

Moviéndose a Través de Languages and Literacies Through Code-Switching in a Community Literacies Event

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Abstract

This article describes a community literacies event from a larger project, one goal of which was to connect those affiliated to the university with the Latino/a community in the greater Lafayette area in Indiana. The notion of code-switching is used to describe how participants, including faculty, graduate students, preservice teachers, and volunteers, moved across languages and literacies to engage with community members—a central characteristic for the establishment of partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse groups. The following questions are addressed: How can we move across literacies in the community and academic literacies to partner with Latino/a families? What models exist to promote understanding of literacies in the community? Based on exploration of these questions, it is clear that code-switching may play a key role in establishing partnerships with Latino/a communities. Suggestions for practitioners' and scholars' engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse groups are given.

Introduction

People are divided from one another in various ways. In some spaces, there is a border, a large street sign, a river; in West Lafayette, Indiana, a small midwestern town predominantly Caucasian and home to Purdue University, there is a bridge that separates college students, faculty, staff, and their families from a growing, diverse community of Latinos/as on the other side (*Arvelo Alicea & Cortés Santiago, 2013*). In an attempt to bridge this spatial separation and guided by our role as bilingual and multilingual educators in the Midwest, we wanted to establish connections with Latinos/as in and outside Purdue University. Our project began during a conversation with the director of the Latino Cultural Center on campus, who recommended we contact the Hanna Community Center, a local nonprofit organization that offers multiple services to area residents, mostly from underrepresented groups (see *Hanna Community Center, 2013*).

In our first visit to the Center, we met the community liaison and some of the families who later participated in our program to discuss the needs of the community and the opportunities to partner with them. We learned that the Latino/a families we had just met were from Mexico, as were those the liaison was envisioning as prospective participants for this initiative. We also experienced Hanna as an inviting venue that, like its people, was abundant in heart but bereft of economic means: We observed children-crafted decorations, humble infrastructure, and a modest library with a small reference and education collection used by volunteers. Our new liaison was the voice of these families and thus shared their concerns, which included language barriers, schooling experiences, and literacy development of culturally and linguistically diverse children. Informed by our various meetings, conversations, and observations, we developed a program to emphasize biliteracy and the family's role in children's education.

Our initiative had perfect timing as a new student grant program sponsored by the Office of the Vice Provost for Engagement had been launched at Purdue University (i.e., Student Grant Program for Community Service/Service Learning Projects). Zaira and Ileana, two doctoral students in literacy and language education (L&L), applied for the grant and sought sponsorship from Luciana, at the time an assistant professor in L&L with a focus on teaching English language learners and president of the Latino Faculty and Staff Association (LaFaSA). We were a diverse team of educators with distinct backgrounds and linguistic repertoires; we also knew different situations that required the use of languages would occur as we planned activities. What we did not anticipate was the centrality of language practices to our initiative.

Families were advised and recruited by our community liaison, who meets regularly with some of the mothers for workshops and other educational programming at Hanna. The families were advised to participate in this event as all information would focus on the topic of family involvement and biliteracy development and would be presented in English and Spanish. Having a proactive community liaison assist with one-on-one recruitment builds trust and legitimizes this type of engagement initiative with families who may otherwise feel overwhelmed by having to share with members of a big academic institution like Purdue University. To illustrate, many of these Latino/a families live near our college campus but have never visited Purdue precisely because they do not see themselves reflected in the overall identity of the institution (i.e., emphasis on research, scholarship, and competitive sports). In

addition to the personal approach, advertisement was also used to invite the families.

Ileana originally developed advertising in English, but Spanish versions of the posters and flyers were created upon suggestion of the liaison. She told us that although many of the children who were coming to the program spoke English, the majority of the parents and guardians spoke Spanish and had limited productive and receptive skills in English. The language variety used on advertisements in Spanish was tailored to the cultural roots of the target community, who were mostly of Mexican descent. English advertising was also developed in an accessible register that would appeal to the prospective participants. As explained by Arvelo Alicea and Cortés Santiago (2013), learning about and placing the advertising in venues highly frequented by the families helps to disseminate the information while communicating the importance of the culture and preferences of the prospective participants.

Overall, the events combined elements of planning and spontaneity, both in the organization and during the activities. We planned and developed the advertising, the materials used in the children's activities, the recruitment of a predominantly bilingual (English/Spanish) group of interpreters, the music selections, and the activities, to mention a few; similarly, the speakers either were bilingual or were monolingual and were provided with assistance through an interpreter.

On the day of the program, organizers, future teachers, parents, relatives, and children gathered at the Hanna Community Center to participate in various activities that emphasized the significant role of parents/guardians in children's literacy development while stressing the value of home culture. Adults listened to poems, made sketches, and shared immigration stories while children decorated masks and created musical instruments. In the end, all participants came together in a shared experience featuring singing and dancing in English and *español*. The rich linguistic interactions that transpired that day informed our awareness of cultural contact zones and the functional role of language.

As we assessed the program outcomes, we recognized code-switching, or the practice of navigating two or more languages (Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Menyuk & Brisk, 2005), as seminal to the success of our initiative. We engaged in code-switching in ways that facilitated dialogue with multiple groups, including university-affiliated contributors, community leaders, and Latino/a families. In this manner, code-switching had a comprehensive role in

our program. Participants were informed that the events would be conducted in English and Spanish and as L&L educators, we knew language alternation would transpire naturally throughout the planning and execution of the activities. In fact, the use of a language or variety went beyond spontaneity, as it also became a series of strategic decisions dictated by an awareness of who the interlocutors were at the time of communication (e.g., Spanish-speaking parent/guardian) and what the context was (e.g., playing singing games, meeting with community liaison). Code-switching was an ally that framed our actions and facilitated the assessment of the program; it helped us develop stronger ties with the families and reconsider outreach and engagement.

We draw on the notion of code-switching (CS) to describe how participants moved across languages and literacies to engage with members of the Latino/a community. We believe the practice of CS is essential to the establishment of relationships with culturally and linguistically diverse families. The following questions are addressed in light of this community literacies event: How can we move across literacies in the community and academic literacies to partner with Latino/a families? What models exist to promote understanding of literacies in the community?

Context of the Event

Inquiries regarding partnerships with culturally and linguistically diverse families are particularly relevant to educators who encounter significant demographic changes in places with traditionally homogeneous populations (e.g., race). In the year 2000, there were 35.3 million Latinos/as in the United States; however, by 2010, that number had almost doubled (*Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011*). The most recent U. S. Census data confirms this growth, as 16.3% of the population self-identified as Hispanic or Latino/a (*U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2011*). A similar panorama occurred in our state, where there was an 81.7% increase for this population (*CensusViewer, 2012*). Millard and Chappa (*2004*) have identified employment opportunities as one factor contributing to this change in states that did not have a strong Latino/a presence.

The community venues where our project took place are located in an area that spreads through the Northwest and West Central regions of Indiana (*Purdue Center for Regional Development, 2012*). According to a classification scheme of statistical area, our county, Tippecanoe, is a central county where at least 50% of the county's population clusters in an urban area and a place that serves as host

for 25% of laborers and commuters from surrounding counties (Waldorf, 2007). Tippecanoe, as reported in census data, is home to approximately 12,000 Hispanics/Latinos (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2012). The state's population projections by race and ethnicity suggest that Latinos/Hispanics will constitute 8% of the state's population by 2030 and that counties in the Central region, including Tippecanoe, will see the largest numbers of this group and the most rapid growth (Kingham, 2008). Demographic changes in the nation, the state, and our university's surrounding counties reinforce the value of community engagement programs with diverse families.

Literature Review

As literacy educators, we understand code-switching (CS) as a natural phenomenon that allows culturally and linguistically diverse individuals to navigate two or more languages (Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Menyuk & Brisk, 2005). Our definition of codes stems from two disciplines. Scholars in the field of social justice have equated the use of codes to having various degrees of access to power that can grant mobility and group membership (Delpit, 1988). From a linguistic standpoint, Gardner-Chloros (2009) explains code as a broad term that encapsulates various uses of language (e.g., alternation between languages and levels of formality). Switching codes can also be conceptualized as alternating between academic and everyday language forms. Academic language is the kind of language that students learn at school and “stands in contrast to the everyday informal speech that students use outside the classroom environment” (Bailey & Butler, 2002, p. 7). Academic language is used for specific communicative purposes (Schleppegrell, 2001, 2004) and requires proper instructional support from teachers (Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Schleppegrell, 2004). Bridging both language forms is a powerful way to help children who are learning English as an additional language (Gibbons, 2009). During our event, these language forms were used according to specific communicative situations between participants and were openly valued. These definitions informed our use of the term CS as we conceptualized, developed, and successfully carried out a community literacies event with Latino/a families in our town.

Research on CS has been ongoing for decades (Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Myers-Scotton, 1988, 1999; Myers-Scotton & Bolonyai, 2001; Zentella, 1981, 1982). For instance, Myers-Scotton (1988) conceptualized CS as both “speaker-centered” and “audience-centered” as individuals choose codes to communicate according to the “dynamics of the interaction” (p. 201). Further, Myers-Scotton and Bolonyai (2001)

found that CS is linked to an individual's capacity to make language choices. In our case, our choices of codes mediated effective communication with the families.

Other studies have addressed how CS can serve in everyday settings, such as community venues and schools, to foster relationships. Alfaraz (2009) found that CS was used in a church to establish commonality and difference in addition to building relationships among members of the congregation. In schools, teachers have used it to promote formative classroom interactions (Qian, Tian, & Wang, 2009). In our program, CS was a central resource to achieve our goal of bringing together families and university personnel as well as emphasizing biliteracy and the role of families in children's literacy development.

Research performed in Canada has found significant support for bilingualism and favorable views toward the Spanish language. For example, Pérez-Leroux, Cuza, and Thomas (2011) investigated parental attitudes toward Spanish language use and bilingualism in Toronto. They found that families had positive views toward bilingualism, which corresponds with the views of the Toronto community, where the diversity of languages, ethnic backgrounds, and multilingual media (e.g., street signs; language services in government, education, and commercial establishments; and community support for ethnic celebrations) are common. Their research study established the potential for language maintenance, the difference family choices make, and the likelihood for the study participants' future Spanish to be unique.

Pacini-Ketchabaw, Bernhard, and Freire (2001), in their study of Latino families in Canada, reported on the home language practices of 45 Latino families and the impact of the school's routine processes on those practices. They found that parents used Spanish in the home for bilingualism and Latino identity maintenance. Their findings show that schools need to recognize families' cultural capital. Code-switching is a key resource for bilinguals, as these and other studies suggest.

Overview of the Program

The broad goal of the program was to bring together those associated with Purdue University with Latino/a parents and children at a community center that serves a culturally and linguistically diverse population in Lafayette, Indiana. The specific goal of the program was to engage the community and university through activities that emphasized the families' role in the literacy develop-

ment of Latino/a children and youth while stressing the value of home culture.

The community's participation at the Hanna Community Center in Lafayette consisted of 43 children and 33 adults (parents/guardians and family members). Our liaison's preregistration list was composed of mostly Mexican heritage families with the exception of one from Colombia. On the day of the event, the children's room accommodated 18 tots (ages 3–6), 13 kids (ages 7–11), 6 young teens (ages 12–13), and 3 teens (ages 14–18). There were 23 female and 17 male Latino/a children.

In addition, we also enjoyed the support of 18 university-affiliated people. The dean of the College of Education, an assistant professor in literacy and language education, six preservice teachers from the Colleges of Education and Liberal Arts, three translators from the Community Assistance Program in the College of Liberal Arts, and five doctoral students from the College of Education at Purdue University attended the event. In addition, an assistant professor of education who is a member of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and a doctoral student from Indiana University, Bloomington facilitated a workshop with parents/guardians. The facilitators, project organizers, dean, and community liaison were from Latino/a backgrounds. The doctoral students were from various backgrounds. All project-affiliated personnel, with the exception of volunteer graduate students and undergraduate students and our dean, were proficient speakers of English and Spanish. English-speaking undergraduate students were preservice teachers in elementary education. The graduate students were pursuing degrees in various educational fields. We relied on the College of Education electronic mailing lists, various meetings for graduate courses, and membership in our own courses to recruit volunteers with previous experience educating young children or with knowledge about literacy development.

On the day of the event, April 1, 2011, organizers, future teachers, parents, relatives, and children gathered to engage in comprehensive activities with English and Spanish musical components. The parents/guardians created poetic pieces and shared drawings and stories about their homelands as children worked on masks and performed music. The Conducting the Event section below includes more detailed descriptions of the program and specific activities for the respective groups of participants.

Assessment of Project/Program

The program had two major goals: first, facilitating an event that would allow members from the academic community to share a firsthand experience with local Latino/a families; second, addressing our community's need to have their home culture and language (i.e., Spanish) validated in an educational event by university-affiliated educators. To this end, our program's team targeted several tasks. Luciana served as faculty sponsor for the program and participant in the conversations on immigration with the families. Zaira and Ileana were involved in the program as grant writers, program organizers, moderators, and participants in the various events (e.g., conversations with families and crafts with children). We were all actively involved in the process of assessing the goals set out for the university affiliates and the families.

Assessment Sources and Procedures

Our program was not conceptualized as a research study. Because of that, we cannot present assessment results as a regular research study would. However, we can present early-stage findings. Thus, we focus on excerpts from the various artifacts developed during the planning stages and the communicative situations transpiring during the program as illustrative of the extent to which the goals were met. In order to celebrate the program, our team participated in a series of exchanges that required constant dialogue with academics and community members. Consequently, an array of digital and printed artifacts was developed, including flyers, formal letters, and brief e-mails. During the event, other situations occurred such as exchanges between participants and visuals representative of personal experiences.

In order to identify the major themes and lessons learned through the development and celebration of the program, our team met on multiple occasions. During these meetings, we examined the artifacts developed for the program and considered the following factors: the context in which the artifact would be used, the target audience, and the level of formality required to communicate ideas effectively. The same criteria were used to reflect on the observations made by our team members during their interactions with the families and other university-affiliated people.

Retrospective Reflection on the Experience

The communicative situations in which our team participated demonstrated the types of code-switching that organizers would

need to perform when planning community engagement projects with different audiences. These early-stage findings are all related to the use of code-switching in entire project stages, from the beginning conversations about it with community partners to the actual event. For example, to contact promising academics to deliver the main workshop, we employed a formal discourse. We sent a formal letter to the proposed presenter appealing to her background as a Latina who works with future teachers and Latino families and introduced ourselves as doctoral students who shared a cultural affinity. Her response was prompt and positive. From then on, our communication shifted to brief e-mails characterized by the use of Spanish with some English words that alluded to technical terms in our field, literacy and language education. Our text-based correspondence extended to videoconferences with immediate feedback characterized by the use of everyday language. Table 1 shows examples of exchanges with the event's presenter to illustrate the different discourses employed.

Table 1. Exchanges with Event's Presenter

Language variety	Excerpts from online correspondence
English academic language	I am an instructor for a course that aims to instill in pre-service teachers an appreciation of good children's literature and promote a multicultural approach to selecting literature and understanding its connection to the students' culture.
Spanish everyday language	Skype sería una muy buena idea porque nos permitiría ver y oír a la otra persona antes de llevar acabo la actividad. Me alegra mucho que su experiencia sea en "drama-education" ya que mi compañera y yo teníamos en mente un formato de presentación menos tradicional y un poco más interactivo.

A different type of interaction took place as we met with our community liaison; here, the preferred language was English. Our conversations, most of which occurred face-to-face in the liaison's office, focused on who the prospective families would be, which literacies and languages they used, and how to secure an environment of trust and respect for the home culture. Our dialogue called for an understanding of the particularities of the families. A main area of concern for our liaison was that all materials and speech before and during the event were carried out in English and Spanish,

which paralleled a concern held by our team. This particular goal would prove to be more complicated than our multilingual group expected, for our varieties of Spanish were two among many. The participants were mostly of Mexican descent and thus had their own varieties of Spanish. This variation highlighted the need for CS even within the same language; thus, we had to question the appropriateness of a code variation toward meaning-making while crafting advertising materials and educational products. Code-switching was a fundamental component, as we planned the community literacies event, recruited our speaker, and gained the trust of our community liaison. This linguistic awareness would also be needed in the actual celebration of the event, as we explain below. Figure 1 summarizes the context and the languages used in the engagement event.

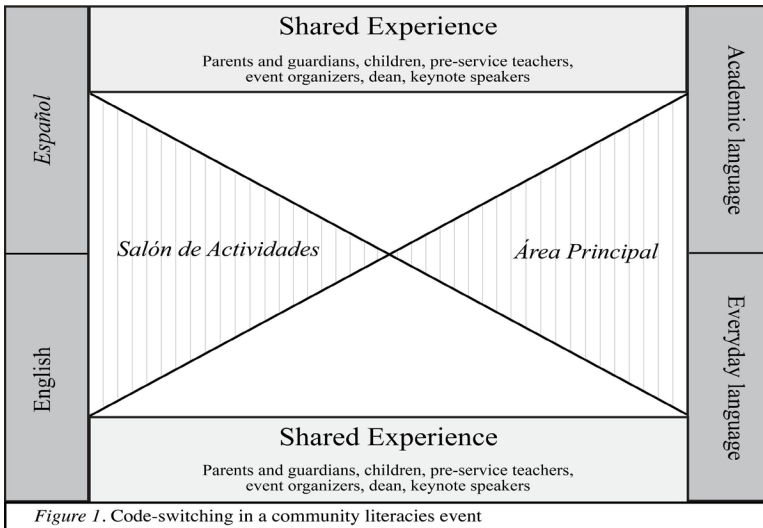


Figure 1. Code-switching in a community literacies event

Conducting the Event

Various activities took place in different rooms at the community center, as described below. Table 2 shows a summary of the activities in their respective areas.

Table 2. Areas in the Centro Comunitario and Respective Activities.

<i>Salón principal</i>	<i>El centro</i>	<i>Salón de actividades</i>
Taller: bilingual slides, delivery of workshop content, and poems	Introductory remarks: narrative account of language experiences in English interjected with Spanish translation	Read-aloud on musical instruments in everyday English
Drawings: multimodal literacies	Closing remarks: bilingual singing games like “Shake It, Morena!” where children used their musical instruments while parents clapped and sang along	Crafts-making with preservice teachers, language interpreters, and graduate students
Group work in bilingual everyday language to voice the meaning of the drawings		Bilingual instructions in everyday language for the children

Experiencia Compartida (Shared Experience). The event started with an *experiencia compartida* in which everyone participated in common activities, including an introduction by the dean of the College of Education at Purdue University. The introduction was accompanied by an impromptu Spanish translation by one of the organizers. Dean Maryann Santos de Barona provided a narrative account of her language experiences while growing up in a Latino/a household in New York. Considerable research establishes the positive effects of bilingualism; however, the dean expressed that she was encouraged to focus on learning English to improve her opportunities as a Latina in the United States. She purposely used everyday English to recount her literacy experiences and connect with the Latino/a *familias*. Her introduction provided the context and set the mood for the day’s events. She shared with the audience how much she regrets not being able to use Spanish herself and emphasized the importance of developing both Spanish and English. Afterward, parents and guardians stayed in *el área principal* (the main area) while the children went to *el salón de actividades* (the activity room) (See Figure 1).

Área Principal (the Main Area). In *el área principal*, Latino/a fathers, mothers, and guardians engaged in dialogue about literacy as it pertains to the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse families. The keynote speaker emphasized the value of developing bilingual literacies and the role of families in this process. The discourses used by the presenter were both academic English and Spanish. Moreover, in working with the families she used a pedagogical approach akin to best practices in the teaching of English language learning (Gibbons, 2009): individual work, small group sharing, whole-class interaction. First, she read aloud a selection of *poemas bilingües* (bilingual poems) on immigration from the

book *A Movie in My Pillow/Una película en mi almohada* (Argueta, 2001) to establish a common ground with the participants. Next, she invited parents to reflect at a personal level by making sketches. Third, the project's team and the presenter joined the groups and exchanged anecdotes with the families. Some of the major topics addressed by the families included the following: nostalgia for the places and people left behind, some over a decade ago; the cultural mismatch between the home culture and the host culture, such as collective versus individualistic values; and the challenges of raising children who are strangers to the home country and do not speak their caregivers' first language. During this activity, everyday Spanish in its different regional varieties served as the sanctioned discourse to discuss the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse families and the challenges that accompany formal literacy instruction in the United States.

Salón de Actividades (the Activity Room). Our use of code-switching in the activity room was highly dependent on the participants' use of language when interacting with us. Following the dean's initial remarks, the volunteer future teachers, interpreters, and our team led the little ones to the activity room in a choo-choo train. In this exchange, we drew on our linguistic repertoire of affective terms and everyday English to make the children feel comfortable, leave the adults in the *área principal*, and follow us. As the number of participants had unexpectedly doubled from the original registration list, we were cognizant of the challenge involved in meeting the needs of Latinos/as of multiple age groups. We relied on the codes that would appeal to such a diverse and large group of children and young adults, as they fluctuated between everyday Spanish and academic English. For the former, we noticed the use of colloquial commands when asking for food; for the latter, we observed formal requests to leave the room, a practice common to educational settings.

Table 3. Exchanges with Children

Language variety	Excerpts from the <i>salón de actividades</i>
English academic language	Can I have a hall pass?
Spanish everyday language	¡Dame pizza!

In this well-organized yet crowded space, the sea of faces and literacies brightened the venue as the volunteers began the read-aloud of a Caldecott Honor Book on musical instruments titled *Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin* (Moss, 1995). During the read-aloud,

the children were prompted to respond and react to the sounds represented in the book: They clapped, moved their heads from side to side, and made mock instrument movements symbolizing those featured in the picture book. Afterward, the children crafted tambourines and *maracas*. Upon reading the instructions in both languages, we distributed the materials to the children, who were eager to begin working on their *obras maestras*, as we heard one of the older, most clamorous participants exclaim with pride. Reflecting on this activity, we recalled the challenging journey of creating bilingual documents for the families and choosing culturally specific labels for objects in a variety of Spanish that was not our own. For example, instead of maintaining the Anglicized term tape in the craft-making instructions, we opted for one more akin to the students' identities, *cinta adhesiva*.

As we engaged in craft-making with the participants, we noticed the strict adherence many of them observed toward everyday English as the language of communication. This parallels findings by Menyuk and Brisk (2005), who claim that “[c]hildren may not develop, and also reject, one of the languages at any age” (p. 15). In this case, they chose to communicate in a language that differed from the one their families used at home. Because of this observed linguistic choice, most of the activity was conducted in everyday English. Amid the sea of glitter, glue sticks, stickers, pom-poms, and crayons, the tasks in the *salón* prompted us to code-switch as volunteers worked with children and constantly consulted each other and us.

Experiencia Compartida (Concluding). After the activities in the *salón principal* with the parents and the *salón de actividades* with the children, all participants were reunited for the *experiencia compartida*. Parents, guardians, children, preservice teachers, and event organizers gathered to dance, sing, and learn new songs like “Shake It, Morena!” and “La Vaca Lechera.” As the collective energy built up, participants found themselves *moviéndose a través de*—moving across—languages and literacies through code-switching.

Discussion, Implications, Next Steps

Our preliminary findings highlight the importance of using English and Spanish in outreach projects with Latino/a communities. When planning for and conducting an engagement project with Latino/a families, it is essential to prepare materials, carry out conversations, and develop artifacts in both languages and varieties (i.e., academic and everyday). Code-switching became an integral

part of what we did, as this is a natural process for multilinguals (*Menyuk & Brisk, 2005*) that should be valued and promoted in any context. From Spanish to English and back to Spanish, from academic to more everyday language in both English and Spanish, from formal to more informal language, our code-switching served to create the conditions for a successful engagement endeavor.

One of the most important lessons gleaned from the program was the value of cultivating a profound understanding of our target community. To illustrate, we knew the *familias* were Latinos/as; however, Latinos/as come from many different regions and countries in the world, and we needed to know more about their specific backgrounds. Finding out the *familias* were mostly of Mexican origin led us to consider and integrate their variety of Spanish as opposed to ours, a process which was not automatic and required additional collaboration with other Spanish speakers. This realization was important at all stages of the engagement program—from crafting advertising materials and educational products to conducting the workshop with adults and activities with children. Of pedagogical significance were the development of bilingual materials and the identification of language alternation as a valid and rich linguistic phenomenon that has a place in language and literacy education; in addition, the workshop presenters and other facilitators modeled effective instructional strategies in language learning.

Finally, although this initiative was not conceptualized as a longitudinal program, it did have an impact on a series of future engagement projects in partnership with the Hanna Community Center. Since 2011, two additional projects have been conducted, one of which was sponsored by a grant from a professional organization. Thus this initial program, or “project with promise,” served to build a foundation for further engagement focused on literacy and language education and to evaluate programming strengths and needs when partnering with Latino/a families and community organizations. Our plan is to continue working with these families and develop specific evaluation instruments that can be used to learn more about the participants’ and volunteers’ experiences; our hope is that such data can be used to strengthen future programs.

Conclusion

This article described a community literacies event that enabled a closer connection of university-affiliated participants with the Latino/a community. The event was an opportunity for families,

future teachers, parents, relatives, and children to engage and experience shared and individual literacies and language activities through poetry, drawing, stories, musical instruments, singing, and dancing. These experiences helped parents and guardians reflect on children's literacy development and consider the importance of their home cultures and languages in education. Meanwhile, educators had the opportunity to expand their understanding of Latino/a culture and build connections with the community. Based on this engagement program, we identified five best practices that readers might apply to their outreach efforts with Latino/a communities in their particular contexts:

- Consider the needs of the community and collect specific information about its members (e.g., languages used in the home, children's ages, and countries or cultures of origin). Information from our community liaison about the families' cultural backgrounds, language preferences, and composition was central to the development of all aspects of the program. For instance, knowledge about the migration experiences of the families was shared with the workshop facilitator in advance; this is how the topic of immigration became the focal point of her session. The allocation of volunteers to various community center areas responded to the dichotomous language preferences of children and parents, with the former endorsing English and the latter Spanish. Although activities in both rooms were entirely bilingual, the departure language for each room varied. As for their composition, the participants' households were characterized by multiple children, parents who worked outside the home, and an interest in attending cultural and educational activities. With this in mind, the event was scheduled during the evening hours of a weekday and planned for a 2-hour block with various services for children, including a meal and cultural and educational activities for various age groups.
- Work through and develop a relationship with a community liaison who can assist in all aspects of the engagement program, including matching community needs and specific goals that organizers deem important and recruiting community members to participate in events. The support and guidance provided

by our community liaison in the Hanna Community Center were essential. In our initial meeting, the liaison assessed every angle of the project seeking affinity between the project's goals and the families' needs as well as the plausible benefits it could bring to the participants and the Center. Before welcoming our program, she advocated for the safety of the families, some of which could be considered vulnerable populations in light of their varying linguistic backgrounds and citizenship status.

- Create opportunities for preservice teachers from predominantly White regions and institutions to engage with ethnically diverse children. As explained by the vice provost for diversity and inclusion at our institution, a lot of work needs to be done to increase the representation of ethnic minorities on the campus (*Associated Press, 2010*), where only 3.48% of a student body numbering over 35,000 is Hispanic/Latino (*Office of Enrollment Management Analysis and Reporting, 2013a*). Similarly, the College of Education, where our project's volunteers were recruited, is also predominantly White: 89.9% (*OEMAR, 2013b*). Only 3.23% of the 618 undergraduate preservice teachers and 4.48% of the graduate-level students enrolled during Spring 2013 were Latino. Despite instructional offerings as international study abroad programs, internships in areas with higher ethnic diversity, and field experiences at urban schools, White preservice teachers in the College of Education have limited chances to engage with Latino/a children. Programs like this one are of utmost importance for preservice teachers, as their engagement with Latino/a children does not result in a course grade or college credit. The demographics at Purdue University, much like those in the state of Indiana as reported earlier in this article, have been known historically for their ethnically homogeneous composition. Institutions and states with similar demographic phenomena should strive to bring together their preservice teachers with their burgeoning Latino/a population in low-stakes environments.

Going from theory to practice in the area of outreach should be an integral part of what colleges of education do. Preservice

teachers, graduate students, and faculty must engage with diverse communities in their contexts. Latino/a families must also be given opportunities to share and reflect about their experiences and the literacy development of their children. We wanted to provide a time and space for all involved to engage in dialogue and enact bilingualism and biliteracies. Many of the participants were able to draw on code-switching as a resource for engaging in the various activities. In addition, we hoped to showcase the contributions of the community and the university.

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