students about social inequities in TWDL classrooms has the potential to support the development of critical awareness for *all* students (Caldas 2018). In this paper we see a first grade teacher open up spaces in her TWDL classroom for students to explore social inequities that emerged in the multicultural children's books she read to them. By re-enacting scenes from the multicultural children's books, students co-constructed their knowledge and awareness about inequities marginalized and immigrant communities experience in the U.S. The following section describes the theories used to frame the analysis of re-enactments from children's books and a literature review of process drama in the classroom.

Critical Engagement in Two-way Immersion

This paper draws from Paolo Freire's critical pedagogy (1993) and critical consciousness (2005) frameworks to examine one teacher's purposeful and intentional pedagogical moves to shed light on urgent issues, specifically, undocumented immigration. I discuss the use of critical pedagogy and juxtapose it against the development of critical awareness as a preliminary step towards critical consciousness in order to reveal the social inequities experienced by minoritized groups in the U.S. I argue that teachers in TWDL classrooms have the moral responsibility to critically engage students about some of the social inequities that exist in society and the ways they can affect marginalized communities and benefit others. In the following sections, I describe the way I am using *critical pedagogy*, define *critical consciousness* and argue that before (young) students can emerge as critically conscience, they must first engage critically through discourse and develop critical awareness.

Critical Pedagogy and Critical Awareness

Freire's (1993) pedagogy of the oppressed *includes* the perspective of marginalized communities in which they examine social inequities with the potential of opening up opportunities for individuals and communities to explore and co-construct knowledge about social issues that affect them. Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed is the foundation of critical theoretical frameworks included in the scholarship of others (Paris and Alim 2017; Caldas 2018; Cervantes-Soon et al. 2017; Heiman and Yanes 2018; Ladson-Billings 1995; Pimentel et al. 2008) whose work focus on deconstructing structural inequities and liberation from oppressive contexts, like a public school classroom.

Ladson-Billings (1995) work towards a more culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) sought to decrease the academic gap by "affirm[ing] [students] cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (p. 469). Paris and Alim (2017) culturally sustaining pedagogies lovingly builds on Ladson-Billings theoretical framework of CRP in that it "seeks to perpetuate and foster—*to sustain*—linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling and as a needed response

to demographic and social change" (p. 44). Freire describes how in order for the oppressed to be liberated they must be woken to the ways they are being oppressed which involves a sort of *conscientização* (or conscious raising) and taking action to overcome social inequities. Freire (1998) describes this process or humanizing experience as *conscientizacion,* where the individual moves from consciousness to *being conscience,* and taking on action to dismantle structural inequities that (re) produce social inequities. Additionally, *conscientizacao* is a human process that recognizes how people "are not only *in* the world, but *with* the world" (p. 68) and have the capacity to transform their world to a more just one (Freire 1998). Palmer et al. (2019) describe the process of conscious raising as including four elements: interrogating power, critical listening, historicizing schools, and embracing discomfort. The capacity of an individual or community to transform oppressive contexts is a process that involves a "deepening of the attitude of awareness" of structural inequities and the individuals' role in perpetuating social inequality. The following section describes in greater detail how *process drama* can serve as a potential critical pedagogy in which teachers can engage students critically and develop critical awareness about social inequities with the hope of pushing them towards taking action.

Implementing Process Drama to Engage Students About Social Inequities

In the last few decades the use of drama in the classroom has been an area of interest among researchers and teaching professionals (Dunn and Stinson 2011; Heathecote and Bolton 1994; Hertzberg 2003; Hertzberg and Ewing 1998; Ntelioglou 2011; Pelligrini and Galda 1982; Rothwell 2011; Wagner 1998). Wagner (1998) describes the goals of process drama as a way to "create experience through which students may come to understand human interactions, empathize with other people, and internalize others points of view" (p. 5). There is little long-term research available about process drama in the second language classroom (Stinson and Winston 2011) and only a dearth in the DLBE classroom (Caldas 2018; Roser et al. 2014, 2015). Hertzberg and Ewing (1998) describe *process drama* as a social and pedagogical paradigm that emerged in the late 1960s as a method teachers could implement to discuss social justice issues and provide students a safety net by speaking from the perspective of a character.

Roser et al. (2014) included the use of multicultural children's literature, *Amazing Grace* (Hoffman 1996)*, Friends from the Other Side* (Anzaldua 1995), and *Henry and the Kite Dragon* (Hall 2004), during process drama to develop the bi-literacy skills of students in a TWDL classroom while discussing social justice issues. Roser et al. (2015) work is evidence that the use of multicultural children's books that deal with issues of race/ethnicity, gender, immigration is pivotal in providing opportunities for children to speak in a safe, yet risk taking place about social justice issues. Martinez et al. (2015) describe how Latino children's literature (also referred to multicultural children's books) offer *all* students a window into another world that may reflect a students' background or give access to different cultures and "elicit cultural connections" (p. 223). Process drama also has the potential of providing students

access to an additional space in the TWDL classroom to negotiate the meaning of story and explore social inequities (Caldas 2018).

Freire describes how a critical pedagogy includes being able to "*name* the world" in order to "change the world." Caldas (2018) work with a 2nd grade TWDL classroom used a drama-based pedagogy where students were asked to explore traditional expectations of gendered roles by responding to a multicultural children's book, *La Asombrosa Graciela*.[1] *La Asombrosa Graciela* is about a little girl of color that wanted to play the role of Peter Pan in a play but was met with hesitation because she did not meet the gendered (nor racial) expectations of her peers. By *naming* gendered expectations and then disrupting them through drama students gained a greater awareness of gender nonconformity. According to Freire's consciousness raising framework this experience of *naming* their world would better equip them to *change* their world. Caldas findings indicate that conversations that focus on social inequities are "urgent for inclusivity in the classroom" (p. 13). Freire described the merging of awareness and action "As critical perception embodied in action, a climate of hope and confidence develops which leads [people] to overcome the limit-situations" (p. 99).

Scholarly work implementing process drama in the classroom have introduced varying strategies, such as freeze-frame and role-play, when working with adult students (Dunn and Stinson 2011; Rothwell 2011; Ntelioglou 2011; Pelligrini and Galda 1982). Linds and Goulet (2010) examined within an antiracism schools program, "…how schools are sites of racist incidents and practices and part of the reason for the lack of engagement of minority students in schools" (p. 160). Linds and Goulet (2010) described strategies to introduce drama and that help in eliciting discussion about racism while working with youth. They used strategies such as *storytelling, imagery, and forum* theatre, which they found to be effective when exploring the possibilities of an anti-racist education. In this study, Mrs. Jackson's willingness to discuss social inequities experienced by minoritized language communities in a straightforward, matter-of-fact manner, allowed students to openly discuss possible solutions that they may have not shared in another context.

Methodology

Context

Hillside elementary[2] was located in an urban and mid-size city in Texas near a large university. It was in its second year of implementing a Spanish/English fifty-fifty, two-way dual language (TWDL) model of bilingual education. The study was part of a larger ethnographic research project examining the ways a school community made sense of the first years of TWDL implementation. One area of interest was

[1] Spanish version of *Amazing Grace* (Hoffman 1996).

[2] All names of people and locations are pseudonyms.

how students and teachers interacted in Spanish and English and how they defined their bilingualism and bilingual identities (Palmer et al. 2014).

Between October 6th and December 16th, 2011 I visited the first-grade classroom a total of 12 times over 6 consecutive weeks for 1 h per visit during their literacy block, both in Spanish and English, and during social studies. Hillside was in its second year of TWDL implementation when data was collected for this case study. The student body was still evenly distributed in terms if linguistic and racial makeup. Approximately half of the students in the first grade classrooms came from a Latinx, Spanish-speaking, and working class background and the other half was made up of mostly white,[3] English-speaking, and upper middle-class background. Part of the TWDL program design included language of instruction being separated depending on the content area. For example, math was taught in English and social studies and science were taught in Spanish. During reading and language arts instruction students were separated depending on their "primary" or stronger language. Therefore, the students traveled in cohorts between three teachers depending on the content area and language the teacher was designated to teach.

Mrs. Jackson, the focal teacher for this paper, taught social studies in Spanish and language arts in Spanish and English. The times that I observed occurred during the social studies and the language arts block. Another feature of this TWDL model is that it included a language-of-day where Monday, Wednesday, and Friday were designated Spanish days and Tuesday and Thursday were designated English days. This was purposely done to increase the status and use of the minoritized language within the school community. A unique feature of this TWDL model were the bilingual pairs where one student was designated the "Spanish expert" and the other the "English expert". The bilingual pairs were meant to encourage students to help one another understand how to complete an academic task in either language. It should be noted that Mrs. Jackson used her bilingualism in fluid ways, often speaking English during Spanish content areas and vice versa, but in strategic and purposeful ways (Palmeret al. 2014). By modeling this authentic and dynamic way of being bilingual, she opened up spaces where her students were able to draw on their linguistic repertoire while co-constructing meaning about a scene from a children's book.

Just as interest in Hillside's TWDL program was rising among parents, additional researchers from a local university were also intrigued by the program and the opportunity it offered to work with a culturally and linguistically diverse group of children. The new researchers decided to work alongside the larger ethnographic study team to train teachers about process drama. They brought children's books into the school in order to explore the power of process drama in a TWDL context. I was also interested in process drama and continuing my work with Mrs. Jackson, therefore I decided to help with the implementation of process drama. Mrs. Jackson and I were learning side-by-side about how to implement process drama and became co-teachers during the 6 weeks I collected data in her classroom. As mentioned

[3] The author uses a lowercase "w" for the label white to problematize and challenge representations of white supremacy in society and in school settings.

earlier, the researchers provided first grade teachers with multicultural children's picture books that had key critical moments, which required a difficult decision. Teachers would read the books up to that point, close the book, and invite children to "play into" the story. The children acted out the challenges and worked together to come up with solutions to story dilemmas. Process drama provided a context in which children were asked to negotiate the meaning of a text from the perspective of a character.

Researcher Positionality

I identify as a second-generation Mexican–American, or Chicana, and bilingual. I am both a proponent and activist for bilingual education, but am concerned about the way the two-way immersion, or TWDL, model is evolving to serve the interests of the majority group—mostly middle-class white families. I taught as a bilingual teacher at Title 1 schools in Texas and Missouri for 5 years (including a two-way kindergarten classroom). I was raised in a Mexican immigrant community in Southern California where my ethnic and linguistic identity was positioned in both positive and negative ways while attending public schools. I participated in protests with my parents advocating for the equitable treatment of undocumented immigrants in our local community which has played a significant role in the way I have explored social justice issues in bilingual contexts.

My role as the researcher and co-teacher mediated the collection and analysis of the data. Part of the reason I decided to be immersed in the interactions of process drama with students was because of the pivotal role *teacher-as-facilitator* can be in encouraging students to engage in critical discussion about a particular text (Anton 1999). Alim (2004) encouraged researchers to use "Ethnosensitive procedures [which] are best employed when one has knowledge of self and community and is willing to face the tensions that may arise during the course of the research, as well as the underlying reasons that give rise to those tensions" (p. 44). My positionality, as a bilingual Latina or heritage speaker of Spanish, participant observer-facilitator, also played a part in how students interpreted and reinterpreted the scenes they reenacted as I, too, used Spanish and English interchangeably during my interactions with students.

Participants

Mrs. Jackson

In 2011 when this study took place, Mrs. Jackson was beginning her eleventh year of teaching at Hillside where she taught in various grade levels prior to teaching first grade. Mrs. Jackson, a bilingual Latina from the border region of Texas, regularly drew on both Spanish and English in order to intentionally communicate ideas with bilingual students. Additionally, she drew on experiences on the Texas/Mexico border to inform her pedagogy.

Table 1 Student demographics

Name	Gender	Background	Home Language
Valentina	Female	Uruguayan/white	Bilingual
Elizabeth	Female	Mexican	Spanish
Mimi	Female	Colombian/Korean	Bilingual
Tessa	Female	white	English
Leo	Male	white	English
Ramon	Male	African-American	English
Liam	Male	white	English
Charlie	Male	white	English
Josue	Male	Mexican	Spanish
Monique	Female	African-American	English

Focal Students

All students in this paper are considered emergent bilinguals because as members of a dual language program they are asked to draw on both their use of Spanish and English throughout the day. Table 1 shows the students gender, ethnic, racial, and language backgrounds; who are listed in the order that they appear in the transcripts to follow.

Data and Discourse Analysis

A total of ninety-two video clippings of small and whole group student–student and student–teacher interactions were video and audio recorded. Mrs. Jackson was informally interviewed while I was collecting data in her classroom during the fall of 2011. Erickson's (2004) type-one method, whole to part inductive approach, of video analysis facilitates the understanding about the ways macro and hegemonic ideologies about social inequities can infiltrate into local contexts. The analysis began by reviewing the whole corpus (macro) and taking steps—Erickson's type one includes six steps—towards examining a small part of the data and honing in on the interactive exchanges between a teacher and her students to describe the ways process drama encouraged students to engage in critical discussions.

The four transcripts in this paper were analyzed in three phases. The focus was on the ways Mrs. Jackson prepared and engaged students to discuss social inequities minoritized communities experience. First, observer field notes were conducted during numerous viewings noting any verbal and/or nonverbal phenomena and the time (in s) of major transitions. Additionally, a timeline with s and min included, major topics, speaking and listening activities, and the contrasting intensity of listening and behavior by listeners was noted. Because I was curious about the ways Mrs. Jackson was facilitating discussions with young children about issues related to social inequities, I coded the transcripts based on the interactive exchanges that occurred between the teacher and the students (Anton 1999). Interactive exchanges

are pivotal in encouraging students to co-construct knowledge and negotiate their own sense making of a concept. Mrs. Johnson's responses are coded as follows: *pushing for further inquiry* (lines 40, 52, and 60), *voice and affirmation* (line 52 and 58), *and providing contextual* information (lines 52 and 56). Lastly, the transcripts were coded based on an emerging theme where the *teacher* was *acting-as-a-facilitator* (lines 3, 5, 10, 12, 14, 16) to implement process drama and eventually to engage students discuss social inequities.

Findings

Data analysis suggests that when the *teacher acts as a facilitator* during the re-enactment of scenes from children's literature she can engage students to negotiate the meaning of a critical scene through dialogue, critically engage them when the topic changes to a social justice issue, and lastly, develop a sense of critical awareness about social inequities. Process drama allowed the children to focus on narratives and share experiences and knowledge; all while developing a critical awareness about social inequities. A sense of urgency to raise critical consciousness about the social inequities Latinx peers and other students of color in this TWDL program had experienced emerged in the findings. The analysis of the following four transcripts are representations of how one teacher (critically) engaged students during process drama to dialogue about social inequities and how she contributed to the critical awareness of social inequities.

Teacher as Facilitator to Engage Students in Dialogue

The first step in creating a safe, yet risk taking place for children to explore possible solutions from children's literature involved using familiar or traditional fairytales such as Cinderella/*Cenicienta* (Brown 1971). Mrs. Jackson read the book in Spanish during the Spanish language arts block and then asked the students to re-enact scenes from the book which they did in the language of their choice: Spanish, English, or both simultaneously. In the following excerpt, we see students engaging in dialogue to find a solution. This excerpt involves Elizabeth (Mexican and Spanish-dominant), as Cinderella, Mimi (Colombian/Korean and English-dominant) as the fairy godmother, and Valentina (Uruguayan/white and Bilingual), as Cinderella's mother, who were re-enacting in front of the whole class a scene from Cinderella/*Cenicienta*; which was taking place at the ball.

Excerpt 1

(1) Valentina: *Te tienes que ir.*/You have to go.
(2) Elizabeth: *No me voy a ir con ustedes.*/I am not going to leave with all of you.

[The sisters plead with Cinderella to leave.]

(3) Mrs. Jackson:	*Madrina,¿consejos para Cenicienta? Madrina,¿Tienes consejos*?/Godmother, advice for Cinderella? Do you have advice for Cinderella?
(4) Valentina, speaking to Mimi:	Do you have something to say?
(5) Mrs. Jackson, speaking to Mimi:	What are you going to tell her to do? She needs to make a decision. Is she going to stay with the prince or is she going to leave?
(6) Mimi:	You should go.
(7) Elizabeth:	Why?
(8) Someone from the audience:	Stay with the prince.
(9) Elizabeth:	Why?
(10) Mrs. Jackson:	She wants a reason.
(11) Elizabeth:	Why? Tell me.
(12) Mrs. Jackson:	Why should she stay with the prince?
(13) Mimi:	Because you have to get married.
(14) Mrs. Jackson:	… because, why?
(15) Mimi:	She has to get married.
(16) Mrs. Jackson:	Oh, she should stay because they are supposed to get married? So what's your decision *Cenicienta*? *¿Qué decidiste?¿Te vas a quedar?*/What did you decide? Are you going to stay?
(17) Elizabeth:	*Quedar.*/To stay.
(18) Mrs. Jackson:	*Bueno, baila.*/Okay, dance.

Mrs. Jackson facilitated students making sense of the scene above by asking students questions about why Elizabeth, as Cinderella, should stay or leave the ball (lines 3, 5, 12, 14, and 16). In the transcript above, there were a total of 18 turns-of-talk in English and Spanish. The conversation started entirely in Spanish with Valentina, as Cinderella's mom, stating that Elizabeth, as *Cenicienta*, had to leave the ball (Line 1). Mrs. Jackson also encouraged, or pushed, students to think of reasons as to why Elizabeth, as Cinderella, should stay at the ball or leave. This sort of strategic prompting forced students in the class to provide either a question (line 4) or a rationale (line 13 and 15) as to why Elizabeth should stay at or leave the ball.

Although the teachers role in this scene could be described as simply encouraging dialogue between students (and she was); Mrs. Jackson was also laying the foundation of process drama such as the kinds of interactions, with words and body language, students would be asked to delve into later with social justice topics and not just traditional fairy tale dilemmas. For example, prior to re-enacting a scene and as she facilitated discussions she asked students to

consider, and modeled for students, the ways their body should mimic someone speaking or dancing at a ball and the expressions their faces could be making when pleading why Elizabeth, as Cinderella, should stay or leave the ball. These sort of interactions in process drama are necessary in helping students get comfortable with body movements and with practicing what a re-enactment could look and sound like with their peers (Roser et al. 2014).

The transcript above is representative of the ways Mrs. Jackson introduced process drama through various traditional fairy tales and children's books. After students got comfortable with re-enacting scenes from traditional children's books, Mrs. Jackson and the researcher introduced a book of poems about experiences many first generation immigrants, with a Latinx focus, face in their new communities and school settings. Some of the experiences included undocumented immigration to the mispronunciation or, in some cases, a change of their names into English. In the following transcript, we see Mrs. Jackson acting as a facilitator to critically engage students about undocumented immigration.

Teacher as Facilitator to (Critically) Engage Students About Social Inequities

Mrs. Jackson read the poem, *My Name is Jorge* (Medina 1999), in Spanish and the students re-enacted and discussed it in both Spanish and English. The poem is about a father (unnamed in the poem) who just shared with his son, *Jorge,* that they would have to pack their most treasured belongings and leave to Mexico that evening.

In the following transcript there are four participants: Mrs. Jackson, the researcher, Tessa, and Leo (both white and English-dominant). Tessa was playing the part of *Jorge,* and Leo was playing the part of *Jorge's* dad. Children were asked to create their own dramatization of concerns *Jorge* could possibly have in response to his dads' announcement about having to move back to Mexico. Tessa, as *Jorge*, chose to share with dad the reasons why she was afraid to move:

Excerpt 2

(19) Tessa, as Jorge, says:	I don't want to move to Mexico because I don't want to eat with my hands.
(20) Leo:	We have to.
(21) Tessa:	Why?
(22) Leo:	Because our house is on fire (class chuckles).
(23) Researcher:	*Jorge, que le vas a decir?*/Jorge, what are you going to say to him?
(24) Tessa:	But I don't want to go to Mexico because there [are] barely any toys.
(25) Leo:	Then we will bring ours…
(26) Mrs. Jackson:	What else is worrying you, Jorge? What else are you worried about?

(27) Tessa:	What if I forget English?
(28) Leo:	We'll bring your dictionary.
(29) Mrs. Jackson:	What else are you worried about, Tessa?
(30) Tessa:	I don't want to eat with my hands I want to eat with a fork.
(31) Leo:	Then pack one in your suitcase
(32) Researcher:	*Jorge*, what makes you think you are going to have to eat with your hands?
(33) Tessa:	Because maybe *Jorge* has been to Mexico before, then he's moved here, then he's moving back to Mexico.
(34) Mrs. Jackson:	Have you seen something or heard something that has made you think that in Mexico you can only eat with your hands?
(35) Tessa:	I've heard it from my friends.
(36) Mrs. Jackson:	Okay, so *Papá*, is that true?
(37) Leo:	[shaking head side to side—confirming no]
(38) Mrs. Jackson:	Well *dile*/tell a Jorge, tell Jorge.
(39) Leo:	It's not true

When Mrs. Jackson and the researcher helped facilitate conversations during the dramatizations of scenes children seemed to engage in richer discussions (Anton 1999; Dunn and Stinson 2011) about social issues that affect immigrant communities and to think more critically about the character's concerns that they were role-playing. Additionally, as the class continued to engage and become more comfortable in the re-enactment of scenes they also delved deeper into topics like undocumented immigration. As mentioned the poem was read in Spanish and students were able to converse as their designated characters in the language of their choice. In the transcript above, Mrs. Jackson chose to keep the content, making sense of undocumented immigration, the focus rather than making sure Leo or Tessa produce the target language which for them was Spanish.

The re-enactment above occurred in front of the whole class and opened up with Tessa exclaiming, "I don't want to move to Mexico because I don't want to eat with my hands." Leo, acting as the father, tries to placate Tessa's concerns about moving with apathetic answers such as "we have to" move or because their house was on fire (line 22). Tessa and the my (the author) responses reflect the kind of dialogue Mrs. Jackson had established when re-enacting scenes from a book where we asked questions (lines 21 and 23) rather than state possible solutions.

The opportunity to engage in a discussion about undocumented immigration from the perspective of a character gave Tessa, as *Jorge*, a safe space to share her own thoughts and understanding about what it may feel like to have to flee a country you consider home. Her rationale includes the lack of toys (line 24), the possibility of forgetting English (line 27), and having to eat with her hands (line 30). Tessa was able to take a risk and share with others how she experienced the world, or what Freire (1998) called "naming the world". Tessa walked into her role as *Jorge* with what seemed like a perception of Mexicans as only eating with their hands (line 19)

and as lacking toys (line 24). Process drama opened up the potential for students to essentially embrace discomfort (Palmer et al. 2019), a component of critical consciousness, by participating and critically engaging in conversation about a sensitive topic that affected the Latinx members of their TWDL community.

Mrs. Jackson diligently tried to facilitate the children's attempt to critically listen (Palmer et al. 2019) to Tessa's concerns, as *Jorge*, about the fear undocumented immigrants have to sometimes face of being forced to return to their country of origin. In doing so, students like Tessa and Leo had the potential, or capacity, to deepen their awareness of structural inequities that push people to immigrate. Although the conversation in the transcript above does not display evidence of critical consciousness, it does, however, force Leo and Tessa to problematize an issue they would probably not had to engage in had Mrs. Jackson not made the topic of discussing social issues a priority or if they were not in the same classroom as other Latinx and heritage speakers of Spanish.

Having a discussion about undocumented immigration from the perspective of an undocumented immigrant created an awareness that the issue exists (albeit at a first grade level), which is one of the first steps in becoming critically aware. In the following section, Mrs. Jackson pushes students to further discuss undocumented immigration with the use of another multicultural and multilingual children's book.

Teacher as Facilitator: The Urgency to Raise Critical Consciousness

In the transcript below, Mrs. Jackson had finished reading the book *Friends from the Other Side* by Gloria Anzaldua (1995) in English. The book is about *Prietita* and *Joaquin* who develop a friendship despite *Prietita* being from the U.S. and, *Joaquin* from the other side of the border, Mexico. In the book, *Joaquin* is undocumented and finds himself trying to hide from border patrol and *Prietita* decides to help him and his mother find shelter in the local *curanderas'* (healers) home.

The following dialogue took place after children were asked to present their interpretation to the whole class of a critical scene from the book. There are 9 participants in the following transcript: the teacher; myself (the researcher); and 7 students (see Table 1). The class was debriefing after one of the groups of students had finished presenting their re-enactment to the whole class of *Prietita* and *Joaquin* looking for a place to hide. Each group was asked, *what would you do if a friend had to hide from border patrol?* Often, Mrs. Jackson and the researcher would add an additional character, one as a friend, to offer advice or to encourage the students to think about alternative solutions to a scene. The following dialogue begins with Mrs. Jackson asking Liam (white and English dominant) and Ramon (African-American and English-dominant) what their re-enactment *actually* looked like in their small groups, which was different than what they had just presented to the whole class:

Excerpt 3

(40) Mrs. Jackson:	Liam and Ramon what did y'all say? What did that look like?
(41) Ramon:	I think that wouldn't be a good idea.

(42) Liam:	Then dig a hole and go in it.
(43) Ramon:	Woul' that wouldn't be a good idea because I could be dead.
(44) Liam:	[closing stage curtain in front of Ramon] Bye!
(45) Ramon:	You said something else. [You said,] Go [hide] in the garden and do that then. You forgot that part.
(46) Researcher:	Let's stop right there. Ramon said, "I can't go in the hole and hide, I could die." That's pretty serious, don't you think?

[Students in audience agree]

(47) Charlie:	They can think of better things that won't make them die.
(48) Researcher:	They can think of better things?
(49) Charlie:	Safer places.
(50) Researcher:	Safer places, okay. And, what did you want to say, *Josue*?
(51) Josue:	They can say, "Let's check in here, they can find Joaquin."

Mrs. Jackson was reminded by a student about how people experience hard times (inaudible); a concept they had been discussing based on another read aloud when the conversation took a slightly different turn:

Excerpt 4

(52) Mrs. Jackson:	Yeah, things are rough [in Mexico]. Remember we talked about "hard times?"
(53) Tessa:	And some people are rich in Mexico and they don't want to share their money with the people that are poor.
(54) Monique:	But, what happens if, uh, him stay in the ground, he will die, and try to dig some more, and if the, uh, if the border patrol come and then drop dead, he wouldn't have found him and pulled him back up, called somebody to pull him back up, and take him to jail
(55) Josue:	You can just say to the…
(56) Mrs. Jackson:	…to the border patrol.
(57) Josue [nodding in affirmation]:	You can say, "I just want to live here 'cause I don't want to leave this place."
(58) Mrs. Jackson:	Did y'all hear what Josue said? Maybe you can just tell the border patrol, "I just want to live here."
(59) Monique:	Yeah and then you'll go free.
(60) Mrs. Jackson:	You think they would just let him go free?
(61) Monique:	Yes.

(62) Tessa:	Maybe you can say, "Umm, I just to live here because, umm, I don't have really a home in Mexico."
(63) Valentina:	No, or you can say, "I just want to live here because I have hard times in Mexico."
(64) Monique:	Or, maybe they don't have work and they don't like having hard things to do.

The most salient finding that emerged in the analysis of the two transcripts above was the purposeful and mindful pedagogical moves Mrs. Jackson was doing to develop critical awareness with her class. Mrs. Jackson and I observed that the richer conversations took place when students were practicing in their small groups what they were going to re-enact in front of the whole-class. Students had a tendency to present to the class something different than what they had prepared. Due to this observation, Mrs. Jackson, purposefully positioned and repositioned students (Palmer et al. 2014) as noted in the ways she pushed some of them to reflect on what they had chosen to re-enact in their small groups (line 40). Data analysis suggests that students understood the urgency to hide a friend from border patrol, but struggled to make sense of the structural inequities that push immigrants to immigrate undocumented. This is to be expected as they are 6 and 7 year old children and the (humanizing) process of becoming critically conscience occurs over time (Freire 1998, Heiman and Yanes 2018; Palmer et al. 2019). The teacher and researcher facilitated the re-enactment by pushing students for further inquiry (lines 40, 50, 52, 60), providing contextual information (lines 52 and 58), giving students a voice (line 55), or affirming their responses (lines 46 and 58).

Mrs. Jackson created a space and time in her class to develop critical awareness by purposely selecting a book about undocumented immigration in order to delve deeper into the topic. It should be noted that the introduction of this book came at a point in the implementation of process drama where children had multiple times to practice acting and discussing sensitive issues, which are not typically part of a first grade class curriculum. In excerpt three, the dialogue began with Mrs. Jackson asking Liam and Ramon what their re-enactment of trying to hide Joaquin actually looked like in their small groups (line 40). Liam and Ramon's solution includes digging a hole (line 42) or hiding in the garden (line 45) both of which are viable options, although Ramon worries that Joaquin could die in the hole. The researcher asks students to pause and think of this as a real consequence of possibly dying in a hole while hiding from border patrol (line 46). Another student, Charlie, recommends thinking of "safer places" to hide (line 47), while Josue interjects and explains the possibility of border patrol finding Joaquin's hiding spot (line 51).

Critical awareness is a preliminary step to *conscientização* where the individual moves from "consciousness to being conscience" (Freire 1998; Palmer et al. 2019; Heiman and Yanes 2018), which can push students to become aware of the structural inequities that (re)produce social inequities. Although the students responses did not deconstruct the structural inequities that push immigrants to seek asylum in other countries, partially due to curriculum constraints, they did have the opportunity to experience and understand, from the perspective of a character, what it can be like

to live with the fear of being deported. In doing so, they were able to recognize that they "are not only *in* the world, but *with* the world" and, therefore, have the capacity to change their world (Freire 1998). These transcripts are representative of the sort of interactive exchanges Mrs. Jackson critically engaged students in and through process drama and children's literature.

What did transpire, and perhaps a more important point, was Mrs. Jackson facilitating the interaction between Josue, a bilingual Latino student from a mixed immigrant status family, and other students responses (lines 50, 56, and 58). Facilitating this interaction became the most important and salient move because it was crucial that students (critically) listen to Josue's voice as someone who came from the borderlands. Additionally, the interaction between Josue and his classmates reduced the marginalization of other Latinx immigrant students in his class who possibly came from mixed immigrant status backgrounds.

Mrs. Jackson worked hard to build a community in her class that allowed for a safe, yet risk taking place for *all* students to share and (as described in other work and as we saw in all the excerpts) draw from their full linguistic repertoire despite the strict separation of language in the TWDL program (Palmer et al. 2014, García-Mateus and Palmer 2017). Furthermore, Josue was a student who was normally quiet and described as a "struggling reader" (Teacher interview, 12/6/11), although process drama provided a space for him to share experiences, or as Anzaldua (1987) describes, *his* stories from the borderlands. In other work (Palmer et al. 2014) the same teacher positioned students like Josue, Latinx and Spanish-dominant, to open up during process drama where he felt comfortable sharing about his grandmother being deported by border patrol. Lastly, Mrs. Jackson drew from her own identity as someone from the Texas/Mexico border and invited discussions about border politics, the embodiment of border identities and gave agency to students who came from the borderlands while also shedding light on issues related to immigrant status.

Discussion

This paper explored the following research questions, *What role do teachers play in critically engaging students during process drama to dialogue about social inequities? How do teachers contribute to the critical awareness of social inequities?* Teachers have the moral responsibility to engage students in discussions about social inequities. This ideology aligns with Freire's (2005) notion that teaching is a political act. In this paper, we saw Mrs. Jackson adhere to this political act of teaching by working hard to facilitate discussions between first graders about a social justice issue that was (and continues to be) relevant to the Latinx community: undocumented immigration.

While laying the foundation for implementing process drama, Mrs. Jackson engaged students in dialogue by consistently asking them open-ended questions. Once process drama was implemented, Mrs. Jackson moved the conversation from lighter topics such as, Cinderella's dilemma about leaving or staying at the ball, to a heavier one about immigration. Mrs. Jackson was diligent about her attempt to (critically) engage students about the struggles of being an undocumented immigrant, or

an asylum seeker, by continuing to ask open-ended questions, but this time about a more intense and relevant topic. Her consistent use of questions in this scene pushed students to critically listen to Tessa's concerns, acting as *Jorge,* about having to flee overnight back to Mexico. For example, Mrs. Jackson facilitated students to engage critically about social inequities by asking them, while in character, how they felt about the issue they were trying to resolve (see Excerpt 2, Line 29) and how they planned to resolve it (see Excerpt 1, Line 5). As the class continued to explore the use of children's literature and process drama to develop an awareness about social inequities, Mrs. Jackson continued pushing students: for further inquiry, to provide contextual information, to give them a voice, or affirm their responses.

Interestingly, Mrs. Jackson missed the opportunity to include social justice issues, like the prison to school pipeline or police brutality, which negatively impact the African American community. This missed opportunity is partially due to the TWDL program design in that it focuses on the Spanish language, which assumes giving more attention to Spanish-speakers and their bicultural interests (Kubota et al. 2003). More research is needed in this area of the TWDL model. As mentioned, both Monique and Ramon are African-American and spoke a variety of English, or Black English (Alim 2004), and were *also* part of the TWDL classroom, but their ways of speaking were not acknowledged— socially inequitable issues that affect their community were not discussed. These are issues that are just as urgent and highly relevant to the black community, or the Black Lives Matter movement (Cullors et al. 2012), many of whom attend urban public schools in our nation. If we are asking teachers to implement a curriculum that values *all* students in TWDL settings, then we need to reimagine what this means for other students of color who do not come from Spanish-speaking or Latinx backgrounds.

Implications

This research has implications for teacher educators working in TWDL contexts. By using process drama as a method, or pedagogy, it allowed a first grade TWDL teacher to encourage students to co-construct knowledge and make sense of social inequities. That being said, process drama has the potential to become more critical by expanding the focus of social inequities to explore topics that receive less attention in school settings such as gender non-conformity (Caldas 2018) or police brutality (Jordan 1988; Martinez 2017).

Teachers and members of a TWDL program should reconsider the linguistic diversity of their students as not just a "Spanish-speaker" or "English-speaker," but having a more dynamic linguistic terrain (Palmer and Martínez 2013). For example, Ramon and Monique (both African-American/English dominant) displayed features of Black English in their speech (Alim 2004; García-Mateus and Palmer 2017). Monique use of English (line 60) displays features, the deletion of -s or the verb-type copula deletion (e.g., stay, try, come, drop), that is unique to Black English (Alim 2004). Tessa and Charlie use of mainstream American English also added to this classroom's linguistic terrain, while *Valentina* and *Josue,* although both considered as having a strong command of bilingualism, both expressed different forms of

bilingualism; Valentina spoke mainstream or "standard" Spanish and Josue spoke a variation of Spanish that was common in Texas or the borderlands, *Spanglish.* I recommend that teachers also examine their own translanguaging practices and tendency to privilege standardized English much more than Spanish (see excerpt 1 and 4) or other language varieties in the classroom. Additional research is needed in the area of how despite the use of multicultural (Latinx) literature that emphasizes minoritized communities experiences', Spanish-dominant students can still be undermined or silenced. In this paper, it seems that the use of English created a space that moved students away from using Spanish and further into English, which seemed to cater to English dominant speakers.

Despite the linguistic diversity of the class, during the read aloud of *Friends from the Other Side,* English was the sanctioned language and what students spoke during the debrief about where an undocumented friend could hide or what he could say to border patrol, which also speaks to the linguistic and structural inequities in place at this school. Mrs. Jackson allowed students to speak, read, and construct meaning using whichever language came most naturally throughout data collection. To that end, she and the researcher also missed opportunities to hone in on *all* students rich and unique linguistic diversity. This lack of critical linguistic and cultural awareness is an area of great urgency in TWDL contexts (Cervantes-Soon et al. 2017). If the development of critical awareness is left underexplored, teacher's run the risk of positioning students of color in deficit ways which is problematic for *all* students.

Based on the practice of process drama in a TWDL classroom the following are recommendations for practitioners and researchers interested in implementing a similar teaching method or replicating a similar study. Using multicultural and multilingual children's books provided the teacher with literature that included themes that exposed social inequities immigrant communities experience in the U.S. context. The books also reflected the language practices students engaged in daily. Insights gained from future studies could further problematize the assumptions that exist within TWDL programs such as solely focusing on issues that affect Spanish-speaking communities. By problematizing these assumptions, we can further expand the draw of the TWDL model to English-speaking Latinx and African-American communities.

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