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## **Benefits of Co-Constructing Latinx Consciousness within Schools**

Elizabeth Cruz Reyes

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BENEFITS OF CO-CONSTRUCTING LATINX CONSCIOUSNESS

Benefits of Co-Constructing Latinx Consciousness within Schools

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### **Abstract**

Within the Latinx community, there are arguments about identity labels, who can speak better Spanish, who is a better Latinx, and how Latinx culture should be maintained. Latinx consciousness originates from Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) concept of mestiza consciousness and the respective work that Gloria Anzaldúa has inspired. Latinx consciousness involves the complex: spiritual, personal, social, political, economic, and historic factors that influence the lives of Latinx students. This senior capstone defines Latinx consciousness and examines the benefits of co-constructing Latinx consciousness. The benefits are framed within the context of education, Latinx attitudes, language use, language loss, and cultural longevity. The benefits of co-constructing Latinx consciousness are investigated with a literature review and the results from fifteen pláticas. The results revealed that this new paradigm of Latinx consciousness: raises awareness about the Latinx community, strengthens connections with Latinx students, and encourages a culturally pluralistic society.

*Keywords:* Latinx, Latino, consciousness, education, cultural longevity, and culture loss.

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### **Introduction & Background**

This project has been created on Coast-Miwok and Esselen land to connect formal American education and cultural wisdom to improve the lives of Latinx students. Healing from a wound takes time and can become worse if the wound is not managed properly. Disregarding the home cultures of Latinx students has caused decades worth of damage to Latinx communities. Latinx students face: low academic retention, significant Spanish loss after first-generation migration, internalized oppression, and loss of native culture as an effect of American colonization in schools (Arriagada, 2005; Monzó, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2006). Assessing the damage from a wound is critical, but to heal we must work on finding remedies. Focusing on cultural revitalization is one remedy to counter harmful colonization in schools. Moving forward from the damage of European-American assimilation means illustrating the complex desires and life positions of Latinx students (Villenas, 1996).

Tuck (2009) points out how focusing only on cultural damage has limited value in research and asks if it is “worth the long-term costs of *thinking of ourselves as damaged?*” (p. 415). Moving forward to heal means we use the varying Latinx positions about identity, language, attitudes, and cultural maintenance to uplift instead of diminish. Gloria Anzaldúa’s (1987) concept of a mestiza consciousness (MC) is a healing method that can be used in education. Mestiza consciousness shifts us away from a “Western” way for thinking to “divergent thinking” (Anzaldua, 1987, p. 101). Latinx consciousness is rooted in MC and heals wounds that are an effect of colonization. A liberated way of thinking makes it easier for educators to link the complexities around Latinx culture in schools. As adults, we have the power to re-imagine schools to heal the damage of cultural and identity demoralization. Students deserve to learn in a classroom that uplifts who they are and does not denigrate them.

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Co-constructing Latinx consciousness is a path to heal cultural wounds within our communities, but what does it look like? Are modern American schools able to do this? Co-constructing Latinx consciousness is examined within the context of K-16 education and shaped by the voices of fifteen Latinx students, parents, and teachers. This paper contains a literature review, methodology summary, plática results, and a discussion about co-constructing Latinx consciousness. The benefits from co-constructing LC in schools is also emphasized in this paper. The end of this paper contains recommendations about co-constructing Latinx consciousness (LC) in schools and the limitations of this study. The primary research question for this project is: *“how can Latinx consciousness be co-constructed in schools?”*

The secondary research questions are:

(1) How is co-constructing Latinx consciousness defined? Where did the idea(s) of Latinx consciousness come about?

(2) Given the new paradigm of co-constructing Latinx consciousness, why is it important for Latinx students? Are there benefits in maintaining and sustaining it?

(3) What does the research say about the benefits of co-constructing Latinx consciousness among Latinx youth?

(4) Are there resources available for schools should they want to incorporate the co-construction of Latinx consciousness into the curriculum?

The benefits of co-constructing Latinx consciousness are explored with the previous research questions and a review of literature. The next part will delve into the literature that has been reviewed to answer the research questions.

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### Literature Review

This literature review will assess the hurt caused by education and identify how to treat the pain. The literature that is used for this review is from 1987 to 2020. The articles all relate to Anzaldua's (1987) mestiza consciousness, literature influenced by Anzaldua's work, cultural longevity, or education. These next paragraphs will illustrate how American schools have influenced Latinx students to keep and lose their home cultures. The aspects of Latinx culture and personhood that are investigated are identity, language, attitudes, and cultural maintenance. A portion of the spiritual, social, political, economic, and historic factors that affect schooling for Latinx students are also explored. This literature review is structured to assess the hurt in Latinx communities and then illustrate how educational tools can alleviate the injuries.

Each of us is uniquely entrenched and influenced by our cultural realities, but traditional schooling fails to meaningfully recognize cultural richness. American schools rarely develop student identity, language, attitudes, and cultural maintenance in relation to a students' native culture. Multiculturalism in schools is also softened to prevent challenging the "status quo" (Sleeter, 2011, p. 7). The dominance of European-American culture is promoted in American schools under the guise of neutrality and actively erases non-European cultures (de los Ríos et al., 2015). Monzó (2016) describes how "la cultura matanza or the culture killing" occurs when European-American education actively forget "people of color" and frame the lives of marginalized communities through deficit frameworks (p. 150). "La cultura matanza" can be seen in the scarce representation of Latines in schools that perpetuate the cultural erasure in education (Monzó, 2016, p. 150).

Latinx students are likely to attend schools that do not provide meaningful cultural representation or institutional support. Solórzano and Yosso (2006) write that "Chicana/os" are

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likely to attend schools that have fewer supplies, are segregated, underfunded, and educators are not sufficiently prepared (p. 2). Sleeter's (2011) analysis of California's 2002 history and social science curriculum found that Latines are in "1 percent" of the K-12 curriculum (p. 2).

Contemporary schools are failing to provide Latinx students with consistent, high-quality cultural education and academic environments. Schools prefer to prepare Latinx students "for low-skill labor" by emphasizing exams and English-dominance (Monzó, 2016, p. 150). Furthermore, the federal focus on standardized testing and uniform schooling limits the time available to implement "culturally empowering pedagogies" (de los Ríos et al., 2015, p. 186). The dominance of English in the classroom is an example of uniform schooling and contributes to language loss for Latinx students.

When individuals receive conflicting life directives and values, there is a cultural "choque" or crash (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 100). Cultural choques are prevalent for multicultural individuals and the choque creates new circumstances for students. Latinx students are often in-between cultures, like being part of a home and school culture that may not be culturally congruent. Cultural choques influence students to maintain or reject the facets of a culture. (Anzaldúa, 1987). Language use is an example of how cultural choques manifest new dynamics and demonstrate cultural congruence/incongruence. Spanish does not align with the English standards of American schools and causes cultural incongruence, where Latinx students adapt their language use. Cultural choques between schools and language dynamics demonstrate the improvement that must occur in American education.

Teaching Spanish in the twentieth century led to teachers losing their credentials and students speaking Spanish would be disciplined "corporally" (Babino & Stewart, 2017, p. 20). The American education system is still working to actively uplift Spanish speakers in the classroom

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and soothe the physical damage inflicted on Spanish speakers in the past. Despite the modern promotion of multilingualism, some Latinx students prefer to speak English and see few benefits to retaining their Spanish proficiency (Babino, & Stewart, 2017). Arriagada (2005) found that Latinx students are more inclined to be Spanish proficient when encouraged by their family and their environment. Latines are likely to keep their Spanish fluency if they are women due to gender socialization and the pattern persists for second and third generation Latines (Arriagada, 2005). Babino and Stewart (2017) found that dual immersion programs are an efficient way to promote the retention of Spanish in Latinx students, but Latinx students are still likely to assign more value to speaking English.

Babino and Stewart (2017) illustrate how internalized oppression and language devaluing occurs even when Latinx students are in Spanish dominant classrooms. Linguistic injuries for some Latines in the U.S are illustrated in how Latines communicate with each other. In a study about dual immersion students, the Latinx students preferred to use a hybrid of English and Spanish unless speaking to a monolingual speaker (Babino & Stewart, 2017). Loss of language and linguistic disempowerment happens when Latinx students become “deslenguadas” (to lose one’s tongue or to have it removed) to become English dominant (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 80).

Anzaldúa (1987) states that Latines in academia have an “internalized belief” that their Spanish is insufficient, and some feel apprehensive about speaking Spanish. When first meeting, “Chicanas” use English as a “neutral language” with one another, because there is are insecurities tied to speaking Spanish (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 80). Latines reinforce linguistic verguenza (shame, embarrassment, and dishonor) in and outside of academia in casual ways to deal with linguistic wounds. Part of the healing process from the damage of cultural erasure and internalized oppression is to reclaim confidence in lost and forgotten languages. However, there

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are conflicting attitudes about language retainment and assimilation within Latinx communities. Conflicting attitudes make language retainment and re-empowerment difficult for some Latinx students (Babino & Stewart, 2017).

“Internalized oppression” causes conflicting conversations in Latinx communities about “who is too Anglo, who has greater Spanish and/or English skills. It projects a ‘defensive othering’” (Monzó, 2016, p. 149). Internalized oppression leads to community fragmentation and is directly linked to Latinx students disconnecting from their families. Latinx families are “often denigrated” in academia if they do not have the “professional knowledge” that educators possess (Monzó, 2016, p. 150). More specifically, Latina mothers who do not possess formal education are treated as incompetent and “with symbolic violence” by school officials (Monzó, 2016, p. 150). There are Latinx students who reject their family for being “out of touch” with American education because they have internalized negative messages about their family (Monzó, 2016, p. 154). American schools have the power to turn students away from their family.

When generating positive social change, there is a significant focus on the damage within marginalized communities, but direct community desires are often dismissed. The “desires” (a desire-based framework) of the community involve the wants of the community that are contradicting, varying, and related to positionality (Tuck, 2009). Focusing on the desires of a community provides antidotes to counter the pain within Latinx communities. Despite academia’s disregard for Latinx mother work, Guzmán (2012) argues that Latinx mothering is “a form of compassionate teaching for Latina girls” and is a Guerrera/warrior praxis (p. 47). The author states that Latinx mothers teach their children life lessons through everyday pláticas. In daily routines, Latinx mothers teach their daughters how to develop self-reliance, to be anti-racist and to “disrupt

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the current systems of oppression” (Guzmán, 2012, p. 50). In addition to Latina mothering, informal wisdom is dismissed in Western education.

Community cultural wealth is made up of familial, social, navigational, resistant, linguistic, and aspirational capital that are not exclusive skills. The different types of capital “build on one another” to help students of color move in the world (Yosso, 2005, p. 77). The cultural wealth model illustrates deficit teaching models as inaccurate and short-sighted. Yosso (2005) demonstrates how all students bring wisdom and unique abilities to a classroom. Familial capital is demonstrated by the life-experiences of Latinx families, but few educators meaningfully connect their lesson plans and Latinx family cuentos/stories. The inclusion of the cultural wealth model in schools can be used as salve to cure wounds by validating Latinx student cultural skills.

Building Latinx consciousness with intent to heal requires connecting Latinx experiences, culture, and scholarship. *Trenzaje y mestizaje* is a multi-methodical approach that weaves together experiential knowledge, formal research, cultural skills, and cultural consciousness (Gonzalez, 2001, p. 646) *Trenzaje y mestizaje* braids together multiple disciplines and critical analysis that cultivates “sociopolitical consciousness” and motivate individuals to be agents of change.

Another remedy to counter the rifts caused by European-American schooling is to create conscientious research that centering community voices. Scholars do not need to dominate community narratives, because research participants are active and authentic “creators of knowledge” (Villenas, 1996, p. 730). The creation of knowledge by participants returns power to the community and validates experiential knowledge from *pláticas* (conversations), *consejos* (advice) and *cuentos* (stories). Villenas (1996) discusses how qualitative research about marginalized communities fails to recognize the power dynamics between academia, researchers, and research stakeholders. Guzman (2012), Villenas (1996) and Gonzalez (2001) emphasize

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using pláticas, cuentos and consejos to gather information from Latinx communities and validate community wisdom.

Chicana feminist epistemology (CFE) centers Chicana cultural intuition to fix systemic ruptures in education. CFE counters traditional epistemology that diminishes “non-Eurocentric knowledge systems” (Calderon, et al., 2012, p. 515). CFE requires the “bodymindspirit” to be recognized as essential and linked to academia (Calderon, et al., 2012, p. 534). CFE is shaped by the work to heal communities by creating scholarly work that puts love forward instead of community damage.

Even if one does not identify as a Chicana, co-constructing cultural awareness can be achieved by using “Chicana feminism” and a mestiza consciousness framework (Kasun, 2018, p. 116). Kasun (2018) explains how seeing the world through a Latinx lens influences European-American students to “understand the oppression they can never physically embody” (p. 124). Kasun describes how community pláticas and community inclusion helped build her *conocimiento*. *Conocimiento* is defined by Anzaldúa (2015) as the “heightened consciousness or awareness” that can be perceived as love and “initiates the relationship between self-knowledge and creative work” (p. 40).

The literature review illustrates the harmful effects of culture erasure, complexity within Latinx culture, the type of research that works best for Latines and how to remedy detrimental reactions from assimilation. The next part describes the Methods and Procedures used to find the answers to the research questions. The Introduction and Background section contain the research questions for this study.

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### **Methods and Procedures**

To answer the primary and secondary questions, an extensive literature review has been conducted to analyze how Latinx students: are educated in America, are affected by assimilation in schools and how to counter the negative effects of assimilation. The literature reviewed the historical, educational, political, social, and economic factors that illustrate how Latinx students can heal by co-constructing their Latinx consciousness. The next section describes the rationale behind the methodology and procedures used in this study.

Latinx students, pre-service teachers, current teachers and Latinx parents were selected for this project because they are the people that Latinx students encounter the most. The plática participants were selected due to their experiences in the California's K-12 system and their willingness to discuss their experiential knowledge. 15 people participated in this project: 5 Latinx parents, 2 current California teachers, 4 Latinx students and 4 pre-service teachers were interviewed. This project uses participant pláticas, consejos, and cuentos to profoundly connect with participants about culture and education. Participants chose to conduct the pláticas in person or through a video call. All the participants verbally agreed to an audio recording of the plática, and the audio was used afterward to quote direct statements. A phone to record audio, online video calls, a notepad, and questionnaires were used to conduct the pláticas. The participants expressed what they desired to keep in their cultural consciousness and re-imagined how schools can be transformed to co-construct Latinx consciousness.

The participants described their desires around Latinx culture, the various forms of Latinx identification, language use (Spanish, Spanglish, and English) and the role of cultural clashes in their lives. We also re-imagined schools to co-construct Latinx consciousness, and how schools influenced the participant's cultural awareness. The participants received their respective plática

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questions (Appendixes A-D), a letter to explain the purpose of the project (Appendix E), a set list of definitions to clarify terms (Appendix F), and an audio consent form. Appendix A is the plática questions for Latinx students, Appendix B is for Latinx parents, Appendix C is for current teachers and Appendix D is for pre-service teachers. The appendixes below do not have the CSUMB header, and the audio consent form was omitted to preserve space. In the next section, the results and findings of the investigation will be synthesized to answer the research questions.

### **Results and Findings**

In the next section, the secondary research questions will be answered first and will lead to responding the primary research question. The secondary research questions answer facets of the primary research question. Before explaining how schools can co-construct Latinx consciousness (LC), we must explore what LC is and where it comes from. The research is synthesized to illustrate the benefits of co-constructing and maintaining LC. The resources to co-construct LC are provided at the end of the Results and Findings.

Latinx consciousness comes from an extensive literature review, participant “bricks and mortar,” and “my own feminist architecture” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 44). The literature review describes a few of the foundations of LC like: Anzaldúa’s (1987) concept of mestiza consciousness, Villenas’ (1996) concept of colonized/colonizer, Tuck’s (2009) call to concentrate on the desires of the community, Gonzalez’ (2001) concept to weave academia and personal experiences together, Guzman’s (2012) Latina mothering as Guerrera praxis and Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth model. Co-constructing Latinx consciousness responds to the damage of colonization by emphasizing the complex wants of the Latinx community.

Co-constructing cultural awareness is a way to counter the damage from colonization like assimilation and cultural denigration. LC is defined by important cultural elements, desires

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surrounding cultural longevity, participant unique awareness, self-identity, attitudes, parenting & language use. Except for one participant, all the interviewees are of Latinx descent. The participant age range is from the twenties to sixties, and no participants identified as non-binary or transgender. Five participants willingly disclosed being part of the LGBTQIA+ community. The participants varied from having high school education to a doctorate degree. While this project focuses on Californian schools, the participants have experience from schools in Oregon, Mexico, and China.

The co-construction of LC requires developing a dialogue about Latinx identity and critical cultural education. The participants discussed personal and formal definitions of terms like Latinx, Latina, Hispanic and Chicana. (All the plática questions are located in Appendix A-D.) The consensus on the different terms varied each time because every person had varying opinions. "I'm not gonna sit here and say I know each and every one of them, because I don't. When I do say what I consider myself, I say Latina, because I am a Latina woman and I'm proud of it." (Survey respondent 2, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2022).

Another person said, "I reject 'Hispanic' just cause it doesn't feel like me." (Survey respondent 11, Personal Communication, 28 March, 2022). Two participants said they do not identify with "Chicano" while also acknowledging that the textbook definition fits who they are. Two participants are not fans of the term "Latinx" and simultaneously emphasized on the need for gender fluid language. These previous statements show the understanding and contradiction that occurs when Latines begin to categorize their identities. The responses from Latines about categorizing their identity ranged from participants rejecting a term to completely embracing all the terms. Anzaldúa (2015) explains that the conversation about identity is more important than

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consensus on one identity label and the pláticas supported the idea that identity is not easy to generalize.

Latines are not a “monolithic group” and have “multiple and sometimes contradictory views related to their positioning in society” (Monzó, 2016, p. 156). The value participants placed on cultural elements also varied and are related to their positionality. “La música trae nostalgia y comida de transporta.” The music brings nostalgia, and the food transports us (Survey respondent 2, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2022). Love, food, family, community, traditions, flags, style of dress, appreciating indigenous people from the Americas, respect, Spanish use, historical movements, spiritual faith, music, and art summarize all the valued cultural elements that are used to co-constructing LC.

The pláticas revealed that the most important elements of cultural awareness are love, social connections, philosophies of life and personal expression. Philosophies of life mean “treating people how you want to be treated” (Survey respondent 14, Personal Communication, 30 March, 2022). Respecting community elders was explicitly stated in over half of the pláticas. All participants talked about the influence of social connections, like familial knowledge because interacting with family builds a Latinx student’s cultural awareness. Personal expression can be seen in an individual’s way of dress and religious faith. The love in the pláticas is seen in the orgullo/the pride that people express about their loved ones and important cultural factors. By examining the cultural desires of Latines, we can learn what educators need to incorporate into classrooms to suture the ruptures that hurt students.

Consistent with the literature review, the pláticas revealed wounds that manifest themselves as linguistic verguenza/shame. A way to heal these wounds is to build confidence and in using Spanish. Mixing English and Spanish (Spanglish) was accepted by all participants as a

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valid way to convey meaning, but participants acknowledged how some Latines do not accept mixing Spanish and English. The expectations around language use were relaxed in the pláticas, but each participant expressed how their language expectations manifested at home and at school. Ten of the pláticas illustrated a feeling of linguistic vergüenza/shame associated with speaking Spanglish and a desire to improve their Spanish proficiency. One person clearly described Spanglish as a “superpoder” (superpower) that Latines have (Survey respondent 3, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2022). Another participant accepted Spanglish use and was wary about Spanglish being perceived as “lazy” by fluent Spanish speakers (Survey respondent 5, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2022).

Every single participant talked in depth about their childhood and parental influence in their lives. Parents during the pláticas credited their own mothers and fathers as . Latina mothers discussed how their mothers taught them about motherhood by watching her persevere and listening to cuentos. Guzman’s (2012) concept that Latina mothers teach their daughters valuable lessons through daily practice is reflected in the pláticas. One participant models her own parenting on how her mom raised her and expressed that she will “never be half the woman that my mom is” (Survey respondent 12, Personal Communication, 28 March, 2022). Recognizing the influence of Latina mothers on Latinx students was a prevalent theme for participants.

One participant discussed how when he learned to cook, he bought many cookbooks but did not utilize his mom’s cooking knowledge. Then he stated how, "I was buying cookbooks, but I have a whole cookbook in my mom" (Survey respondent 12, Personal Communication, 26 March, 2022). Another participant brought up how formal education ignores Latina mothers that do not have sufficient schooling (Survey respondent 8, Personal Communication, 26 March, 2022), (Monzó, 2016). The participant asked if schools are willing to use the wisdom of Latinx mothers

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in the classroom, "if you ask, are you gonna do it?" (Survey respondent 8, Personal Communication, 26 March, 2022).

Co-constructing Latinx consciousness is defined by the voices of Latina mothers and Latinx students who are directly affected by educational institutions. The steps that academia must take to heal from cultural erasure can be heard directly from the community. A participant passionately stated how "we should be able to present and teach the class in Spanish" and that all professors should honor non-English use in the classroom (Survey respondent 5, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2022). Even at CSUMB, future teachers on the bilingual pathway learn Spanish, but not how to teach Spanish. This means that bilingual pathway students learn to teach each other out of necessity, and outside the mainstream curriculum structure. An elementary teacher stated how she was specifically told not to use Spanish in the classroom to instruct or help students (Survey respondent 14, Personal Communication, 30 March, 2022). A college professor explained how using Spanish in the classroom can make administrators upset, so educators must find innovative ways to uplift a student's linguistic abilities (Survey respondent 14, Personal Communication, 30 March, 2022). To help build a student's LC, we must teach students to balance systemic realities and unique, personal realities that clash with each other.

When cultural choques appear in the lives of Latinx students, the crash creates a new reality where students lose/keep facets of culture (Anzaldua, 1987). Cultural choques illustrate the healing work that must occur when new realities are hurtful for Latinx students. Participants who identified as queer were asked how sexuality ties into their culture and identity expression. Being queer, Latinx and from a religious family caused hurt for participants and a sense of pride. One participant described the contradicting feelings he had about being gay and having traditional Latinx parents, it is "not as laid out for you. Hard but exhilarating. Orguloso to be here at the

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forefront. To be on the precipice of change” (Survey respondent 6, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2022). Queer Latinx students often face cultural choques about language, sexuality, cultural expectations, and find themselves creating new cultural realities.

The battle between an anti-queer religion and being gay was painful for participants to describe. Another participant said that he did not want to disappoint his Christian faith and family because of his sexuality. The participant explains how he found “spirituality in my own way” (Survey respondent 4, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2022). To co-construct LC is to address the injuries that prevent growth of the “bodymindspirit” and restrict people from expressing their sexuality (Calderon, et al., 2012, p. 534). Queer Latinx students discussed how they balance being authentic to themselves and to their culture. The idea to “include the good of our own culture and leave the bad” was expressed by all participants (Survey respondent 9, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2022). While co-constructing Latinx consciousness is a new paradigm it is important for Latinx students because they can learn to use cultural choques as sources of inspiration instead of negativity.

While some argue that assimilating students to align with European-American culture aids national unity, there can be nasty repercussions to this ideology. The side effects of racially neutral methods with a goal of European-American assimilation include internalized oppression, student disempowerment, disengagement, loss of mother language and culture (Monzó, 2016). Internalized oppression can also cause personal, internal pain and creates fragmentation within cultural communities. Multiple participants actively blamed themselves for the lack of meaningful cultural education in their lives and reflected on the wounds they had hidden as children. An interviewee explained that when he was a kid, he wished he was not from a Spanish-speaking home and thought that would improve his English skills. Now as an adult, he can recognize how

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his schooling experience did not value Spanish and being born into a Spanish speaking home is not a reason to “fail” (Survey respondent 13, Personal Communication, 28 March, 2022).

Co-constructing Latinx consciousness helps combat linguistic verguenza and cultural denigration by utilizing non-convention skills in education.

Another participant explained that he saw teachers prioritize, “losing accents and learning standardized vocabulary” so he purposely stopped using Spanish in elementary school (Survey respondent 9, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2022). Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth model demonstrates how using familial, linguistic, navigational, aspirational, resistant, and social capital re-empowers students from marginalized communities. Survey respondent 9 stopped using his linguistic capital to navigate through a system that emphasized English-only methods. There needs to be a shift in education, so that Latinx students do not feel disempowered to speak Spanish.

Incorporating multilingualism in a classroom is a way to co-construct LC, because Latinx students may not see the value in non-English languages (Babino & Stewart, 2017). Four participants described how using Spanish in a traditional classroom can lead to being bullied and how bilingual students are singled out in schools. Additionally, all participants described feeling linguistic shame in schools and how it affects their language use today. Linguistic verguenza and wounds for Latinx students come in different forms. However, there was a surprising linguistic pattern that arose for all participants despite their varying positionalities. Individuals with higher fluency and confidence in one language expressed discomfort speaking in the other. Those who have greater Spanish fluency and confidence expressed feeling discomfort speaking English in English dominant spaces. Conversely, English fluent people reported feeling discomfort speaking

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Spanish to other Spanish speakers. The three people who felt comfortable speaking in Spanish and English had worked to improve their linguistic confidence.

Villenas (1996) describes how colonized scholars can become colonizers to others if we do not examine and halt our role in damaging cycles. One of the participants changed her Spanish minor during her undergraduate education, because she felt “judged” for her Spanish and for being the only Black woman in the classes (Survey respondent 1, Personal Communication, 24 March, 2022). Co-constructing Latinx consciousness is critical, because this path stops Latinas from “defensive othering” that exacerbates community fragmentation and personal damage (Monzó, 2016, p. 150). The Social Justice Education Project or the SJEP was an educational model aimed at Chicana/x/a/os that emphasized Latinx community strength and influence. Sleeter (2011) found that the educational model helped students see their role within their community and how we are all intertwined to influence each other.

The benefits of maintaining and sustaining Latinx consciousness can be seen in the literature review and plática responses. All the parents expressed the importance of teaching children about their Latinx heritage to promote cultural longevity. Sleeter (2011) and de los Ríos et al (2015) both argue that ethnic studies combat the negative effects of cultural erasure.

Sleeter (2011) disproves the critique of ethnic studies being “‘divisive’ and un-American” by illustrating how ethnic studies improves human relations. The benefits of ethnic studies are academic success, insight into varying cultures, improving cross-cultural communication, and boosting student self-esteem (Sleeter, 2011).

The benefits of co-constructing “student critical consciousness” are improving student confidence, boosting student literacy skills, knowing how to enact positive social change and innovative opportunities to record personal stories (de los Ríos et al., 2015, pp. 186). The

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benefits of the Social Justice Education Project were academic success, motivation, long-term planning, increased graduation, and test scores (Sleeter, 2011). The benefits of co-constructing Latinx consciousness can be seen with the positive outlook that Latinx students gain from this process. Participants described how co-constructing Latinx consciousness strengthens an individual's connection to family and community. The positive aspects of co-constructing Latinx consciousness are not limited to academic spheres. The direct benefits of co-constructing Latinx consciousness are analyzed above and improve a Latinx student's physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Multiple participants pointed out that to decolonize ourselves by reclaiming a colonized language like Spanish is paradoxical and displays the contradictions that lie within Latinx identity. Chicana feminist epistemology (like *trenzaje y mestizaje*) create bodies of knowledge that start controversial discussions about what it means to be Latinx to encourage spiritual, intellectual, and physical growth (Calderon, et al., 2012; Gonzalez, 2001). Analyzing personal decolonization tools, linguistic complexities and repression is beneficial, because Latinx students become confident in their linguistic capital. Furthermore, all the participants expressed concern and called for immediate change to prevent third-generation U.S. Latinxs from completely losing their Spanish. Preventing damage from occurring to future generations is a benefit of co-constructing Latinx consciousness.

Maintaining Latinx culture and consciousness required participants to listen to family cuentos, ask provoking questions, regain native language fluency, and actively restore cultural roots. One person explained how the "body has a yearning" for personal cultural growth and "you do it, not because it's [negative] work, it's the right thing to do" (Survey respondent 7, Personal Communication, 26 March, 2022). Participants articulated how they learned about Latinx culture

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through personal experiences and cuentos from familia/family. Latinx students who maintain their Latinx culture in schools oppose “la cultura matanza or the culture killing” and prolong their cultural existence (Monzó, 2016, p. 150).

Furthermore, students who keep their culture(s) in schools tend to succeed academically and fortify themselves against “la cultura matanza” (Monzó, 2016, p. 150). Bicultural students who actively practice their native cultures in mainstream society gravitate towards academic success (Sleeter, 2011). Yet, the combined power of academic success and cultural rejuvenation is underutilized in schools. Only one participant was able to provide a consistent, detailed recollection of connecting Latinx culture and K-12 schooling. The participant attends CSUMB, went to a dual-immersion elementary school and has taken multiple years of Spanish classes. Despite attending schools designed to promote bilingualism, she worked to become confident in her language skills on her own time (Survey respondent 5, Personal Communication, 25 March, 2022). Maintaining native language and culture within schools is not a priority, so Latinx students must reach outside of formal education to embrace cultural wisdom on their own.

Schools have a plethora of options to co-construct Latinx consciousness in schools and move away from reductive instruction. Both de los Ríos et al., (2015) and Sleeter (2011) propose conscious-raising and challenging cultural education to promote cross-cultural understanding and student agency. De los Ríos et al., (2015) and Sleeter (2011) describe how to co-construct Latinx consciousness in schools by using; Mexican corridos, family histories, literature about Latinx movements, political involvement like attending council meetings, student examination of their positionality and community experiences.

All the skills listed in the cultural wealth model can be used in traditional classrooms at no cost and encourage students to actively use these skills (Yosso, 2005). Linguistic capital can be

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used by enthusiastically linking Spanish and other non-English languages to schoolwork. Familial capital relies on experiential knowledge like cuentos, pláticas and consejos that help a Latinx student build their cultural awareness. Sleeter (2011) reviewed the Social Justice Education Project (SJEP) from Tucson, Arizona and found that the school was successful in providing a balance of academic success and culturally empowering education. The co-construction of LC in schools is achieved by centering the voices of the Latinx community and focusing on cultural complexities instead of minimizing human experience.

The resources available for schools to incorporate the co-construction of Latinx consciousness into the curriculum are scattered. Hopefully there will be more resources in the future and this paradigm will need further examination. This project brought together the pieces that make up this paradigm, the benefits for Latinx students and explain its development in education. A consistent resource that has been emphasized in this project is the voices and cultural wealth of Latinx communities. A simple solution is not available to meet the needs of every student, but educators can rely on experiential knowledge to co-construct LC. Educators must also seek positivity and healing as a supply in co-constructing LC, because simply focusing on problems is not a solution.

The results and findings have been organized to answer the research questions with the data compiled. The next portion will elaborate on the origin of Latinx consciousness, its purpose and its future.

### **Discussion**

This discussion section will develop Latinx consciousness using a first person narrative and summarizes Latinx consciousness (LC). LC is developed through learning about Latinx culture, using native languages, and improving our cross-cultural understanding. Part of

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co-constructing Latinx consciousness is to negotiate the varying identities and attitudes within Latinx communities. Helping pupils develop cultural awareness is not a priority in modern U.S. schools, and yet, the co-construction of cultural consciousness is seen in various academic fields and pedagogies like ethnic studies and Chicana feminist epistemology. LC uses the *conocimiento* of those in and out of the Latinx community to create a meaningful shift in how we view education for Latinx students. The co-construction of Latinx consciousness requires a shift from focusing on just the damage and move towards the remedies that liberate all of us.

Identity and language fluidity is modeled authentically in queer spaces. In this project, I used *Latines* as a plural term and *Latinx* as a singular term, but they can be used conversely as well. I learned halfway through this project that some queer spaces in Mexico use “*Latine*” and *Latinx* interchangeably for linguistic fluidity. *Amigos* and *amigas* (Spanish, gender specific words for friend) are transformed in these spaces to *amguis* (ah-ME-gees) which is a gender-neutral word. *Latinx/Latine* consciousness illustrates how language is fluid and changes with context.

The identification of Latinx people varies from Hispanic, Latin, Latina/o, *Latine*, Mexican, Mexican American, Salvadoran, Puerto Rican, Nicaraguan, *Chicanx/a/o* and so many more. Understanding varying attitudes and how language is used helps expand our awareness of Latinx culture. I started this project to deepen my *conocimiento/knowledge* of the complex identity beliefs that *Latines* have, but (the paradigm) *Latinx* consciousness grew as it was shaped by my life, the *pláticas* and literature review. Unintentionally, I began to co-construct my own *Latinx* consciousness by working on this project and am working on my own pain that has resulted from colonization in schools. I have experienced most of the things covered in this research study like linguistic *vergüenza*, internalized oppression, subtle cultural denigration and adhering to restrictive binaries to please others. Being a university student comes with its own triumphs and tribulations

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that need to be examined, or we take on the role of colonizer as colonized people (Villenas, 1996).

I do not want to colonize my future students.

Co-constructing my Latinx consciousness has helped me make meaning of the colonization process I experienced and heal from the damage inflicted in that process. By co-constructing my Latinx consciousness, I have been able to conscientiously weave together experiential knowledge, academic research and theories that spark change. Co-constructing Latinx consciousness is not the only method to approach healing and begins a dialogue about what we can do about cultural demoralization. I hope others will continue to examine cultural complexities, liminal spaces that transform, re-imagine schooling and personal cultural strengths. I would love to see how people of other cultures write their cuentos about their cultural consciousness and how they are affected by cultural choques.

This section has provided insight into personal hopes and thought processes that arose while working on this project. The next portion explores the Problems and Limitations of this research.

### **Problems & Limitations**

This next paragraph focuses on the problems within the research and the next paragraph will explain what the limitations were. There is much emphasis in this project to move away from just seeing the damage in Latinx communities, but the damage is still a focus of this project. Tuck (2009) explains the problem in a desire-based framework, where only focusing on desires can also be diminishing. Using this framework is a delicate balance. A problem in this study has been to balance the portrayal of damage and healing to show the complex lives of Latines. Another problem was that by focusing on complex experiences, the results and findings

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are also complex. I had trouble connecting abstract ideas and realities if I became too focused on the intricacies of Latinx culture like language.

Even using the word Latinx is problematic in this research. Latinx is disputed within and outside the Latinx community. Additionally, not all the respondents felt comfortable using Latinx to describe themselves. The participants are mainly of Mexican descent and there is a lack of Latinx diversity in this project. More problems are that participants expressed worry that Latinx consciousness would not properly serve students and teachers have limited time to implement this paradigm. Teachers willing to implement “culturally empowering pedagogies” may not have sufficient time and resources to make meaningful cultural connections with their students (de los Ríos et al., 2015, p. 186).

One limitation for this research was the limited time, because I could have included testimonials, follow-up pláticas, group talks, and more people to participate to receive a wider range of responses. This project could have been developed further if there was more time. Another limitation was that some of the participants were hesitant to offer authentic opinions to avoid being politically incorrect. I reassured participants that they had the freedom to speak how they felt. Despite this reassurance, participant responses were limited for fear of starting controversy. Latinx consciousness is also an active effort and can be perceived as limiting due to its focus on Latinx students. Like cultural competency, it is constantly developed and revisited, so people may be hesitant to develop their LC. This paradigm focuses on the multi-faceted nature of personal and cultural awareness. Due to its multifaceted nature, some may desire the maintenance of a hegemonic and singular culture.

Topics like language loss, forced assimilation, acculturation and damage inflicted within schools had to be “unearthed” from the memories of the respondents. Participants often mentioned

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that it had been years since they thought of an event and remembered old memories. The project steered away from being too controversial, so there was little discussion about homophobia, anti-indigenous and anti-Black sentiments within the Latinx community. The colorism and internalized racism were brought up by participants themselves or we only discussed it briefly. For the future, aspects like nationalism, xenophobia, racism, and language use can be explored in the pláticas to add dimensions to this dialogue.

This section has elaborated the Problems and Limitations within this research. The next section provides recommendations about co-constructing LC in schools. The recommendations come from the pláticas and literature review.

### **Recommendations**

This is the recommendations portion with the ways that co-constructing LC can be realized in schools. To co-construct LC in schools, students need a committed, fascinating, culturally sustaining curriculum that focuses on the complex richness of Latinx culture. The participants in the pláticas considered what their Latinx consciousness looks like and how their LC was co-constructed over the years. Ensuring that the co-construction of LC is not superficial or negatively biased should be used as a method to revise the instruction provided.

Latines living in Southern America and Northern America should actively educate ourselves about the other to promote cultural unity (Anzaldúa, 1987). Anzaldúa (1987) states that “a misinformed people are subjugated people” (p. 108). Education about the richness of Latinx culture should emphasize the multitude and diversity of Latines from North to South America. Otherwise, we continue the decentralization of Latines and do not work towards building our Latinx consciousness.

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We should use art and positivity to increase Latinx student engagement in their culture. Participants mentioned authors that educators should use to co-construct Latinx consciousness like Reyna Grande, Gloria Anzaldúa and Francisco Jimenez. Two participants said schools should use Home Economics classes to incorporate co-constructing LC in schools. Contemporary education should actively use non-English languages and then students can begin to recognize the power of their native languages. There should be a shift in how we teach students to see multilingualism as an invaluable power that can be used within academia and in the community

Teachers should also consider a Latinx student's feelings about using Spanish, because students differ in the motivation they need. Educators should do this work with other change makers for students. Working alone as a teacher can contribute to burn out. Educators should turn to Latinx families for help to connect and engage Latinx students in their culture. Mothers know their kids well and could help teachers connect with students. If teachers are going to ask parents how to teach their kid, we should implement it. An educational curriculum should fully encompass and thoughtfully challenge preexisting cultural, social, political, economic systems and conditions. Otherwise, students are silenced by teaching them how to follow reductive systems instead of learning to resist them.

The work of Latinx mothers and the educational power of consejos, cuentos and pláticas should be recognized in all of society. The role of Latine families should be used by schools to encourage students to become engaged in schoolwork. Latinx consciousness can be co-constructed in schools and should be implemented by using consejos, pláticas and cuentos. The use of consejos, pláticas and cuentos can be used in homework and should be paired with Latinx students seeking familial knowledge. Current methods to nurture Latinx students should be elevated by including and honoring familial experience.

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The recommendations in this section come from participant desires and scholarly articles. The next section concludes this research.

### **Conclusion**

The damage of language denigration reaches all levels of American academia, but we can improve schools so students of the future will not face the same devaluing process. This senior capstone research project examines, “how can Latinx consciousness be co-constructed in schools?” The co-construction of LC in schools requires healing through culturally sustaining education and conscious-raising activities. Students co-construct their LC when they learn more about the complexities of Latine culture and use specific cultural wisdom to generate optimistic social change.

Latinx consciousness is defined by the opulent identities and rich body of literature that Latinxs claim and influence. Latinx consciousness is “one that includes rather than excludes” the messy aspects of humanity that are not easily sorted in academia (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 101). The co-construction of Latinx consciousness involves Latinx individuality, families, unique life experiences, language, and culture. Co-constructing Latinx consciousness in schools may look like a Latinx student doing a project on the different consejos/advice that their family could give them and creating meaningful dialogues with consejos.

The benefits of sustaining Latinx consciousness are academic success, self-agency, re-empowerment, and cross-cultural communication. Co-constructing Latinx consciousness in schools heals the injuries inflicted by colonization methods and liberates us from harmful binaries. Teachers can become conscientious change makers instead of unintentionally perpetuating damage for students. The future we are building has no space for education that is repressive and

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detrimental. Students deserve to be nourished in high-quality educational space and we have the power to re-imagine schools to be exceptional for our students.

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**Appendix A**  
**Plática Questions for Students**

Question #	Questions for Plática
#1	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>*Optional; what is your gender, age, sexual orientation, and schooling level. You can answer or skip ANY of these questions! You may skip any question at any time by saying "skip" *</i></p>
#2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-How would you describe your cultural identity and/or personal identity?</li> <li>-Are you part of multiple cultures or groups?</li> <li>-Can you list at least 5 important things you value within your culture? Why do you value these 5 things?</li> </ul>
#3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-How did schools influence your view of your cultural identity?</li> <li>-Teacher's actions, school activities, reading specific books, etc. If they didn't, do you think it would have benefitted you?</li> </ul>
#4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Is maintaining your culture a natural thing or do you work towards it?</li> <li>-Are there specific elements that come naturally and others you work towards?</li> <li>-What are the benefits of these elements &amp; keeping your culture?</li> </ul>
#5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-How do you make a distinction between Latinx, Latina/o, Chicano, Hispanic, Mexican-American, etc?</li> </ul>
#6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-How would you describe your Spanish speaking skills?</li> <li>- How important is it for you to be proficient in the Spanish language? Your thoughts on Spanglish/ Chicano Spanish?</li> </ul>
#7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Do you feel self-conscious of your Spanish skills around other Spanish speakers?</li> <li>-What are your experiences using Spanish in the classroom? Can you elaborate on that?</li> </ul>
#8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Did the positive elements you listed on #2 reflect what you do/did in school? If they did, did you enjoy learning that way?</li> </ul>
#9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-How would you re-imagine schools using the 5 positive elements you listed on #2?</li> </ul>
#10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Did you ever attend a class or event where you were able to link your home culture and school culture?</li> <li>-How did teachers connect your familia and your homework? (ex.; stories of migration, family tree, show and tell, etc).</li> </ul>
#11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Let's pretend you met yourself as a kid and could tell "little you" how to strengthen your culture and sense of identity.</li> <li>-What consejo(s) or cuento(s) would you tell a younger version of yourself or the adults around you?</li> </ul>
#12	<p>If anybody asked you, how would you define Latinx consciousness in your own words?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>*Feel free to be as short or descriptive as possible!</i></p>

## BENEFITS OF CO-CONSTRUCTING LATINX CONSCIOUSNESS

#13	Are there any questions you want to ask me or anything you want to add?
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**Stuff 2 Read & Interpret:(4) excerpts**


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(1) “For a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo: for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castillian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves—a language with terms that are neither español ni inglés, but both. We speak a patois, a forked tongue, a variation of two languages.” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 77).

Questions to think about

-How does this excerpt impact how you view Spanish, and Spanglish / “Chicano Spanish” use in the classroom?  
Is this excerpt an accurate or inaccurate reflection of your views?

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(2) “El choque de un alma atrapado entre el mundo del espíritu y el mundo de la técnica a veces la deja entullada. [The clash of a soul caught between the world of the spirit and the world of technique sometimes leaves it stunned.]

Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war. Like all people, we perceive the version of reality that our culture communicates. Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes un choque, a cultural collision. Within us and within *la cultura chicana* commonly held beliefs of the white culture attack commonly held beliefs of the Mexican culture, and both attack commonly held beliefs of the indigenous culture. Subconsciously, we see an attack on ourselves and our beliefs as a threat and we attempt to block with a counterstance.” “el choque/the crash,” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.100).

Questions to think about:

Do you live in more than one culture? Do these cultures give you opposing messages? What does a choque/cultural collision look like in your life? How does this relate to how we view ourselves as children of Latino parents? How does this play into your (cultural) consciousness? Thoughts on this passage?

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(3) “But I will not glorify those aspects of my culture which have injured me and which have injured me in the name of protecting me.

So, don't give me your tenets and your laws. Don't give me your lukewarm gods. What I want is an accounting with all three cultures--white, Mexican, Indian. I want the freedom to carve and chisel my own face, to staunch the bleeding with ashes, to fashion my own gods out of my entrails. And if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture—una cultura mestiza—with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture.” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 44).

“*And if going home is denied me...*” is a reference to another part in the book about the “fear of going home: homophobia.” There is a fear that her native/home culture will reject her for being gay. That our mother culture will reject and deny a metaphorical home/supportive family for being gay & outside the traditional norm. If a home is denied to her, then she will make her own “a new culture.”

Questions to think about:

How does this piece make you feel and what stands out to you? What about that first sentence?? How can you relate this passage to your identity?

*References*

1. Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Aunt Lute Books. pp. 44, 77 & 100.

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## Appendix B

## Plática Questions for Parents

Question	Questions for Plática
#1	<p><i>*Optional; what is your gender, age, sexual orientation, and schooling level.</i>  <i>*You may skip any question at any time by saying "skip" *</i></p>
#2	<p>How would you describe your cultural identity and/or personal identity? What has helped you understand the culture you identify with?          Are you part of multiple cultures or groups?          -Can you list at least 5 important things you value within your culture?          -Why do you value these 5 things?</p>
#3	<p>-Is maintaining/staying in your culture a natural thing or do you work towards it?          -Are there specific elements that come naturally and others you work towards?</p>
#4	<p>-How do you make a distinction between Latinx, Latina/o, Chicano, Hispanic, Mexican-American, etc?</p>
#5	<p>-How would you describe your Spanish speaking skills?          -How important is it for you to be proficient in the Spanish language? Your thoughts on Spanglish/ Chicano Spanish?</p>
#6	<p>-Do you feel self-conscious of your Spanish skills around other Spanish speakers?          -What are your experiences using Spanish in the classroom? Can you elaborate on that?</p>
#7	<p>-Did the positive elements you listed on #2 reflect what you learned in school?          - Would you like your child to learn about these 5 elements in school?          -Why is it (or why is it not) important for you?</p>
#8	<p>-How would you re-imagine schools using the 5 positive elements you listed on #2?</p>
#9	<p>-Is it important for your child to retain Latino culture and its elements?          -Why? What would be/are the benefits of maintaining Latino culture within your family?</p>
#10	<p>-How did your parents enrich your understanding of Latinx/a/o culture?          - Do you wish to continue these same traditions and can you provide an example(s)?</p>
#11	<p>-What has helped you (co) construct your consciousness as a parent? (School, family, community program, etc).          Do any specific consejos or cuentos come to mind? Name as many as you want.</p>
#12	<p>-Does your parental consciousness/awareness intersect with your cultural identity &amp; awareness? If so, can you elaborate?</p>
#13	<p>Are there any questions you want to ask me or anything you want to add?</p>

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### Stuff 2 Read:

#### (4) excerpts

**(1)** “When we discuss Latina mothering in particular it is important to point out that as mothers we belong to a historically oppressed group in the U.S and by this very notion we transmit life lessons through our daily actions and rituals which become pedagogical moments or moments of teaching and learning that are political. Guzmán (2012) has referred to this as the ‘pedagogy of the home.’ It is through mothering that many of us develop coping skills, empowerment strategies, and ultimately agency. For the current analysis, I propose that mothering is a form of compassionate teaching for Latina girls that involves learning while encountering conflicts and contradictions that require healing and transformative modes of cultural practice.” (Guzmán, 2012, p. 47).

- Pedagogy=study of ways to teach. Parenting is a way of teaching. Pedagogy of Home.

Questions to think about/not all will be asked. You can lead the conversation.

-How do you view your parenting to be part of Latino culture and is it “political” for you?  
 -What do you think of this excerpt and how does it relate to your view on mothering?  
 -How did your mother and/or how do you hope to “transmit life lessons through our daily actions and rituals” that are teaching moments? -How can you reimagine schools to include this?

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**(2)** “El choque de un alma atrapado entre el mundo del espíritu y el mundo de la técnica a veces la deja entullada. [The clash of a soul caught between the world of the spirit and the world of technique sometimes leaves it stunned.]

Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war. Like all people, we perceive the version of reality that our culture communicates. Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes un choque, a cultural collision. Within us and within la cultura Chicana, commonly held beliefs of the white culture attack commonly held beliefs of the Mexican culture, and both attack commonly held beliefs of the indigenous culture. Subconsciously, we see an attack on ourselves and our beliefs as a threat and we attempt to block with a counterstance.” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 100).

Questions to think about:

*Do you live in more than one culture? Do these cultures give you opposing messages? What does a choque/cultural collision look like in your life? How does this relate to how we view ourselves as children of Latino parents? How does this play into your (cultural) consciousness? Thoughts on this passage?*

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**(3)** “For a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo: for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castillian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves—a language with terms that are neither español ni inglés, but both. We speak a patois, a forked tongue, a variation of two languages.” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 77).

Questions to think about: *Is this excerpt an accurate or inaccurate reflection of your views?*

#### *References*

1. Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Aunt Lute Books. pp. 77 & 100.
2. Guzmán, B. (2012). Cultivating a Guerrero Spirit in Latinas: The Praxis of Mothering. *Association of Mexican-American Educators (AMAE) Journal*, 6(1), 47.

## BENEFITS OF CO-CONSTRUCTING LATINX CONSCIOUSNESS

## Appendix C

## Plática Questions for Future Teachers

Question #	Questions for Plática
#1	<p><i>*Optional; what is your gender, age, sexual orientation, and schooling level.</i></p> <p><i>*You may skip any question at any time by saying “skip” *</i></p>
#2	<p>How would you describe your cultural identity and/or personal identity? What has helped you understand the culture you identify with?</p> <p>Are you part of multiple cultures or groups?</p> <p>-Can you list at least 5 important things you value within your culture?</p> <p>-Why do you value these 5 things?</p>
#3	<p>Is maintaining/staying in your culture a natural thing or do you work towards it? Are there specific elements that come naturally and others you work towards improving? What are the “issues” you care and are aware of?</p>
#4	<p>How do you make a distinction between Latinx, Latina/o, Chicano, Hispanic, Mexican-American, etc?</p>
#5	<p>How would you describe your Spanish speaking skills? How important is it for you to be proficient in the Spanish language? Your thoughts on Spanglish/ Chicano Spanish?</p>
#6	<p>Do you feel self-conscious of your Spanish skills around other Spanish speakers? What are your experiences using Spanish in the classroom? Can you elaborate on that?</p>
#7	<p>How has your teacher preparation emphasized the value of the Spanish language? If not, why do you think this is so? Is it difficult to integrate Spanish within your field? Do/Would you encourage the use of Spanish within your classroom? Why?</p>
#8	<p>How do you gauge a Latinx student’s cultural or personal needs in the classroom? How can we connect the school and home cultures of Latinx students? How would you re-imagine schools to use the 5 elements you listed on #1?</p>
#9	<p>Did the positive elements you listed on #1 reflect what you do/did in school? Why is it or why is it not) important for students to learn about these elements in school?</p>
#10	<p>Have you ever worked with a teacher (or student) to learn about Latinx culture and identity? If so, what did you do and how did it go?</p>
#11	<p>What have your classes taught you about connecting Latinx culture to academia? How do you think we can integrate Latinx culture in your future class lessons? Can you give me any particular cuentos, consejos, or suggestions? If not, what kind of resources would help you best?</p>
#12	<p>Are there any defining cuentos or consejos that have formed your perspective/identity as a Latinx person and/or a teacher to Latinx students?</p>

## BENEFITS OF CO-CONSTRUCTING LATINX CONSCIOUSNESS

#13	-Let's pretend you met yourself as a kid and could tell "little you" how to strengthen your culture and sense of identity. -What consejo(s) or cuento(s) would you tell a younger version of yourself or the adults around you?
#14	Are there any questions you want to ask me or anything you want to add?

**Stuff 2 Read & Interpret:(4) excerpts**

(1) "By the end of the century, Spanish speakers will compromise the biggest minority group in the U.S., a country where students in high schools and colleges are encouraged to take French classes because French is considered more "cultured." But for a language to remain alive it must be used. By the end of the century English, and not Spanish will be the mother tongue of most Chicanos and Latinos.

So if you want to hurt me talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity I am my language until I can take pride in my language I cannot take pride in myself." (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 81).

Questions to think about/not all will be asked. You can lead the conversation.: -How does this excerpt impact how you view Spanish, and Spanglish /"Chicano Spanish" in the classroom? Is this excerpt an accurate or inaccurate reflection of your views?

(2) "When we discuss Latina mothering in particular it is important to point out that as mothers we belong to a historically oppressed group in the U.S and by this very notion we transmit life lessons through our daily actions and rituals which become pedagogical moments or moments of teaching and learning that are political. Delgado Bernal (2001) has referred to this as the 'pedagogy of the home.' It is through mothering that many of us develop coping skills, empowerment strategies, and ultimately agency. For the current analysis, I propose that mothering is a form of compassionate teaching for Latina girls that involves learning while encountering conflicts and contradictions that require healing and transformative modes of cultural practice." (Guzmán, 2012, p. 47).

- Pedagogy=study of ways to teach. Parenting is a way of teaching. Pedagogy of Home.

Questions to think about

-How do you view parenting as part of the school process? How do you approach this idea of a pedagogy of home?

-What do you think of this excerpt and how does it relate to your view on mothering?

-How did your mother and/or how do you hope to "transmit life lessons through our daily actions and rituals" that are teaching moments?-How can you reimagine schools to include this?

(4)"El choque de un alma atrapado entre el mundo del espíritu y el mundo de la técnica a veces la deja entullada. [The clash of a soul caught between the world of the spirit and the world of technique sometimes leaves it stunned.]

Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war. Like all people, we perceive the version of reality that our culture communicates. Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes un choque, a cultural collision. Within us and within *la cultura chicana* commonly held beliefs of the white culture attack commonly held beliefs of the Mexican culture, and both attack commonly held beliefs of the indigenous culture. Subconsciously, we see an attack on ourselves and our beliefs as a threat and we attempt to block with a counterstance." "el choque/the crash," (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.100).

Questions to think about:

*Do you live in more than one culture? Do these cultures give you opposing messages? What does a choque/cultural collision look like in your life? How does this relate to how we view ourselves as children of Latino parents? How does this play into your (cultural+) consciousness? Thoughts on this passage?*

**References**

1. Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Aunt Lute Books. pp. 77 & 100.
2. Guzmán, B. (2012). Cultivating a Guerrera Spirit in Latinas: The Praxis of Mothering. *Association of Mexican-American Educators (AMAE) Journal*, 6(1), 47.

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## Appendix D

## Plática Questions for Teachers

Question #	Questions for Plática
#1	<p><i>*Optional; what is your gender, age, sexual orientation, and schooling level.</i></p> <p><i>*You may skip any question at any time by saying “skip” *</i></p>
#2	<p>How would you describe your cultural identity and/or personal identity? What has helped you understand the culture you identify with?</p> <p>Are you part of multiple cultures or groups?</p> <p>-Can you list at least 3-5 important things you value within your culture?</p> <p>-Why do you value these things?</p>
#3	<p>Is maintaining/staying in your culture a natural thing or do you work towards it? Are there specific elements that come naturally and others you work towards?</p>
#4	<p>How do you make a distinction between Latinx, Latina/o, Chicano, Hispanic, Mexican-American, etc?</p>
#5	<p>How would you describe your Spanish speaking skills? How important is it for you to be proficient in the Spanish language? Your thoughts on Spanglish/ Chicano Spanish?</p>
#6	<p>Do you feel self-conscious of your Spanish skills around other Spanish speakers? What are your experiences using Spanish in the classroom? Can you elaborate on that?</p>
#7	<p>How has your teacher preparation emphasized the value of the Spanish language? If not, why do you think this is so? Is it difficult to integrate Spanish within your field? Do you encourage the use of Spanish within your classroom? How?</p>
#8	<p>How do you gauge a Latinx student’s cultural or personal needs in the classroom? How can we connect the school and home cultures of Latinx students? How would you re-imagine schools to use the 5 elements you listed on #2?</p>
#9	<p>Did the positive elements you listed on #2 reflect what you do/did in school? Why is it or why is it not) important for students to learn about these elements in school?</p>
#10	<p>Have you ever worked with a teacher (or student) to learn about Latinx culture and identity? If so, what did you do and how did it go?</p>
#11	<p>What have your classes taught you about connecting Latinx culture to academia? How do you integrate Latinx culture in your class lessons? Can you give me any particular cuentos, consejos, or suggestions? If not, what kind of resources would help you best?</p>
#12	<p>Are there any defining cuentos or consejos that have formed your perspective/identity as a Latinx person and as a teacher to Latinx students?</p>
#13	<p>-Let’s pretend you met yourself as a kid and could tell “little you” how to strengthen your culture and sense of identity.</p>

## BENEFITS OF CO-CONSTRUCTING LATINX CONSCIOUSNESS

	-What consejo(s) or cuento(s) would you tell a younger version of yourself or the adults around you?
#14	Are there any questions you want to ask me or anything you want to add?

**Stuff 2 Read & Interpret: (4) excerpts**

(1) “By the end of the century, Spanish speakers will compromise the biggest minority group in the U.S., a country where students in high schools and colleges are encouraged to take French classes because French is considered more “cultured.” But for a language to remain alive it must be used. By the end of the century English, and not Spanish will be the mother tongue of most Chicanos and Latinos.

So if you want to hurt me talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity I am my language until I can take pride in my language I cannot take pride in myself.” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 81).

Questions to think about/not all will be asked. You can lead the conversation.: -How does this excerpt impact how you view Spanish, and Spanglish / “Chicano Spanish” in the classroom? Is this excerpt an accurate or inaccurate reflection of your views?

(2) “When we discuss Latina mothering in particular it is important to point out that as mothers we belong to a historically oppressed group in the U.S and by this very notion we transmit life lessons through our daily actions and rituals which become pedagogical moments or moments of teaching and learning that are political. Delgado Bernal (2001) has referred to this as the ‘pedagogy of the home.’ It is through mothering that many of us develop coping skills, empowerment strategies, and ultimately agency. For the current analysis, I propose that mothering is a form of compassionate teaching for Latina girls that involves learning while encountering conflicts and contradictions that require healing and transformative modes of cultural practice.” (Guzmán, 2012, p. 47).

- Pedagogy=study of ways to teach. Parenting is a way of teaching. Pedagogy of Home.

Questions to think about

-How do you view parenting as part of the school process? How do you approach this idea of a pedagogy of home?

-What do you think of this excerpt and how does it relate to your view on mothering?

-How did your mother and/or how do you hope to “transmit life lessons through our daily actions and rituals” that are teaching moments?

-How can you reimagine schools to include this?

(3) “El choque de un alma atrapado entre el mundo del espíritu y el mundo de la técnica a veces la deja entullada. [The clash of a soul caught between the world of the spirit and the world of technique sometimes leaves it stunned.]

Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war. Like all people, we perceive the version of reality that our culture communicates. Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes un choque [crash], a cultural collision. Within us and within la cultura Chicana, commonly held beliefs of the white culture attack commonly held beliefs of the Mexican culture, and both attack commonly held beliefs of the indigenous culture. Subconsciously, we see an attack on ourselves and our beliefs as a threat and we attempt to block with a counterstance.” (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.100).

Questions to think about:

*Do you live in more than one culture? Do these cultures give you opposing messages? What does a choque/cultural collision look like in your life? How does this relate to how we view ourselves as children of Latino parents? How does this play into your (cultural+) consciousness? Thoughts on this passage?*

## References

1. Anzaldúa, G. (1987). Borderlands/La Frontera. Aunt Lute Books. pp. 77 & 100.
2. Guzmán, B. (2012). Cultivating a Guerrera Spirit in Latinas: The Praxis of Mothering. Association of Mexican-American Educators (AMAE) Journal, 6(1), 47.

## BENEFITS OF CO-CONSTRUCTING LATINX CONSCIOUSNESS

### Appendix E

#### Letter for Plática Participants

Hello!! My project is about the *Benefits of Co-Constructing Latinx Consciousness in Schools*. We all have a consciousness, but we don't have the same feelings towards it, especially when it relates to our culture. Our familias, maestras, and amigas all influence our consciousness, but schools do not always link our home culture and personal consciousness in the classroom. Latinx consciousness is a new concept that builds off of previous research and I would like your help constructing it. I am interviewing parents, teachers, and students for this project because they/you are the biggest influence on Latinx students. Please let me know if you cannot participate as soon as you can. I appreciate you for reading all this!!

#### Background

“The United States has a well-deserved reputation as a graveyard for immigrant languages. (Alba, & Stowell, 2007, p. 1). Non-English speaking people lose their language in America and their children reflect the change. Alba and Stowell (2007) found that “less than 30 percent of third-generation Hispanic children today speak some Spanish at home.” (p. 4). Schools are slowly learning to connect different cultures & languages to schoolwork, but parents and students are not always considered in this process. This project aims to listen to and amplify the voices of the people most affected.

This project works alongside Gloria Anzaldúa’s ideas of a mestiza consciousness and will “connect the community to the academy.”(Anzaldúa, 1990, xxvi). With this project, we will connect community voces/voices and CSUMB/academia to find out how to generate positive social change within the classroom for Latinx students.

We will explore the important elements of your culture, how you “got” or received that culture, your comfort level with the Spanish language, and determine the benefits of knowing about Latinx culture. We will shape how Latinx consciousness is defined and expressed. Additionally, we will re-imagine schools to aid Latinx students (with or without Latinx consciousness). All our pláticas will result in various opinions and beliefs around how what a Latinx/a/o should look like and we will define what our collective, individual and complex Latinx consciousness looks like.

#### Procedures

Overall, this project will require 2-3 hours of your time. I am open to any suggestions and modifications to make this work. I have provided a list of questions, excerpts and definitions that I will be using during our pláticas. We will keep the pláticas centered on your voice and how you relate to the themes presented. I am asking that we audio record the pláticas and I have provided the audio consent form (& further details) on another page. I can provide further resources and citations if required for preparation. I can also send you the full version of the texts or in another format if needed. I recommend you look at the definitions, the questions and then the excerpts before our plática. The following table explains the plática details, process, and requirements.

Plática details	Process	Requirements
(1)- First plática interview ~30 minutes to 1 hour.	-A fluid plática. Allows us to cover any questions, any questions you may have, and opinions on the excerpts provided.	-Set of questions -Reading excerpts to discuss and interpret -Be able to conduct plática on Zoom or in-person
(1) A follow-up plática en comunidad. (Parents will talk to other parents, students talk with other students, etc). ~30 minutes to 1 hour. *This interview depends on time and availability*	-I will summarize our conversation and will provide you with a copy beforehand. -We will discuss if my report is correct and if we missed anything during our chat. This prevents any misinterpretations on my part and you will be able to hear the responses from other pláticas.	-Summary of the pláticas. -Any extra observations or consejos you want to give -Be able to conduct plática on Zoom or in-person

Afterward, I will be using the pláticas results for my written discussion paper and an art collage. I may use what you said during the pláticas, but I will ask for your approval in the plática report beforehand.

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### **Risks and Discomforts**

This project requires you to read ~2-3 pages of reading in English and a little bit of reading in Spanish. I have provided translations, but let me know if you need anything clarified! I am happy to answer any questions!

This interview may have potentially uncomfortable or unfamiliar questions that you can skip. The interviews may be longer or shorter depending on the length of our discussions. There may be moments you may wish to take a break and we can stop. We both have the choice to stop at any time and ask different/follow-up questions. We may also revisit another question as our plática progresses. If we stop the plática altogether, then we can reschedule the interview or stop the process completely.

### **Benefits**

I will explore and analyze the elements that make up Latinx consciousness and if there are any benefits for modern Latinx students. We cover what cultural capital is, cultural consciousness, and see if “Latinx consciousness” would be beneficial in the classroom. This is also a chance for you (the participant) to provide input about your educational (and life experiences) and we can encourage positive social change within the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

Schools and educators help students shape their personal consciousness and our consciousness determines our futures. The main constructors of consciousness are students and we are influenced by our environment. I want to start a meaningful dialogue about how you developed your consciousness, identity, and cultural knowledge. We will explore a new area of development for Latinx students and explore the benefits of Latinx/a/o culture within the classroom.

Muchas gracias por tu tiempo and I send you best wishes,  
 Elizabeth Cruz R.  
[ecruz@csumb.edu](mailto:ecruz@csumb.edu)  
 707-889-5964

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### References:

1. Alba, R., & Stowell, J. (2007).. Linguistic assimilation across the generations: An analysis of home language among second-and third-generation children from contemporary immigrant groups. Retrieved from <https://paa2007.princeton.edu/papers/7138>
2. Anzaldúa, G. (2002) Now let us shift ... the path of conocimiento ... inner work, public acts, In G. Anzaldúa & A. Keating (Eds) *This bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation* (New York, Routledge), 540–578

## BENEFITS OF CO-CONSTRUCTING LATINX CONSCIOUSNESS

## Appendix F

Definitions and Connections

This page is part of Elizabeth Cruz R.'s CSUMB Liberal Studies Capstone Project. We can refer to this page at any time during the process. Thank you for reading!

-The definitions in "quotations" come from <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/> unless cited otherwise.

-If the statement does not have a citation and quotation marks, then I am *paraphrasing* the meanings for efficiency.

-Let me know if you have questions or suggestions!

**Chicano:** a person living in the US whose family came from Mexico. Chicax is the gender-neutral and fluid version.

**Co-construct:** to work together to build and create something.

**Consciousness:** "the state of being able to use your senses and mental powers to understand what is happening." Anzaldúa describes how knowledge makes her conscious, aware and is also a painful process.

**Culture:** "refers to behaviors and values that are learned, shared, and exhibited by a group of people." (Yosso, 2005, p. 75).

**Hispanic:** "of or connected with Spain or Spanish-speaking countries, especially those of Latin America."

**Latino:** "a person, especially one who is living in the US, who comes from Latin America, or whose family came from there." Can be used to refer to male Latinos or multiple Latinos (plural). Latina/o is a way to describe both Latinos and Latinas while writing.

**Latinx/Latine:** "a person, especially one who is living in the US, who comes from Latin America, or whose family came from there (used as a gender-neutral alternative to Latino or Latina)." I will be using this term to include everybody and am open to modifications.. Please let me know if you have any preguntas or suggestions!

**Latinx consciousness\*\*:** A concept revisiting Anzaldúa's ideas around a mestiza consciousness 35 years after its creation. We have differing levels of historical, experiential, familial, community, and cultural awareness, yet we all are united under the term "Latino" or "Hispanic." Latinx consciousness is the intersection of Latinx culture, progressive action, understanding, reflection, and healing. The complexities from the voces/voices, raizes/roots y valores/values of Latin American descendants make up a collective stream of Latinx consciousness.\*\*This response will vary. There is no "correct" answer. \*\*\*\*

**Mestiza:** "a Latin American woman who has both Spanish and indigenous ancestors." Anzaldúa reclaims it by describing herself as a mestiza who has white, African, and "Indian" ancestry. See figure 1 for more details.

**Mestiza consciousness:**

Gloria Anzaldúa describes it as a "shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movement away from set patterns and goals and toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes." (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 101). Rest of the quote is below.

**(What is) Plática methodology:** Conversations that are fluid, trusting, match each other's energy, we exchange knowledge and ideas in a casual setting. This is a research method "that honors participants [you] as co-

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constructors of knowledge.” (Bernal & Fierros, 2016, p. 111). I want to use this method in our interviews and want the



conversation to be trusting, easy and be a creation of its own.

**Re-imagine:** The act of imagining again. New imaginations to think about.

“Español con India. Mestizo.”

Figure 1

-This is a 18th century painting

Please let me know if you have any questions!

### References

1. Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Aunt Lute Books. pp. 70 & 101.
2. Bernal, D.D & Fierros, C. (2016). *Vamos a Pláticar: The Contours of Pláticar as Chicana/Latina Feminist Methodology*. *Chicana/Latina Studies*, 15(2), 98-121.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43941617>
3. Yosso T.J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332052000341006>