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The Culmination of Teacher-Student and Teacher-Community  
Relationships Foster a Student's Academic and Social Development

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### **Abstract**

This is an approach to understand the complexities of becoming an effective educator using an ethnographic lens. This narrative outlines my first impressions of teaching, and it goes beyond to discuss the impact that community, school, and teacher relationships have on student success.

The purpose of this ethnography is rooted in my progressive understanding of how to become an effective and socially just educator in Lincoln Heights. Through an impeccable experience in my very own classroom, I was able to capture the essence of quality relationships with my students and fellow teachers. A year packed with great content and strategies to strengthen my understanding of analyzing student assessments, applying classroom management, working with paraprofessionals, and much more. As I reflect on my practice, I come to understand that building relationships with your students is the key to creating a space for social-emotional learning in the classroom. In addition, the reflective component of my ethnography is crucial to my process of developing my experience in the classroom. In the midst of collecting student data and building relationships with my students, I came to the conclusion that social-emotional learning is a vital component to the configuration of a socially just educator and pedagogy.

**Keywords:** Social justice, effective educator, social emotional learning, and relationships

### **Preface**

This ethnographic narrative is an extensive collection of my early expectations of teaching, three focus students, community value, and a reflection of my professional development. In a holistic sense, this ethnographic narrative is an expanded version of my inner beliefs and experience in the realm of education, but even more so as an intern at Lions Academy. I discovered the in- and outs of teaching, and I learned that the community, families, school staff, and many other factors are involved in the process of student success and wellness. I was able to experience this first hand, and it's significant to my understanding of the work I need to do in order to become an effective educator. It's fascinating to see my development come together in this project, and I'm delighted to see the shifts occur as I take on my very own classroom in Lincoln Heights.

Most of my ethnographic narrative addresses the way I attended to my students social and academic needs to increase their attainment of success. After collecting data, I created individualized action plans for three of my students to record their progress and later reflect on my efficacy in maximizing their learning. Towards the end, I use reflective practices to determine my level of effectiveness as a first-year educator. As part of my reflection, I set goals for myself so that I can continue to partake in improving my pedagogy. As I continue teaching I'll make sure to reflect on my practice as it is beneficial to my development of becoming an effective educator. This narrative is essentially my way of reflecting on my personal and professional development to become an effective educator.

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### **Introduction**

Writing about my experience in the classroom is the main core of this ethnographic narrative. It's a mixture of hope, assumptions, feelings, connections, and learning that occurred throughout my first year as an educator. I carefully examine three focus students in my class and learn about their strengths as well as their areas of improvement. With their cumulative file and assessments I was able to determine their academic needs, but that was only superficial information about the child. This ethnographic narrative was an initiative to dig deeper and truly understand the child in a cultural, linguistic, and communal context. In the midst of this rich context, I was able to determine the wealth of knowledge students have outside the classroom and utilize that to formalize a rigorous learning experience. Building strong connections to the community in which you serve is self fulfilling and important to the academic and social development of a student. This is essentially the most important thing I learned throughout this journey, and I'm able to use this approach in the future to continue serving my students.

Some challenges I encountered were based on my age and experience in the education realm, but I was able to overcome it through my commitment to work tirelessly in a community I cared about. It didn't take long before families and students realized that I was making an effort to immerse myself in the community by attending events and exposing myself to new endeavours. I hope you are able to see how my fear to begin teaching develops into this passion towards building relationships and creating a welcoming classroom environment. The following narrative is an outline of this journey, and answers the question of what elements create a socially just educator.

My K-12 academic experiences and relationships with exemplary teachers have impacted the way I want to teach elementary students and how I can become an effective educator. I am the child of hard-working immigrant parents who was raised on the foundations of setting myself to a higher standard in achieving my goals. My parents' experiences as immigrants have resonated with me throughout my life as I work towards success in creating a prosperous future like the one my parents paved the way for me. I have learned from my parents, educational experiences, and social interactions to utilize them in my teaching pedagogy. I understand the disparities that exist within underserved communities as I was raised in one; with this, I come with a lot of heart and dedication towards motivating students to learn and invest in their education. My experiences in academia as both a student and a tutor has given me the opportunity to distinguish what teaching strategies supplement student learning. As a future educator, I aspire to cultivate an innate interest in learning for my students to ground them in skills that can be applied throughout their lives.

My parents immigrated perilously to the United States of America as teens in pursuit of a better opportunity for financial stability and job security. Together, they miraculously established their life with a job, a family, and a home in America despite their prolonged struggles of language barriers, undocumented status, working class, and low educational attainment. Their migratory journey and experiences in America have contributed to the formation of a thick and impenetrable outer layer of skin that protects them from the idea of giving up, which is a concept that they instilled upon me growing up. Their narrative on migrating and settling in the U.S. serves as a lesson for me to work tirelessly for my future and to rise above the challenges that attempt to hinder my progress towards achieving my goals.

My parents constrained job mobility and financial shortcomings have played a significant role in my desire to pursue a higher education. They consistently lectured me on the importance of attaining a college education. They believed that through a college education, I can get a career I am passionate about that involves helping others, especially those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. My parents' message has resonated with me throughout my journey in education and they have shown me that through hard work, perseverance, and passion, I am able to accomplish anything I set my mind to.

My journey through education begins in the long ninety-degree summer breaks in elementary school when my parents and I made frequent trips to our local library to check out books. I was an eager six-year-old with an oversized backpack who loved school. I was always carrying mountain high stacks of children books on the way out of the library. My mother bought me reading glasses, a lime green bean bag to sit on, and an aesthetic white bookshelf in my room to organize my overt obsession with books. This comfortable reading environment served as a designated space to engage in reading and developing literacy skills while cultivating a close relationship with my mother during our read-alongs. We ritually read books together every night which is a practice that contributes to literacy development. According to Curry, Reeves, & McIntyre (2007) "home literacy practices that involve shared reading, parental interactions and responsiveness are supplemental to the development of a child's early language and literacy skills." My early literacy skills were developed through my mothers involvement in my reading obsession; She would sit down next to me, use her finger as a pointer to keep track of where we were in the text, change her voice to accentuate the personality of the book's characters, and correct my pronunciation of some words she was familiar with. She had the patience to guide me



through the intricacy of phonetics by reading aloud to me. She was actively engaged in my learning experience in forms of modeling how to fluently read, explaining what sounds certain letters produced when combined, and questioning my understanding of the story's purpose.

Furthermore, my mother encouraged me to read age-appropriate books in both English and Spanish which was so empowering to my learning experience and literacy development. My exposure to Spanish books was a way to connect to my cultural heritage and native language and also build foundational literacy skills. I was able to recognize Latin root words in English vocabulary terms at an early age and grasp the meaning of it based on my knowledge of Spanish. I was able to apply my solid understanding of Spanish in the process of deconstructing the meaning and spelling of an English word. According to the Curriculum Framework and Evaluation Criteria Committee (2015), they found that:

English learners have varying levels of literacy in their native language, depending on their prior experiences in the home, community, and school. As learners of English as a new language, they gain metacognitive awareness of what language is and how it is used and apply this awareness in their language learning strategies, including drawing upon knowledge of their native language. (p.37)

In essence, bilingual students and English language learners, are able to connect their native language knowledge to strengthen their English proficiency skills. Students' native language skills serve as a vital component to building strong literacy skills in their second language.

My experience as an early bilingual learner has led me to understand the importance of utilizing English Learner's native language as a foundational base for learning content and a second language simultaneously. As a teacher, I will contribute to my English Learner's learning

by tailoring my lessons to incorporate their native language. For instance, In the Iris Module for teaching English language learners (2011), it states that “a teacher’s two-way immersion instruction approach can be beneficial for not only EL’s but for all students” (p.3). This approach means that the teacher will incorporate the EL’s native language along with English equally in their instruction. A two-way immersion approach is what I aim to abide by in my instruction so that ELL’s have an equitable opportunity to learn the content along with their peers. This type of instruction is beneficial to EL’s comprehension of the content and also sets the tone for an inclusive learning atmosphere where “opportunities are created for all students to learn different languages, cultures, and customs” (Iris Center, 2011). A two-way immersion approach is intersecting with the notion of creating a culturally responsive learning environment. When student’s culture and language are implemented in class instruction, it garners a unique and relatable learning experience for them. By implementing both languages in class instruction, it deconstructs the language barrier for ELs, stimulates their comprehension in learning, and makes a meaningful connection to their learning process.

My mother, a genuine and caring individual, has been the most influential role model in my life. She has significantly contributed to the development of my character and has paved the way for my academic journey. Still, there was only so much academic assistance my mother could provide for me. Having her consistent motivation as the backbone to my success still played a role even when she could not help me with homework past third grade. Although I could no longer depend on her guidance in homework, she encouraged me to speak up in class and seek out help for myself when I needed it. My first encounter without my mother’s help on academic content was in the Fourth grade. It was the first time I felt alone and afraid of not

understanding the material in school. I recall most of my peers' enthusiastic outlook on the teacher's lesson because they understood it, while I displayed uncertainty in my eyes. I could not understand how to add fractions, and I told myself that this was the opportunity to voice my concern to the teacher. I nervously asked my teacher, Mr. Knowlton, for help on adding fractions. He redirected my attention towards an example on the board and asked me guiding questions to help me deconstruct the step-by-step process of solving the problem. He then instructed students to pair up and take turns discussing the process of adding fractions. I felt this huge weight lifted off my shoulders as soon as I understood the complexity of fractions. I was able to solidify my comprehension of the content through additional instruction from the teacher and peer discussion. This sparked the development of my voice in class—essentially helping me detach myself from dependency and utilizing my voice to take ownership of my learning.

My personal struggle to speak up for myself in class hindered my ability to fully participate in my learning experience. Most of my academic struggle was correlated to the lack of communication I had with my teachers and peers. I learned that by asking the teacher clarification questions and engaging in interactive discussions, I was able to grasp the content much more. This enlightening experience has correlated to my desire to teach in the most effective way possible by focusing on the students' communication skills. I am committed to fostering a discussion-based classroom environment where students will have multiple opportunities to express their voice and communicate their understanding of the content. My goal consists of students communicating their knowledge through their participation in class discussion, presentations, and recitations. Student discussion throughout a lesson is a way to check for understanding which enables students and teachers to address any misunderstandings

of the content before continuing with the lesson. I firmly believe that students expressing their voice is extremely empowering to their learning experience and communication skills.

As I continued my education, I realized my mother's attentiveness in my education had influenced my desire to excel in school. My mother and I were always excited to shop for back to school supplies, it was our favorite time of the year. We were most interested in agendas, planners, and stickers which turned out to be the most helpful and creative way to stay organized in school. We would plan once a week which took hours of creativity, sticker shuffling, and structure to get a perfect layout of our busy week. I wrote all my assignment due dates, color-coded my to-do-lists, and set certain dates for studying. Planning and time management became second nature to me. It was a way in which I kept myself accountable in completing all of my tasks in an effective manner.

It was through the experience of creative and innovative planning with my mother, that enables my potential in devising strong goal-oriented lesson plans for students. My passion for planning can be useful in the making of versatile lesson plans. Lesson plans are like a scheduled to-do list on a planner, but with much more flexibility in order to accommodate to student learning and comprehension. My ability to plan accordingly is correlated to my keen desire to take every opportunity available during class to maximize student learning. I will make sure that my intricacy of planning and tailoring lesson plans will revolve around the students' learning needs. Lesson plans keep teachers accountable in understanding their students' needs and finding solutions to accommodate to them. It is essential for me to put an emphasis in lesson planning in order to set goals that maximize student learning and time efficiency.

Ever since my parents told me that a career was something I had to be passionate about, I began to question what school subjects were compelling to me, hoping it would direct me towards what I wanted to be in the future. I loved math after not being intimidated by it because of the help I sought after with Mr. Knowlton—making it easier to understand and appreciate the complexity of math. It was the subject in school that I felt passionate about and eager to learn the more I was exposed to it. I remember feeling interested in teaching as a profession when I tutored a friend in geometry. She had a puzzled look on her face everytime our math teacher introduced us to a new concept. She turned to me for help and guidance in the process of understanding geometry. I felt instantaneous satisfaction when her facial expression shifted from a puzzled look to a glowing joyous one because she was able to understand geometry through my assistance. It was this instance that introduced me to the concept of teaching as a profession as I compared my academic struggle to hers. My ability to teach and comprehend Math was beneficial to the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. I relate this to teaching strategies as it incorporates mental flexibility and versatility. For example, in lesson plans, teachers must apply differentiated learning styles to accommodate student's learning needs. This requires problem-solving skills which help in the process of evaluating student's academic needs and accommodating to them. Students are diverse individuals who learn in intricate ways, therefore I will effectively strategize my lessons to tend to diverse learning styles. I will commit to implementing alternative teaching methods that will cater to students' comprehension and retention of the content material.

Throughout high school, I was fortunate enough to be a part of the AVID program that served as a support system which paved the way towards obtaining a higher education. The

message of pursuing a higher education resonated with me at home and was solidified through AVID's guidance. As a first-generation college student, I had the constant fear of not having the support that will lead me to obtain a higher education; AVID broke down this barrier and instilled guidance in my academic journey. My AVID teachers created an environment where there was a distribution of accountability and community support.

This program strengthens my communication skills by enforcing the use of academic language in Socratic seminars. My AVID teacher would have us read and annotate scholarly articles every Friday. We were placed in groups of 6 to synthesize and discuss the article's information in its depth. This process was an introduction to analyzing writings through a critical lens and engaging in intellectual conversations with my peers. I realized that Socratic seminars served as an opportunity for students to apply their communication and reading comprehension skills at an academic level. The exposure to cooperative in-depth discussions in AVID led to my further development of critical and analytical thinking skills. These skills are vital components for producing informed thought and contributing to purposeful reflections of information. Students need to develop these skills because they contribute to purposeful learning. These skills are what I aim to garner in a discussion-based classroom environment where students begin to build their own voice and provide awareness of their intellectual abilities or lack thereof.

I chose to work as an AVID tutor because it was an opportunity for me to guide students in grasping a clear understanding of all subject materials, but also as an AVID student alumni, I knew that this program helped uplift disadvantaged communities through informing them about the benefits of attaining a higher education. These two compelling factors strengthened my

interest in pursuing a teaching profession so that I may be directly involved in uplifting disadvantaged schools and giving students high quality and equitable education.

At the middle school, I tutored sixth to eighth graders who struggled academically in all content areas. Most of my tutoring experience was with sixth graders, and I saw how they weren't reaching their full potential in each subject area. I realized that the shift from elementary to middle school brought new academic challenges to students as content became more rigorous and guided instruction was minimized. I want to establish a strong foundation of learning preparedness at an early stage in students' education which has prompted the desire to teach in elementary schools. I believe that primary education serves as a contributing factor in the development of fundamental learning skills: reading comprehension, writing, and problem-solving skills. Through my work tutoring sixth graders, I noticed that many students were falling behind in class due to a lack of fundamental content skills, which should have been acquired in elementary. This notion contributes to widening their achievement gap, while also affecting their motivation to excel. It breaks my heart when I see my students not being able to multiply decimals--something that should have been learned in elementary. This often occurs in disenfranchised communities as resources are limited, however, teachers can minimize this discrepancy by fully immersing students in supplemental instruction that aims to develop fundamental learning skills.

As an elementary teacher, I aim to prepare students from disadvantaged communities to work on building their fundamental learning skills in order to avoid academic disparities in their learning. In my first year of teaching, I hope that I can employ a differentiated learning pedagogy that tailors to all types of learners so that everyone can access the content and tools necessary to

develop fundamental learning skills. However, in order to be an effective educator that meets their students' learning needs, I need to know who they are and inform them about my interest in maximizing their learning experience. That can be achieved through icebreakers at the beginning of the school year. Students can be asked to introduce themselves and state their favorite subject or hobby. This sets the tone for students to be understanding of one another and it can help me plan engaging lessons that incorporate their interest and strengths. When lessons reflect the students' background, identity, or interests they tend to be more engaged in the learning process while helping me establish a relationship with them.

Growing up in an underprivileged community, the education I received was minimal and the academic resources were scarce. Therefore, my academic and social development were primarily secured through the support of the AVID program. I worked tirelessly alongside teachers and staff in underprivileged schools to provide students with enriched academic opportunities to develop their cognitive thinking, collaboration, organization, leadership, and soft skills. I believe that students from all backgrounds can excel in their academic and personal development through the acquisition and mastery of these skills. Through my work with the program, I was able to solidify my desire to pursue a teaching career, and also clarify my purpose in education to uplift underprivileged communities. Even if the school is in a disadvantaged community, the effectiveness of a teacher and their commitment to providing students with rich instruction can distinguish the academic disparities in student's learning. This tutor experience made me realize that an educator's job was more than just teaching state standards, but also to innately possess the qualities of an influential role model who is committed to guiding students towards academic and social excellence.



I felt a strong connection to addressing the importance of education and providing the students, guardians, and community affiliates with valuable information about the opportunities and benefits of attaining a higher education. I shared my personal and academic struggles as a first-generation college student from an underprivileged academic background to convey the commonality between the AVID students and me, which also showed them it is possible to overcome society's preconceived notions of their potential. I became comfortable with public speaking in front of students, teachers, and community members about the educational discrepancies within underprivileged communities, and I felt that through these conversations I was able to spread awareness about how we can collectively work together in support of student learning.

I was a tutor at a college-oriented middle school where I observed a network of paraprofessionals working collaboratively to serve students' academic and social developmental needs. Located in Montclair, this school serves a lower-middle-class demographic and aims to inform students about college readiness as evidenced by the hanging college pennants in the classroom and highlighting student accomplishments. Teachers implemented effective teaching styles that set the tone for an enthusiastic, goal-oriented, and innovative classroom environment which engages students learning. The school's attempt to provide a balance of social well being and diverse representation is seen through their placement of motivational quotes from people of color in the hallways. The school is very connected to their student's community, they host monthly meetings for parents and guardians to learn and be involved in their student's learning. The school offers a wide variety of enriched courses for students to take that include Arts, Music, Foreign languages, Leadership, Honors, and Computers. The school offers their students

additional academic and social support through the teacher's study hall, AVID tutors, and numerous counselors which are readily available all week before and after school. The middle school's staff and community collectively work in unison to provide their students with the proper tools and support systems to advocate for their academic and social well-being. I was particularly influenced by my observation at what I consider an exemplary school that effectively applied multiple academic and social well being strategies. I aspire to integrate the teaching styles and community building strategies that effective teachers, like Ms. S, implemented in order to create an inclusive classroom environment for students.

At this middle school, there was a particular teacher that aligns with my values and has also made me aware of the strategies I set to implement. Ms. S clearly communicated the purpose of a lesson by orally stating the learning objective and writing it on the whiteboard before students began note-taking. This sets the tone for the class. It provides students with a narrowed and focused learning objective which helps direct their learning. In Fisher and Frey's (2011) seminal text, they have researched how teachers can effectively employ strategies to increase student learning, such as creating structured and purposeful lessons. It was found that "by initially establishing the purpose of the learning objective, the teacher was able to draw their students' attention to the concepts that they wanted them to learn" (Fisher & Frey, 2011). You can see that this is pedagogically sound because students can follow the lesson's purpose which will enhance their comprehension of the material being taught. This experience has led me to see how communicating the purpose of a learning objective is important by addressing it at the beginning of class to help students move through a lesson in an engaging manner. I was able to

understand how something abstract as clear learning objectives, could have real effects on how students learn more effectively.

The articulation of learning objectives is integral to student learning and comprehension of the lesson's purpose in addition to a system of support from the community, teachers, and parents/guardians. It was evident that through the collective support of the middle school staff, teachers, and community they were able to enforce their promise of providing students with the proper academic resources and support systems to help them thrive academically and socially. Having such an intense focus on the systemic nature of education allows everyone to be involved to offer students the support and guidance needed to attain academic success. This collective approach is a network of accountability where teachers work diligently with others to strategize effective activities and lesson plans. This leads to providing equitable educational opportunities to all students, and utilize every resource available to aid their student's academic development.

The notion of sustaining a collective support system for all students resonates with me because I understand how beneficial this is for students to acquire self-belief and academic excellence. My high school AVID program had a similar support system in place that led me, a first generation college student, to grasp an understanding of academic content and obtain self-assurance in my ability to succeed. I had the moral support of my parents in addition to the academic care and support I received from my teachers. My parents and teachers quickly established a rapport relationship in which they often discussed my progress and regression in academia. My teachers would provide me with additional support, such as assigned tutoring hours after school in the content area I was struggling in. In these tutoring sessions, I was given extra worksheets and guided instruction from the teacher to help me reach an understanding of

the material. I felt that through this collective support system, the means to attaining academic success was readily accessible through teacher and parent intervention. I saw how the effort compiled by both parties was integral to student success. I aim to contribute heavily to this support system through my communication skills with paraprofessionals and guardians in order to provide students with the opportunity to an equitable education.

Through my experience as an AVID tutor at middle schools, I was able to determine what elements and factors play a large role in student's learning development and also what deprives their eagerness to learn. I want students to feel included, motivated, and engaged in my classroom because that is what initiates their desire to learn. I am intrinsically motivated to incorporate community and cultural values in my classroom so that students feel welcomed and included in their learning space. This notion of inclusivity is also pertinent to the idea of valuing and respecting student diversity.

Teachers should emphasize the value of diversity in class as a way to show students that their differences and similarities are significant to their understanding of various perspectives. With the implementation of Common Core standards, teachers are now focused on preparing students to understand the subject material in a more hands-on learning approach that incorporates active participation and group discussions. This learning style enhances the students' social interaction skills which incorporate the understanding of different perspectives. According to Taras and Rowney (2007)

One of the goals of modern education is to prepare students for work in global environments. Having classmates from different cultural backgrounds provides an excellent opportunity to receive first-hand experience of work in multicultural settings.

Students with diverse experiences and backgrounds enable the generation of more ideas and exchange of more opinions, which enriches in-class discussions and group collaborations.

The students will bounce ideas off of one another and engage in intellectual conversations that will enhance numerous skills such as literacy and communication. Simultaneously, students will incorporate their diverse perspectives into the conversation which will enhance students' abilities in expressing and valuing alternative viewpoints.

Although I will do everything I can to make my classes discussion-based, I fear not being able to carefully manage students disruptive behavior in class. I want to make sure I can effectively address the behavior issues in class without taking away from students instructional time. I hope to attain extensive knowledge of behavior management strategies which will help me establish a working and learning environment for all students. Classroom management skills are crucial to my potential as an effective educator because I believe that if students are focused and determined they will grasp material more effectively. In Evertson and Emmer's research (2013), they found that initially establishing classroom management strategies at the beginning of the school year will garner a structured learning environment. Researchers state that "Teachers can make their expectations known to students by directly teaching the classroom rules and procedures, providing opportunities for students to practice them, and consistently responding to students' behavior" (Evertson & Emmer, 2013). During the first week of instruction, I will explain the rules and procedures of the class to students so that they are aware of classroom norms. I will create a poster that lists the rules and procedures and model these rules and procedures. For elementary students, the rules and procedures can be more effective and

interesting if the teacher portrays this as a social contract, ask the students to sign the poster as proof of their agreement to abide by them. This strategy engages students in their understanding of behavior expectations which will aid my ability to manage the class effectively.

I hope that the school I work at has structured teacher meetings that discuss strategies geared towards increasing student learning in class. I want to be involved in intellectual and progressive conversations with highly experienced teachers so that I may learn about which strategies and activities aid student's learning. I want to be a part of a learning community where all the teachers are interested in their students academic and social well-being.

A learning and thriving classroom involve the collective support from parents, guardians, students, teachers, and school staff. Teachers should have a dynamic relationship with their student's parents/guardians to understand their learning style in order to provide equitable learning opportunities. However, a potential roadblock would be the parent's/guardian's lack of involvement in the student's learning process. In this case, I intend to spark the parents/guardians interest in their student's academic development by sending handwritten notes to home about the student's progress in class. In those messages, I will address my commitment to their students learning through informing them on my availability to meet in-person, email, or phone to discuss any concerns or questions they may have regarding their child. I can encourage parents/guardians to volunteer their time and participate in the class activities or projects so that they may experience first-hand the ways in which their child is learning in the class. If parents/guardians are unable to volunteer in class, they may support their student's learning by dedicating time to ask their child about homework assignments and discuss their goals and aspirations. According to Hee Im, Hughes, and West (2016), "there is a positive correlation to parent-youth discussions

about school activities and their student's drive to academic success. Parents can respond in a variety of potentially helpful ways, such as helping their child study for a test, locating materials for an upcoming presentation, or structuring time for homework" (p.965). Parental involvement in child's academia is a fundamental element that contributes to their child's self-belief. I hope that parents/guardians can acknowledge their involvement as a beneficial attribute that aids the student's learning and social development.

There are multiple strategies that educators can implement in their teaching pedagogy that will supplement the students' academic and personal development. In my attempt to advocate for students education, I want to emphasize inclusivity, which may be interpreted in the ways I incorporate students cultural and linguistic backgrounds to instruction. My personal experiences as a first-generation college student and growing up in a disadvantaged community has propelled my desire to create and be a part of the positive systemic change as an educator. At the same time, my struggles as a learner have been insightful experiences to comprehend the different disparities that exist for individuals--motivating me to seek solutions that cater to diverse learning needs. I am committed to cultivating dynamic relationships with students, parents/guardians, and the community to seek out the strategies, activities, and support systems that will aid the academic and social development of students.

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## PART B

As I ponder on my experience as a first-year educator, there is a coming of self-awareness intertwined with the social-emotional impact that students have on teachers. The

key to teaching the next generation of leaders is about understanding and validating a multitude of their identities in- and outside the classroom. This ethnography is my opportunity to effectively analyze three of my students' demographics, values, backgrounds, academic histories, and behaviors in order to meet their needs. Through close observations and analysis of student data, I will be able to understand them better to serve them academically and social-emotionally. This report will reveal valuable insight and context of my students' identities and goals which will lend itself to enrich their learning experiences in the classroom. By participating in this invigorating journey, I will be monitoring each student's progress and applying an individualized action plan so that I can provide them with the tools needed for academic and social success.

Before I made a decision about who my case studies would be, I took a couple of days to observe each individual and immerse myself into the school's community. By staying after school, I got a gist of what my students liked to partake in and whose parents were whose. It took being physically and mentally present taking note of the interactions going on around me, which further help me discover the school and community culture my students come from. The initial quest to uncover the depths of my students' personalities would be best under the circumstances of conducting an interview with the student's family. This interaction would give me information that school data cannot offer, such as family values, beliefs, and traditions. These elements would ultimately compose a stronger understanding of my student's life holistically.

I knew that conducting these home visits and interviews would benefit the students and myself, but I had this uneasy feeling about it all, especially that of entering an intimate setting and displaying vulnerability as an observer. The students I chose to be part of my ethnographic study, had parents and guardians who were not initially fond of their son or daughter having a



young inexperienced teacher in the classroom. Although the home visits were initially scrutinizing, my open-mindedness approach demonstrated my sincere interest in their child's learning experience in academia, which was a shared commonality between us all. It was the notion of gaining their trust and understanding that the information I gathered would be utilized to benefit their child's progress in academic success. Although the start of these home visits was rough, I slowly moved towards building a strong relationship with my students' families and the school community.

My case study students have unique characteristics and experiences that play a large role in their overall academics and social behaviors. I'm eager to delve into my students' lives beyond the classroom and gather that information to guide my journey as an equitable educator. By embarking on this virtuous journey, I will be able to observe and acquire valuable information about my students' development through a multitude of the lens.

#### Focus Student 1: Jess Albores

I was a visitor for a couple of days observing the class I will soon take upon as my own and I knew immediately who was going to be my first case study. Her name's Jess, she reminds me a lot of who I was in elementary school, an notably shy and reserved student. Jess was always the first one to line up in the pick-up area because she was punctual and her name stood first in alphabetical order. Her golden brown hair wrapped in a ponytail with hot pink bows that matched her water bottle was her signature look. She popped open her neatly organized pencil box and set herself up with a blank paper and a sharpened pencil before all her peers sat down. Her actions and reserved personality led me to believe she was a particularly private student who was solely dedicated to learning. She showed signs of maturity ready to overcome obstacles

head-on, which is true to an extent. But there was a slight shift in her personality as soon as she became socially comfortable with peers and me.

Her entrance into the classroom is served with confidence and sass, but she quickly retreats from this emotional stance during our Math block. There is an unsettling facial expression, body posture, and lack of participation that implies a sense of insecurity. She is quick to put her head down on her desk or raise her left eyebrow arch while tilting her head showing a distraught or confused expression. The same face she displayed when her mother told her to count money at home. I registered that look as worried and insecure because Jess's mother said that counting money was something she deeply struggles in. I wanted her to channel that same character full of charisma and hope she demonstrates during our ELA block, to shift the paradigm from a fixed to a positive growth mindset.

Assets and Needs: Socio-Emotional Development and Social Identity

Socio-emotional development

Jess holds herself to high expectations as shown with her perfect attendance, punctuality, grooming standards, and material preparedness for a long day of learning. She smiles, hugs, and greets her closest friends in class before she settles down in her seat. She props open her pink sequin backpack and takes out her neatly organized pencil box with all her homework in a hello kitty folder. By glaring at the front of the class, she signals her intention of preparedness for the following lesson.

First thing on our class agenda is our ELA block, which is Jess's favorite subject only if she can engage in meaningful discussions with her friends. She's an active participant in class discussions when paired with friends, but she closes herself away from discussions with other

classmates. At first, I thought it was the lack of community building activities in class to get familiar with one another, but weeks passed and she remained the same. I asked someone to read the essential question in our textbook, she's one of the few students who loves reading this aloud. She sits straight in her seat and reads it with prosody to give it flare. I ask students to turn to their shoulder partner for a brief discussion about the essential question. Jess grunts under her breath while turning to her partner, and begins to finger comb her hair while listening to her partner's input. She's hesitant to talk to those who aren't her friends, and this restricts her opportunity to access multiple perspectives and interpersonal relationships.

She has a solid grasp on the notion of socializing with friends, but it's a matter of extending that skill to engage with others as well. Open lines of communication are an important element in the 21st-century skills that will fundamentally prepare her for the workforce. Therefore, I've created opportunities in class to develop stronger relationship skills and emotional development. By integrating mingle discussion as my prime strategy to mesh engagement and movement in one. I started small by using this strategy as a means to get students familiar with their classmates. It was a low stake activity where students had the opportunity to talk about themselves and get acquainted with all their classmates. Jess was thrilled to talk about herself with others and began to show interest in what others had to say. She would say "oh yeah me too!" or "wow that's so cool!" which was definitely progress towards socializing with all students. She began to giggle and fill out her list of new acquainted encounters with classmates. Beyond this activity, I began to notice her interest in creating lists and needing to check off similarities between herself and peers.

As mentioned, her promptness to class shows an eagerness to begin the day and stay on a set schedule. She walks and holds her head high at the things she has planned to be successful at, which is her preparedness and tidiness. She utilizes her agenda religiously, throughout the day and checks off what we complete in class. By remembering her interest in creating a list during mingling, I created a daily agenda on the whiteboard for the class to follow. I recall Jess entering the class and quickly noticing this change. She perked up from her seat and eagerly volunteered to be in charge of checking off the items we completed daily. Of course, I allowed her to do so because it was an opportunity for her and the class to complete this task. It's as if the notion of success was tied to checking off tasks from the list. Checking off things from a list has a special significance in Jess's life and may be reflective of what she's accustomed to at home.

#### Family Background and Funds of Knowledge

Every Monday morning, Jess proudly shares information with me regarding her family's well being and upcoming events. Every day after school, the first guardian to greet me is Jess's grandmother or mother. Jess receives them with a smile from ear to ear and leans in for a strong hug, they kiss her forehead while signing out and gracefully walk back home. They live a three-minute walking distance from Lions Academy. Along with her grandmother and mother, she lives in a three-room apartment with her grandfather, older brother, uncle, and two older cousins. She describes her family as "tight and caring" with a bit of "crazy" involved.

According to administration and Jess's third-grade teacher, her family is heavily involved with her studies and extracurricular activities. Because her family was involved, I strongly felt that they would be willing to adhere to following up with an action plan and meeting frequently to track Jess's academic and social growth. I knew this statement would be true based on their

attendance in school events and parent conferences. At the winter performance, Jess's entire family was present waving, cheering loudly, and taking multiple pictures of Jess. Her grandfather and uncle along with other parent volunteers helped the school build the children's playground. Jess's family are active volunteers on campus who maintain open lines of communication with her teachers to provide their support. I have witnessed the presence of her family at most school events, and I see how it's impacted her emotional wellbeing.

Jess was enthusiastically reminding me about our scheduled home visit throughout the day. While looking down, she twisted her hair and asked me what I would like to eat for dinner because she was planning on cooking a meal with her grandmother. Something that I felt extremely honored by was the fact that I would experience my student's passion for cooking firsthand. Jess openly suggested that I skip lunch so that I could truly feast on their flavor enriched dishes. I did just that and dismissal came quickly after. Jess's grandfather picked her up and we interchanged conversation about having me over as a guest in their beloved home. He insisted I walked to their home because it was close in distance, and it was beyond difficult to find parking.

As I walked towards the entrance of the apartment complex, there were a lot of familiar faces from the school glaring at me. I glanced over at the direction my GPS signaled me to walk towards, and in between an abundance of vegetation and flowers, there stood Jess waving alongside her mother with a squishy toy in her other hand. Her mother sweetly hugged me and welcomed me into their home.

I entered their home and was immediately acquainted with the rest of her family who nervously asked me if I was okay conducting the interview in Spanish. Much like the rest of my class,

Jess's family is from Mexico and are Spanish speaking. They insisted I get a tour of their household before we began the interview. Jess's grandfather led the tour and everyone else followed. He asked if I wanted the tour to be translated in English, Spanish, or Italian which was his way of introducing his family as being trilingual. He squeezed Jess who was by his side and told us both that it's very important that his native language gets passed down to future generations. He smiled and proceeded to show me around. Jess's grandfather showed me the perfect view he has of the school from his bedroom window. He pointed to the school's playground and said he helped build it when the charter school was established in 2002. "All of my grandkids have been to this school and I will do anything for the school or teachers in order for it to be a great school for my grandkids". In confidence, Jess's grandfather assured me that if I ever needed a class volunteer, he was more than glad to offer his support. As a proud grandfather, he showed me all of his grandchildren's academic and extracurricular accomplishments displayed on the wall he referred to as the wall of fame. Jess pointed and explained her certificates of achievement on the wall and told me that her "biggest fan" is her grandfather. They uphold a strong bond with one another and it's evident that he has been an active emotional and academic supporter for Jess and his other grandchildren.

The tour came to an end, and we all sat down at the dinner table where Jess was starting her homework. Her mother sat beside me and we both were directly in front of Jess and all of her squishy toy collection. Ms. Albores began the interview by saying that her child's education is her main priority and wants to push Jess towards college readiness. She says that no one in her family has been to college, and hopes that Jess can be the first to break this cycle. She states that the fundamental elements of being successful are dependent on the organization, communication,

and confidence. Ms. Albores says that she has instilled practices that reinforce these elements with the following: planning with her daughter, taking drawing classes, and playing soccer. For this reason, her mom believes these practices will strengthen Jess's self-esteem and organizational skills.

Ms. Albores strongly believes that children mirror exactly what they see and hear, therefore she's trying to be the best role model for her daughter. In light of sharing this, she acknowledges that teachers too are on the spotlight of being a role model for students. She says that teachers and parents have the shared responsibility of raising a child to become a good civilian by teaching them about the values of education, respect, and resilience.

When Jess would leave the room, Ms. Albores took it upon herself to discuss concerns about Jess's social-emotional and academic development. She said Jess's ability to socialize with others at school is very low due to her past experience of bullying from her peers. Jess considerably distanced herself from talking to anyone new because she feared being bullied again by her peers. She felt a safe haven with her close friends, but Ms. Albores believes this is only damaging her ability to connect with others. She also expressed Jess's frustration in completing her math homework. She complains about the difficulty of it and gives up too quickly. The time she spends doing math homework goes beyond an hour, which leads to her frustration and quickly burn out. I thanked Ms. Albores for voicing her concern with her daughter. Knowing these concerns will guide my action plan outline and hope that after the plan she is able to note a difference in her daughter's academic and social well being.

Academic History

Language

Jess was raised primarily by her grandfather, who taught her both Spanish and Italian. She says he raised her as his own and she loves the attention he gives her. He loves her so much that he does everything in his power to give her a solid foundation in life. He thought it was best to enroll Jess at a dual immersion school in order to strengthen both her Spanish and English language skills. Because Jess's native tongue is Spanish and Italian, she is classified as an English language learner. Jess began in transitional kindergarten at Lions Academy, which was her first year learning English. According to her cumulative file, her ELPAC scores determined her English proficiency to be at a beginning level. As a dual immersion school, teachers utilize the students' funds of knowledge on their second language to strengthen their understanding of English. It's this strategy that has given students the confidence to learn a second language, and one of the reasons Jess has made significant progress in her English since her start at Lions Academy.

Jess's third-grade ELPAC scores are representative of a lower expanding English learner. In order to move to the next level, Jess needs a considerably large amount of scaffolding, reading practice, and speaking/listening skills. These are required to enhance her level of proficiency from somewhat to moderately or well developed in the reading, writing, and listening domains of the ELPAC. Jess's passion for reading will definitely play a large role in navigating her towards ELPAC proficiency level.

As observed in class, I see that Jess shows an interest in reading aloud and making interpretations of the text with her partners. She captures most of the story's main idea best when the story is read to her or she reads it aloud. Once she reads the story, she is able to show her reading comprehension by using graphic organizers that help put the main scenes in sequential



order. During this process, she often refers back to the text and looks for her highlighted important information to answer reading comprehension questions. She is able to complete this form of work as well when working in small groups of five or four students. She is able to remember key details and orally state them in order to follow the sequence. She recalls important information and draws sketches of what the story is about. Her area of improvement is leaning towards applying grade level grammatical skills to her writing.

### Math

In class, Jess has expressed her frustration with fourth-grade math since it requires multiple steps to find the answer. She describes math problems and multiplication tedious work that requires a lot of patience. Towards the beginning of the year, the multiplication problems were review to a lot of students, but now it's become more complex with the application of area models, partial products, and words problems. These types of problems require students to apply previous knowledge and acquire problem-solving strategies to attain their answer. It's understandable that this is her most challenging subject because she doesn't take advantage of her resources or strategies to lighten the coursework.

Jess's NWEA benchmark keep track of her fluctuating progress towards fourth-grade math common core standards. This type of assessment provides teachers with immediate results on their students' achievement or progress aligned with math common core standards. They test them on forty-five questions which fluctuate in difficulty level based on how many questions they get right or wrong at the beginning of the exam. In this case, Jess's area of improvement is based on her score for word problems that highlight the common core standards for both number and operations in base ten, as well as operations and algebraic thinking. In accordance with her

summative assessments, Jess's mistakes occur with incorrectly giving the estimation of a number and interpreting the function she will use in word problems. A lot of the confusion comes along with properly rounding numbers to the next place value and underlining important information in word problems. This year, the algebraic standards and base ten operations require students to enable a critical thinking mindset to solve and explain a multi-step problem in detail. Jess needs more exposure and scaffolding to problems that address these standards in order to test at grade level.

In class, we've covered numbers base ten operations and word problems that are at a beginners level in order to reinforce the concept. However, the repetition of these concepts will not come easy if their basic multiplication facts aren't mastered. In essence, these types of problems are reliant on the student's knowledge of stating their basic multiplication facts with automaticity. If this skill has not been met, the new information they are expected to learn in fourth grade will become even more challenging. In Jess's case, she struggles with automaticity of her multiplication facts and often refers to charts or finger counting. Similar to the struggle of her peers, this explains why the duration of completing an exam of math assignment is longer than usual. For that reason, I have shifted my assessments from multiplication drills to multiplication activities that reinforce fluency without the pressure of being timed. Boaler (2015) explains that "...number sense is the foundation for all higher-level mathematics, and the more we emphasize memorization to students, the less willing they become to think about numbers and their relations and to use and develop number sense". Perhaps distancing from the practice of memorization which provokes anxiety, I allow students to develop fluency in math by reinforcing number

sense and spatial recognition. In essence, this strategy will enhance Jess's confidence in math and help her associate number sense with multiplication.

Through the replacement of multiplication drills, I've seen a noticeable difference in Jess's test results by using methods that illustrate her understanding of the multiplication two-digit numbers by two-digit numbers. We've been reinstating the basics of arrays, grouping, and place value to reinforce their understanding of multiplying larger numbers. During this process, Jess gained more confidence in completing area models to multiply 2-digit numbers. This soon became one of Jess's strengths as seen in her homework assignments and exams. By practicing these skill sets, my students all scored considerably higher on their unit exam, but Jess scored below 70 percent on it.

It's the basics of number sense that students still need to master in order to score higher on problems that require abstract thinking and reasoning. Knowing that Jess struggles in math and repeatedly uses phrases that signal a fixed mindset, I plan on encouraging her to use a growth mindset to be able to prepare her for the challenge. From what I've observed in class, I know she's capable of completing these multi-step problems, but I want her to recognize that potential and invest in a mindset that will guarantee her access to grit.

### Language Arts

Jess's favorite subject is language arts as it relates to her passion for reading and writing. She's currently reading comic books such as *Sisters*, *Dogman*, and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* which include a lot of room for the reader to interpret the text. Because she has a passion for reading, I was sure that her language arts grades and benchmark scores would follow in a fairly high range. According to her San Diego Quick Assessment, she can decode words at a second-grade

independent reading level and third-grade instructional level. These findings are also supported by her STAR testing results which determine her Zone of Proximal Development level. Jess can read books independently between ZPD levels of 2.3-2.8. By reading these leveled books, she will practice her individualized level of English proficiency. Due to the vocabulary and content covered in these designated leveled books, Guiliana is able to complete the reading on her own and grasp a basic comprehension of the story.

By analyzing Jess's NWEA testing data from the 2016-2017 and the 2017-2018 school year, she steadily continues to score in the intermediate level spectrum for grammar mechanics and reading comprehension. Yet her writing contains basic grammatical sense and she is able to complete the grammar assignments in class independently. She is attentive to ELA instruction by answering the guiding questions quickly and taking well-developed notes in her ELA notebook. She finds identifying action verbs, adjectives, and phrase tenses the most intriguing. Moreover, the discrepancy that is underlined in the NWEA results is her lack of knowledge of demonstrating commands of English conventions such as capitalization, commas, and punctuation. These elements are what set her apart from being classified as an upper intermediate level student on the NWEA benchmark.

Gulliana does not show signs of difficulty in understanding the conventions of literacy in comparison to her grammatical sense. It may be due to the fact that Jess reads and understands a variety of genres because she actively participates in our English block in comparison to other subjects. We were reading nonfiction text that explained how one could give back to the community, and she was so excited to read about non-profit organizations. She knew what they were immediately, and raised her hand to offer the class a simpler definition of it. Of course, her

background in helping the Lion Academy's community garden was the reason she understood the purpose of organizations and the cycle of community wellness. We continued reading the story, and she, like many others, noticed the amount of valuable information presented in text features. Jess highlighted the information provided in the text features because she knew they offered her with important facts about community organizations. When called upon, Jess can recall important details from the story and refer to information under subheadings. If she's ever lost with words or forgets her train of thought, she quickly refers to her notes or the book answers. By highlighting important details and referring back to the text when necessary, she's practicing integral elements to reading comprehension.

#### Focus student #1 Action plan

Based on the information I gathered in classroom observations, summative assessments, and the home visit, I believe that most of Jess's action plan will focus on improving her social-emotional and Math skills. At Lions Academy, we aim to set students for success by using phrases that convey a growth mindset. Therefore, I want to encourage both Jess's family and myself offer support and encourage her to strive for success through the lens of a growth mindset. Making minor changes to the way students conceive failure will soon become moments filled with meaningful lessons and perseverance. These are important characteristics that Jess's family hope she can embrace. In doing so, a growth mindset can also positively impact her self-esteem and confidence. Allyn and Morrell (2016), suggest that families can promote confidence by "sending a clear message to their children that their opinions matter". Have them engaged in conversations and hear them out when they are feeling down, this advocates for student's voice and essentially feel confident to make mistakes and learn from them. If she's able to firmly believe that

perfection comes after multiple errors, then she will associate that with the idea of being herself.

Learning to love oneself is contingent on distancing yourself from a negative state of mind in which you compare your worth to someone else's. Therefore, I plan on giving students tips on self-care and appreciation so that they acknowledge their individual value. It's a matter of consistently using specific positive appraisal in the classroom to enforce a growth mindset and self-appreciation. I know this mental state of happiness and mode of perseverance can ensure Jess has stability and can be fearless while facing academic challenges and bullying.

Besides implementing this plan in the classroom, Jess's family also needs to enforce these elements into their day to day interactions with her to see progress. It's a working effort from all parties to contribute towards Jess's academic and social growth that will create positive change in her life. I talked to Jess's mother, Ms. Albores, about how she can offer her emotional support on academics. Ms. Albores, who always sits down with Jess to complete homework says that "Jess gives up on harder questions quicker and cries about how hard math is getting for her". I gave Ms. Albores a copy of a growth mindset packet that explains how to phrase their conversations to fit the guidelines of a growth mindset. We briefly discussed the benefits of having conversations about challenges and obstacles in life because these factors strengthen our character over time. It'll be a working progress, but I am positive that Jess is capable of demonstrating these qualities in her work and self-esteem.

When something is challenging for Jess, in this case, math, she is driven to abandon her work and interest in completing the assignment which damages her confidence and academic accomplishment. She has difficulty with solving multi-step word problems and rounding numbers to find the estimate. I plan on strictly following the CUBES strategy in class and

making students their own copy of it. CUBES is meant to help students simplify the word problems and evaluate what is being asked of them. It'll help her stay organized and follow a step by step procedure. Students will be able to use this strategy on their exams as a tool for success. In addition to this action plan, I will also focus on helping her round numbers to find the estimate. She has a hard time understanding when to keep the number the same or to round up. In order to further assist her, I will provide her with a visual diagram that gives examples of how to round numbers and steps to complete an estimation problem. This diagram will give her the organization she seeks and will help guide her towards rounding correctly. Having these strategies available will help her hone in on the skill of completing a multi-step problem. With time and practice, she will become more confident in completing word problems and will eventually not need to refer to the CUBES or Rounding chart. My goal is for her to be able to utilize resources as a way to simplify multi-step problems and use visuals to help her understand the logic behind rounding numbers.

Her progress will become evident and that's when the release of dependency on these strategies will occur. With the support of Jess's family, we will be able to both work on building her confidence and math proficiency. Jess will be receiving support in class in regards to her need in solving multi-step word problems. In order to see progress in her math skills, she will need to develop a growth mindset while referring to her math strategies. By implementing these strategies and instructional supports, I am setting her math test score goal to be above 75 percent. To help accomplish this goal, I plan on providing her with basic multi-step word problems and see how she's applying CUBES and the rounding visual chart. I will be checking her work on summative and formative assessments and asking guiding questions to remind her of CUBES.

This will ensure her understanding of these steps and it'll become evident that these steps are transferable steps for any word problem. Working towards this goal will promote her confidence in the material, as well as in her desire to interact with other peers for assistance.

Based on my observations, I've seen moments of growth in both her academic and social interactions with peers. She has a sassy side to her, but she's one of the sweetest student's ever who often comes across as shy. I want to see more of her charismatic side to her reveal itself to help her connect to other students. There is a lot of potential in her that she's not fully aware of or doesn't want to shine a light on. It's a matter of providing her with space and proper tools to accept herself and come out of this shell. I'm looking forward to seeing how she grows academically and socially within the next couple of months.

Focus student #2 Chris Santos

#### Demographic Information

During the first week of school, Chris was one of the very few students in my class to start nitpicking at different objects in and on his desk during instruction. Instead of paying attention to instruction or his peers' presence, he would play with velcro, legos, or squishy toys in his desk. I wanted to keep a closer eye on him because I strongly believed these distractions would derail him from learning in class. Because his main focus was the toys in his desk, I thought he wasn't as sociable as his counterparts. I learned quickly that he was not a talker with his mouth, but with his eyes and hands. He relies on his ability to communicate through his movements, but when he does talk, it's as if a tiny little mouse was talking. He prefers to whisper his answers or write them on a whiteboard. These were cues that signaled my attention, and it's through these behaviors that I hope to get him comfortable with himself in a socially aware manner.



Normally, Chris comes in with his hair combed to perfection with his favorite neon yellow sweater. He begins to roam around the classroom as everyone else is taking out their agendas and writing their homework. After five minutes in class, I give students a two-minute warning and ask them to take out their ELA notebooks. During this time, Chris trots over to his seat and writes his homework in his agenda. He enjoys taking long pauses in between tasks. For instance, when instructed to take out their ELA notebooks, he began to draw doodles or abstract figures on his agenda instead. He spends a lot of time focusing on the intricacy of objects, such as my extra large pencil that I have as decoration in class. He quietly looks around the class to see if anyone is looking at him, and he takes my extra large pencil and begins to carefully examine every crack in it with care. Chris completes the desired task after two or three direct reminders from either myself or his peers. For this reason, I believe Chris is unable to work independently without a checklist of the required tasks. But nonetheless, just like his neon yellow sweater is bright, Chris has a riveting personality and ora I'm thrilled to know more about.

Chris uses his body language to communicate confusion, excitement, and all of his other emotions. However, before I delve into explaining how I understood his body language I need to say that Chris has a straight face. He doesn't smile as often as other students, and he rarely shows facial expressions to denote his feelings. Nevertheless, Chris is verbal, but he is one of the very few students who uses his hands and his eyes to signal his struggling and triumphant moments in- and outside of class. I knew this was a form of nonverbal communication because when I started teaching math, he automatically slumped into his chair, roamed around the class, and crosses his fingers repeatedly to signal his need to use the restroom. If he wasn't doing any of those things, he would look straight at me and wiggle the top of his button nose and open his

eyes as wide as he can. This look in his face was leaning more towards fear, anxiety, and distress. I approached him after giving students independent work and he softly whispered in my ear that this “type of math is too hard”. After this time, I noticed that he did that same signature nose wiggle every time he was confused. He’s a shy fellow and prefers not to participate in formative assessments such as fist to five, therefore I always make sure to check in one on one with him in order to get his response. It’s these social cues and facial expressions that guide me to have independent conversations with my students to know where their level of understanding is.

Chris is a reserved quiet ten-year-old student in the class, however, he’s a very different student out during lunch. He eats his lunch with a group of four boys and they all exchange food items. Once they are done eating, socializing, and laughing, they all get up and jog over towards the playground. Chris ran throughout the playground along with his friends and climbed up the apparatus several times until the end of lunch recess time. As he runs around with his friends on the playground, he effortlessly socializes and shyly smiles when talking to his friends. By observing these interactions, there is no sign of significant concern for his social development other than communicating in class. He was noted to have age-appropriate social interaction skills on the playground, but his social behavior in class is what I want to focus on for his action plan.

#### Assets and Needs: Academic Standing

Chris has an IEP and his identified learning disability falls under the category of Other Health Impairment. I met with his psychologist, previous teachers, and the RSP teacher at Lions Academy whom all said Chris needs brain breaks, extra time on assignments/assessments, and to practice basic social and communication skills. These skills are crucial to improving his

academics and allowing him to feel confident to speak with others and express himself freely. In essence, I agree that these factors can help Chris succeed in his areas of improvements.

One day after school, Chris and I were talking about how he feels at school and what he likes or dislikes about school. He told me that the subjects he feels are challenging are reading, math, and writing because they require a lot of extra thinking. According to his IEP annual goals, his incremental goals for reading is that he'll be able to identify the main idea and two key details and describe in two to three sentences how the key details support the main idea. His math goal is to solve word problems by drawing pictures and/or writing equations to determine the final solution with an 85% accuracy. In terms of writing, Chris should be able to write a grade-level opinion essay composed of five to seven sentences presenting his opinion clearly in a topic sentence, using linking words/phrases to connect at least three examples in support of his point of view and conclude by restating his opinion.

Lions Academy is a dual immersion school where most of the student population is classified as an EL. Students like Chris, who is an EL, are able to learn both English and Spanish simultaneously. Chris's score on the ELPAC categorized him as an EL level two. Chris's native language is Spanish and he considerably loves learning the content in Spanish as opposed to in English. When it's time for our Spanish period, Chris gets up from his desk and is the first one to open his book to the Spanish lesson. According to Garcia and Kleifgen (2018), "Within a dynamic bilingual perspective, languages are not simply perceived as autonomous and separate systems that people have, but rather as linguistic and multimodal features of a semiotic meaning-making repertoire for which people select and do". In this case, Chris probably has not seen that the ELA curriculum compliments the SLA, therefore it could be easier to access the

information if I make connections between these two curriculums. Being bilingual has so many benefits, especially for EL students because they could maximize their learning by acquiring funds of knowledge from their native language and applying it to ELA. Our Spanish curriculum covers vocabulary, reading comprehension, fluency, and grammar which are all similar to that in English. He performs well pronouncing the words with accents and can orally share a brief summary to me that highlights the main events in the story. Nevertheless, my goal is to make Chris feel comfortable with writing and reading in English as well as in Spanish. In order to support him, I will need to offer Chris a lot of scaffolding, sentence frames, and repetition of comprehension skills.

#### Language Arts

Chris has expressed his concern about math and reading is the most difficult subjects for him. Reading in English is difficult to a lot of my students because the curriculum's stories follow grade level Lexile levels and that's a disservice to students who are not at grade level. According to our STAR benchmark and AR testing, Chris is reading at a 2.4-3.4 ZPD level. This score translates to the end of a second grade to the beginning of a third-grade level. These results mean he struggles in reading the ELA stories at an independent level if not given a set amount of scaffolding to support. At Lions Academy, we have supplemental programs that allow students to practice and essentially improve their reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition skills. In addition to these online supports, Chris's IEP instructional accommodations are that he needs to be read to and have a lot of practice with guided reading. Therefore direct instruction in ELA is mainly working on choral and partner reading in order to help students practice reading aloud and listening skills. Once that is complete, I turn to whole instruction in order to get a

grasp of the reading comprehension with students. Chris does not like to orally discuss the story to the class, but he is able to orally tell me in our one-on-one check in what he understood about the story. Reading comprehension is one of his strengths and he can answer factual questions about his reading mentioning the characters, setting, and plot from the story. He enjoys drawing and writing about a story using sequential order graphic organizers. He's able to refer back to the text and pinpoint main details in order to find the main idea, theme, or author's point of view.

### Math

Chris has a difficult time understanding multi-step math word problems and mastering his basic multiplication facts. As part of our fourth-grade math common core standards, the focus is multiplication and division which are two functions that heavily rely on understanding their multiplication facts with automaticity. As part of Chris's IEP instructional accommodations, I need to provide him with simplified step-by-step instructions, color coding for math, and extra processing time. During our math block, we take notes aside from our GoMath workbooks in order to familiarize ourselves with the content and key academic vocabulary words. I color code the steps to examples and match it with its academic vocabulary term. Chris likes drawing arrows and color coding his own notes, which helps him have a greater understanding of the mathematical concepts.

Besides writing down his notes, Chris is able to come to a greater understanding of division problems when given manipulatives. He was able to work with a partner and draw the number of groups he needed to divide by and then he was able to place counters in each group accordingly. As a matter of fact, Chris was extremely excited to show me that he could complete this problem on his own. He looked up at me with the biggest smile and said: "I did it!". He's able to explain

his reasoning using academic vocabulary and drawing models. When explaining math comes with movement or tactile objects, Chris is able to grasp the key concepts.

Math word problems are one of Chris's area for improvement. Based on his work in class, assessments, and observations, Chris performs at a very low average range level in Mathematics and solving problems skills. He scores an average of 35 percent on his summative chapter test assessments. A lot of the skills learned in the previous chapters are still being applied which makes it even more difficult because he struggles to study or review older concepts in class. For instance, learning about multiplying two-digit numbers by two-digit numbers are convenient when you have mastered your multiplication facts and place value. When I'm reviewing math concepts to the class, Chris stays away from participating and begins to look elsewhere or use the restroom a number of times within the next hour. At times, he is withdrawn from interaction in class and has a difficult time listening to instructions. He's taking multiple breaks in between this period which derail him from re-learning and familiarizing himself with the content. There are times when his frustration level is so high, he just closes his math notebook and walks and sits down at the carpet in the back of the classroom. Math, in general, is a huge concern that I want to address with Chris in a manner that encourages perseverance in a growth mindset as well as strategies to help simplify the difficulty of a problem.

#### Social-emotional development

Chris is a reserved student who isolates himself from engaging in class discussions or partner talk. He refuses to give the speaker eye contact, moves his body away from the speaker, and begins to play with objects in his desk. His mother, Ms. Santos says that he avoids communication with his family and isolates himself in his room every day after school. She

strongly agrees that this unsettling behavior is only getting worse and we must do something to avoid its progression. This is a worrisome social developmental phase that I plan on looking into and asking for outside resources in order to ensure he feels safe and welcomed in our school environment. I have explicitly created a mini-lesson on social and self-awareness to address this concern. Students co-created a bubble map graphic organizer that goes into detail about how a good listener looks and what they do. Students were able to come up with the traits of a good listener and put it to practice with a partner from class. Chris was hesitant to participate in this lesson, but after seeing how engaged other students were, he decided to partake in the lesson as well. In turn, this lesson will help Chris visually see what a good listener does and looks like which is the epitome of self-awareness.

The notion of comfort in a classroom derives from the establishment of ground rules and expectations in a classroom that abides by respect, safety, and responsibility. In Chris's defense, he feels overwhelmed to express his thoughts and ideas orally but is able to be an active participant in class with writing. In order to create an environment that respectfully takes everyone into consideration, I must first find out what my students are most comfortable with. I had a small discussion with Chris about what elements he finds relaxing in his home or in class. He pointed to the color white and picked up the class "pet" which is a stuffed animal with small beads inside. The interesting thing is that every time the class pet would go missing, I would find it stuffed in the back of Chris's desk. I came to the conclusion that this stuffed animal served as a coping mechanism for Chris to alleviate his need to be holding or playing with something. I then gave the stuffed animal to him and explained that he could only use it when he feels the need to

relieve stress or relax. This method is validating Chris's need as a kinesthetic learner as well as accommodating to his need to decompress unsettling feelings.

#### Funds of knowledge

I've spoken to Chris's mother the most out of all parents, as she and I discuss how his developmental needs are impacting his academic growth. She's reached out to me in a multitude of ways to discuss Chris's academics, this is only one of the ways she's demonstrated her determination and dedication towards providing her children with the best education. We hold fifteen to twenty-minute conversations daily after school about his progress at home and in the classroom to see if there is a correlation or pattern of behavior he is displaying. When I asked her about having Chris as one of my case studies, she was thrilled to know that I would be observing him more closely throughout the year and offering him and her tools and resources for academic success. That being said, she responded immediately and approved my presence in their household to conduct the family interview.

Ms. Santos insisted I arrive after school on a Monday so that I could meet Chris's immediate family all at once. Thus, right after school Ms. Santos approached me with a friendly smile and stated that she was ready whenever I was ready. Because I've talked to her on different occasions I felt comfortable conducting this interview and I was invested in providing Chris with an immediate action plan.

I immediately took off after school walking down the street for about 10 minutes until I reached Chris's house. It was the apartment complex on the right side of Jess's apartment and I saw the same faces when I went the first time. I had a sudden flash of nervousness and my heart pounded as I walked up to the stairs of the apartment building. There was this sense of panic



because I had not met Chris's immediate family and it was absolutely frightening meeting people for the very first time. It didn't take long before I noticed Chris peeking through the kitchen window watching me come up the stairs. He quickly moved away from the window, and I heard a rumble of running around going on in the apartment. At the door, I was greeted with an abrasive hug and kiss on the cheek by Ms. Santos, following Chris's little sister and brother who hugged me and quickly ran into their rooms. Ms. Santos kindly opened the door and directed me to take a seat in her living room. Chris came out of his room slowly and nervously approached me. He extended his hand and I shook it and we exchanged a smile to one another. He sat down next to his mother as we began to conversate about my interest in choosing Chris as my case study.

Before I could ask my pre-written questions, Ms. Santos began to talk about her experience as a parent at Lions Academy. She started saying that she strongly believes obtaining a higher education is the way to "open" doors for success. Therefore she wants to be involved in Chris's school activities and progress as much as possible to foster a strong relationship with his teachers. In her son's previous school years, she's worked and volunteered with all of his past teachers and she noticed large increments of Chris's academic and social behavior growth. Ms. Santos said that teachers and parents have a shared responsibility in educating the child to be a well-rounded person of good faith. She got up from her seat and hugged me as an emotion of gratitude for helping her son in academia and his personal well being. This gesture was comforting in a way that I no longer felt anxious as to conducting the interview. I felt the urgency of her interest to discuss more of Chris's development in school and at home.

I began asking Ms. Santos questions corresponding to Chris's behavior in the classroom being mainly timid and withdrawn during instruction and partner talk. She sighed and stated that Chris has been this way since kindergarten and that he's only actively engaging in discussion with his immediate friends. She describes Chris as someone who is always embarrassed to talk or receive attention from anyone. She blames her lack of patience to explain his homework and the forms of punishment in place for not completing homework. Before he was assessed and referred for an IEP, Ms. Santos would tell Chris that he couldn't move from the kitchen table, play outside, or talk to anyone until he finished his assignments. Of course, he didn't fully understand his assignments which meant he was stuck frustrated and burnt out every day trying to complete his assignments. She believes that these practices played a role in Chris's lack of communication skills and low self-esteem. As supportive as she is now, it was hard for me to believe that she punished Chris for not completing his homework. I know her as the mother that is attentive to what her child is learning in class to be able to offer her support on assignments, so this fact caught me by surprise. I'm at ease knowing that she has changed her ways of approaching Chris's frustration with homework because that in itself will help him feel supported.

Throughout this entire interview, Chris was going in and out of his room to the living room with action figures and police cars. I took this opportunity to interview him with the presence of his mother to see how he interacts with other adults. I asked him to explain why he was interested in hero action figures and he said it's because they can do special things that regular people can't. He took the time to explain the superheroes powers and then he mentioned policemen as superheroes too. He went on to say that policemen are heroes because they arrested the guy that was physically hurting his mom. In this instance, I looked over at Ms. Santos and her eyes were

filled with tears. She confessed that for the last five years her husband would physically and emotionally abuse her in front of their kids and that Chris was the one who called the police. Chris and his other siblings were exposed to violence in their household and this event could have also been partially the reason why he's such a reserved student in the class. Chris has not been in contact with his father after this incident and Ms. Santos says it's been a painful year because her husband was a good father, but a horrible partner. He would take Chris and his siblings out to play at the park and cook homemade meals with him every day. Chris would laugh uncontrollably alongside his father, but once things got physical with his mother, Chris showed signs of isolation. Knowing about Chris's father and the relationship they had early on is important because it gives a plausible explanation to the discrepancy of Chris's social behavior. Taking the abuse in the home into consideration has guided me to further ask Chris about the type of support he's receiving from the school to alleviate this pain. He didn't reach out for support because he wasn't sure how to cope with this strong situation. Due to this situation, he would become inattentive to class instruction and begin to daydream about his life with and without his father in the family. He said that last year, Ms. Plaza, the RTI teacher, asked him what was going on at home because she saw a drastic score difference in his assessments and behaviors in class. He mentions that Ms. Plaza was more approachable than his third-grade teacher because she has a small instructional group. After Ms. Plaza understood the situation with the dad, she referred Chris to see a therapist at least once a week for a period of thirty minutes. Chris said he loved seeing his therapist because it made him feel safe and listened too. The therapist would help him understand how to avoid negativity, become social, and cope with emotions on a daily basis. There began a support system in place which was composed of his

teachers, therapist, and family members that were invested in providing Chris with emotional and academic support through these rough times. He describes the feeling of being at school was much better knowing that he had the emotional support and attention from his teachers and therapist.

#### Focus student #2 Action Plan

I want to begin by focusing on Chris's social well being because the majority of teachers have commented on Chris's cumulative record regarding his social behavior as extremely timid, shy, and inattentive for his age. In addition to providing Chris with a tactile object to help with comfort, I plan on setting up a friendlier classroom environment by implementing a decompressing corner. This corner will have elements that help students practice mindfulness and peace. Chris will be able to utilize this corner as a coping mechanism to deal with his emotions and relieve any stressful situations. There will be steps on how to practice tranquility mindfulness in order to focus on healing the bodies mind and concentrate intently on the present. There will be a chart that promotes teddy bear breathing which is focusing on eliminating negative emotions and breathing at a constant pace. Because the majority of my students have shared their traumatic experiences, I believe this decompressing corner would help all of my students validate their feelings and learn more about self-management, self-regulation, and social awareness.

Our fourth-grade mathematics power standards are focused on division and multiplication, which are two operations that Chris needs support in. Seeing that he's a kinesthetic learner, I plan on implementing more hands-on activities that show visuals of division. For instance, Chris is struggling with understanding remainders in a division problem so I gave him counters to

define a remainder. I will incorporate more hands-on activities and movement in the class for math lessons in order to keep the level of engagement. In addition to this, I will be writing my math notes using different colored pens in order to match it to the vocabulary terms. I want Chris to explain his reasoning using academic vocabulary, therefore I will think-aloud during instruction and color code the vocabulary terms. This way it'll help him with the correlation of the steps and academic vocabulary.

For ELA, I want to improve Chris's reading comprehension by using graphic organizers to identify the main idea. I have anchor charts available in class that is color-coded to explain what each component is made up of. I will be using graphic organizers to set In addition, I will be providing Chris with a bookmark to help him follow along during our read aloud. This will help him follow along in an innovative way it overlaps with his type of learning. I've learned that he enjoys reading about cars and sports, so I've decided to implement these topics into my guided reading small instruction groups. I hope that with these interest incorporated into the reading, he will be able to thoroughly grasp the content and be able to use strategies such as inside and outside context clues to determine the definition of a vocabulary term.

In following these steps and tactics along with family support, Chris will be able to synthesize information better for reading comprehension and truly come to terms with his social well being with the practice of mindfulness. I will be constantly checking in on him throughout the year and the support team. Together, we will be able to support Chris in this journey for academic success. Because his mother and I talk every day after school to check in on his observable behavior at home, I will be able to keep track of his behavior and use it to guide my

implementation of coping strategies. I look forward to building a stronger relationship with Ms. Santos and seeing Chris's development over the next couple of months.

### **Focus student #3 Maria Roblero**

#### ***Demographic information***

I have a full class of taller than average fourth-grade students and one particular student who is short in stature but holds a mighty large personality caught my attention. I chose her for this case study because I see potential in her not being used to its maximum due to her emotional state. Her name is Maria Roblero and she's the most down to Earth girl I've ever met. I can hear her soft giggle before coming into class everyday and she proceeds to greet me with the largest smile, "Good Morning Ms. Martinez!" She'll enter the class and tell me about her day while swiveling her foot in circles making little-to-no eye contact. Her regular voice sounds like she's whispering from afar, but when she's out on the playground, I can hear her yelling on the top of her lungs down the slide. This individual is one of a kind and I have yet to learn more about who she is in- and outside the classroom to offer my support.

She has as a tremendously large heart whom I would describe as caring and selfless. Maria has demonstrated a sense of maturity in relation to her peers, she offers hugs to those who cry and resolves conflict with compromise. She seeks tranquility in our classroom when an argument breaks out, she's on her feet trying to facilitate negotiations with the two conflicting parties. She's an activist seeking a leadership role that will help her bring justice and peace. I've taken note of her role as a mediator in the class and I asked her a couple of questions to understand where these initial instincts came from.

The purpose of questioning her was to get a sense of why or how she came to be so self-aware at a young age. We met during our lunch period to talk about her life and interests outside the classroom, but I didn't think I was going to be digging deep into her personal life. It wasn't until she conferred to me about the challenging experiences she and her mother endured in their home country that she began to truly unveil her identity. When they lived in Mexico, her father would be intoxicated and physically abusing her mother. After a couple of years living with her father's excessive drinking, Maria's mother was motivated to migrate to the U.S. for her children and herself to have a fresh start in life. Maria says that leaving her father, migrating to the U.S., and not communicating with others because of a language barrier were the three most challenging obstacles she's had to overcome. These hardships have shaped her into becoming a young mature student, but it's also impacted her emotional well being.

She's a unique student, as I read into her PowerSchool logins online, it stated that in the past few years she's been under a lot of stress and anxiety which causes her to have panic attacks. These panic attacks go beyond her needing breaks, she collapses to the floor, curls up, and begs for someone to hold her tight while she attempts to regulate her breathing. Based on these logins, I know my action plan will focus on providing her with access to external and internal social-emotional support. What I can provide is my emotional support, a safer classroom environment, and outside social-emotional resources. She needs to be listened to and analyzed by a domain-specific expert in order to commence her social-emotional upbringing. I want her to move forward with her hopes and dreams without the emotional weight that resides from her past experiences.

### **Academic Standing**

**Language Arts**

Based on her home language survey and ELPAC scores, she is classified as an English learner. She scored an overall of 2 on the ELPAC last year which places her at an expanding proficiency level. Her areas of improvement according to the ELPAC are speaking and reading. These scores are contingent and true to the work she produces in class regarding the English language. We take bi-weekly assessments on reading comprehension and the author's point of view and she scored below average in comparison to her counterparts. Most of the questions she missed on her assessment required her to read between the lines and identify the point of view keywords. I carefully observed her taking the exam, and saw that she highlights most of the text, but doesn't refer to it when answering the questions. Although it is important to highlight information, it's not useful or advantageous of her to do that for the entire text. Being able to effectively annotate the text can be a helpful tool to improve her reading comprehension.

Maria is dedicated to her education, and has made significant improvements in her decoding skills and identifying factual information from the text. At my school site, we use Achieve 3000 to help students meet their Lexile level and reading comprehension goals on an individual base. I can track their progress over time even as far as first grade. She's grown each year at least 75L points towards her Lexile level. In class, we read short stories and Maria is delighted to volunteer read. She reads softly to the class and chooses someone else to read aloud. I make stops in our reading every so often to have students discuss reading comprehension questions with a partner. This is where Maria often struggles because she allows her partner to monopolize the conversation as opposed to working in unison to find the answer. Based on my classroom observations, I believe it's because she's quiet and allows others to take control of the



discussion. However, I've noticed that she takes more time to produce work when doing it independently. When given exit tickets with reading comprehension questions, Maria is able to answer them in incomplete sentences using what she recalls from the text. She can repeat facts, but can not summarize or pick out main ideas from the passage. She doesn't like to refer to the text because she says it's "like doing double the work to find the answer". There is a sign of frustration associated with citing text evidence.

In hopes of reducing the amount of frustration with the text, my designated goal for her action plan includes the test-taking strategies and annotating important details in the text. In addition, I will be reinforcing student partner discussions that follow the kagan structure Rally Robin to bring voice equity to the class. This would essentially help understand the power and benefit of engaging in a conversation between two intellectuals. She would benefit greatly from this and be able to increase her level of participation and engagement.

### **Math**

Maria's favorite subject is math, she smiles and takes out her materials the fastest when transitioning from ELA to Math. Her last assessment was on multiplying 2-digit by 2-digit numbers using regrouping or partial products and she only missed three out of twenty-five questions. She made silly mistakes on the exam that could have been avoided if she checked her work. During our partner discussion and math talk, she's eager to offer her input and often uses manipulatives to explain her reasoning. Maria utilizes academic vocabulary in her explanations during class in addition to presenting her work on the whiteboard for other peers. Despite her being shy, she can speak in front of her peers without hesitation as an acting teacher. She answers students questions during her presentation very well, so during our small instruction,

she's actively helping others come to an understanding. As a helper, she creatively uses visuals to chunk information to help her peers synthesize and understand the content. She uses manipulatives and color codes her notes to help explain the content to students, she truly is my mini teacher figure.

Fourth-grade math standards are primarily focused on multiplication facts and surprisingly Maria does not know her multiplication facts with automaticity. During our multiplication drills, she has not been able to complete one basic fact in the designated two minutes. She missed a couple of questions, but I believe that it's the time constraints along with the pressure to finish that overrides her ability to focus. I assume time is the issue because she taps her pencil and shakes her legs when taking these drills which are signs of test anxiety. I've seen that she takes her time to solve a multiplication problem correctly, which means the only thing she lacks is automaticity. Remembering her multiplication facts takes up most of her time to solve questions such as area model, word problems, and division problems. My hopes are that with the action plan, I will be able to provide Maria with practice worksheets at home and in class to improve her knowledge of multiplication facts. In addition, I plan on deviating from timed multiplication drills because there is more stress associated with learning basic multiplication facts. I want to incorporate fifteen-minute multiplication practice every day as our do-now activity. These activities will vary from time to time in order to keep the practice lively and focus on a multitude of skills. For instance, twelve-sided dice roll, multiplication flash cards, mental math, etc. With consistency in our practice, we will be able to reach Maria's goal to have multiplication automaticity without the pressure of being timed.

### **Social-emotional development**

Maria's contagious smile and positive energy isn't always present due to her past traumatic experiences. According to her previous teacher logins on PowerSchool, Maria's family experienced a traumatic event in their past which still affects their well-being. The events that transpired which heavily impacted her emotional well-being and these events as she describes it, "play over and over in her head." I find that in class she's zoned out and even isolates herself from interacting with others. Her emotional state varies every day, essentially she's on either side of the spectrum in terms of being immensely joyful or low-spirited. I may not be able to provide her the appropriate emotional support as would a school counselor or therapist. Therefore, part of my action plan, if Maria's family agrees to it, will be to seek emotional counseling/support for her and her family.

In addition to seeking professional assistance, I would also like to inform Maria on self-awareness strategies she can use towards her healing process. She'll be able to understand and validate her emotions in a cohesive manner. It paves a way for Maria to reconnect with herself and deliberate on her emotions towards the event that impacted her. Besides overcoming her traumatic experiences, becoming self-aware will help her develop life skills and confidence. It's a learning and coping mechanism in place to help Maria maneuver her feelings under a healthy framework.

Considering the student population I work with, I believe integrating growth mindset and self-care strategies would help sustain a positive culture in the classroom for all students. I strongly believe that in Maria's case, she would benefit from engaging in dialogue that refers to finding a balance in her physical and emotional health. For instance, by integrating the practice of mindfulness in the classroom before or after an eventful day could help Maria and others

reconnect with themselves. Mindfulness is a branch stemming from self-care, which is what a lot of my students need access to in order to feel prepared for the day. Moreover, a growth mindset can help students manage their emotions and understand self-care as part of a healing process. In class, I could remind students that healing is a long and exhaustive process to stimulate a growth mindset as a process of perseverance and inner strength. I hope that through this integration of self-care, Maria will be able to unlock her maximum potential as a positively thriving individual.

### **Funds of Knowledge**

#### **Cultural and Linguistic resources and funds of knowledge from home visit**

As a first year educator, I've internalized the multitude of professions that an educator encompasses in order to maximize student success and emotional stability. Being an educator in a low-income community, it means that you're an emotional consultant for your students who are enduring complicated obstacles at home such as poverty, divorce, etc. Therefore, in my classroom, it's important to prioritize the social well being of my students. During my first couple of weeks at school, Maria wrote me a note and placed it on my desk asking if she could talk to me during our lunchtime. The first thing she noted was a disclaimer by stating that she might cry. She began to talk about her mother's reason for migrating to the United States from their humble beginnings in Oaxaca, Mexico. She quietly mentioned a couple of facts about the journey but refrained from talking about it further when her eyes began to water. I assured Maria that this is a safe space, but I didn't want to trigger her either. The way she reacted to this conversation showed me something in her past lingers in her memory.

Students are picked up after school every day by their caregivers which is a perfect opportunity for me to converse with parents about their child's needs. In this case, I wanted to

talk to Maria's mother in regards to her daughter's well-being and academics. When Maria introduced me to her mother, I couldn't believe how similar they both were in stature and looks. Mrs. Roblero is a humble and modest woman who genuinely showed interest in meeting with me to discuss Maria's social and academic well-being. We had talked previously over the phone about conducting the home visit, but she suggested it was best to hold the interview in the classroom after school. She told me that she lives in a house with her sisters and their children, and didn't feel comfortable having me over for an interview in a crowded environment. She also mentioned that there were a couple of personal topics she wanted to discuss away from family members. Considering the conditions Mrs. Roblero explained, we proceeded to set a meeting time to discuss Maria's well being the following day after school.

Mrs. Roblero and Maria were holding hands and quietly walking next to me on our way to the classroom after school. In order to lighten the tension of the interview in the classroom, I had prepared Abuelita hot chocolate and pan dulce to enjoy. Maria immediately sat down at the carpet to read her favorite Harry Potter series while Mrs. Roblero and I sat in front of one another to begin the interview. Mrs. Roblero rearranged her rebozo, a long woven scarf worn over the shoulders, as she got comfortable in her seat. She began by saying that this country has been a safe haven for her and her children. With tears filling up her eye sockets, she expressed gratitude towards life and the lord for presenting her with fruitful opportunities such as shelter, access to bilingual education, and a stable job. It could have been the calm tone in her voice or the way she expressed herself, but I felt this instant connection to her.

Maria's mother got closer to me and immediately conferred to me that she and her daughter had endured numerous types of violent acts by her husband. Mrs. Roblero sobbed and

hesitated to speak about it in detail, but felt the need to inform me so that I could help them. She believed I could connect them to counseling services in order to overcome this trauma. In fact, I printed a copy of a local counseling service that is available to work with both students and family members. Tears ran down her face as she accepted to contact this agency and seek assistance for Maria and herself. Maria's impeccable behavior was a thick disguise which covered the trauma her mother and she endures.

Mrs. Roblero did not feel comfortable going into detail about their experience but assured me that Maria has not been the same since. Mrs. Roblero blames the long two years of violence in her home as the primary reason for Maria's anxiety attacks. She states that Maria used to be a joyful individual, but after witnessing domestic violence in her household she became quiet and unresponsive to feelings. As Mrs. Roblero looked at Maria reading independently, she wiped her tears and said she's willing to do anything to get Maria back to her normal self. In correlation to Maria's third-year grades, Mrs. Roblero says Maria's emotional instability has negatively impacted her focus in class and home. She hopes that moving forward, I can use the strategies her 3rd-grade teacher used to capture her attention in class such as preferential seating, proximity, and visual cues. In terms of Maria's anxiety attacks, Mrs. Roblero suggests I cradle her while she regulates her breathing levels. This is one coping mechanism that professionals have identified as empowering and nurturing. Soon after Mrs. Roblero shared this information with me, she apologized and said she had to leave in order to catch the city bus on time. She thanked me for meeting with her and assured me that we would talk soon about Maria's progress academically and socially.

Maria's family had a difficult transition from Mexico to the United States, which collectively impacted their social-emotional well-being. As an educator, I can apply a social-emotional learning framework to focus on the students' upbringing and self-esteem. By operating in a social-emotional framework, I will be able to enhance Maria's overall well-being and potentially boost her self-esteem. I truly believe that she contains the potential to excel at large, but it requires her acknowledging her worth and taking action on it. In regards to my students' experiences, I believe they would all benefit from focusing on social-emotional learning. This may be the opportunity for Maria and her peers to invest in self-care and empathy in hopes that it could help them move forward with academics. It's a matter of helping Maria learn how to manage and express her feelings in a safe way. She'll be able to act on social competencies which will pave its way for academic achievement. It's proven to have been a program that enhances students' well being. As researchers suggest, "SEL provides instruction that is designed to promote student self-awareness, social awareness, and responsible decision making and to improve students' attitudes and beliefs about themselves, others, and school." (Eklund, Kilpatrick, & Kilgus, 317). In an attempt to create a nurturing environment, where students' social well-being is a pressing matter, I will integrate a social-emotional learning framework into my pedagogy. It'll be seen through culturally responsive journal writing, morning meetings, and conflict resolutions. Through these activities, Maria will be able to access her maximum social and academic potential. I know that behind her shy smile, she's an incredibly potent student with a lot of confidence ready to shine. She has a sweet soul and I hope that with a focus on integrating an SEL framework in the classroom and outside of school counseling, it'll alleviate the limitations she has and explores her true self.

**Ethnography Part B Conclusion**

Participating in this study has given me valuable insight into my role as an educator and student data. At the beginning of the year, I thought that making myself vulnerable and visiting students' homes would be nerve-wracking, but that's beside the fact. I've acquired the knowledge I couldn't receive by reviewing cumulative folders, in a way I was able to strengthen the trust and fluidity of my student's community and family relations by doing home visits. I've immersed myself in my students' interests, family backgrounds, academic records, and hopes. These elements are vitally important in my pursuit to tailor my pedagogy and approach at social well being in the class. I've learned so much about how certain events transpiring can either positively or negatively impact the students' life. I had to interview students who've experienced both ends of the spectrum in terms of joyous and devastating events. Both of which have made me aware of the power I hold in creating and maintaining a safe haven in the classroom. By taking my student's life experiences into consideration, I've recreated my classroom environment to portray a calming atmosphere. I hope that by doing this I will be able to give students a comforting space where they feel safe, engaged, and inspired to do their best.

I'm looking forward to strengthening the relationships I've built with students and their families throughout this school year as we discuss the impact of the action plan in place. I know that with the support from all parties involved, we will be able to work and see the level of progress the student has made over a set period of time. Most of my student's families are actively involved in their child's education and have asked to volunteer in the classroom. If this is arranged and made possible, I hope on integrating the parents as part of my student's action



plan to further promote academic success. I feel that this study is empowering to all parties in an engaging manner, and can truly make a difference in the student's animations.

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## PART C

Learning how to communicate and integrate myself at the school site is not limited to my role in the classroom, but it's extended towards understanding the flow of communication and relationships with the community we reside in. By taking the time to observe and talk to members of the community at school events, it's helped me connect the underlying events that impact my students' behavior and drive to succeed. This ethnographic narrative project is allowing me to understand that teaching is intertwined with various elements that impact the coalition of the community as a whole. As an intern, I'm familiarizing myself with the obligations I have while simultaneously learning about the "behind-the-scenes" work needed to improve my pedagogy using my student's funds of knowledge. I hope that by connecting with members of the local community I will be successful in gaining insight into my student's day-to-day lives in order to integrate that into the classroom.

### **Micro-Community Research: Community**

Every morning, I leave my house no later than 5:45 a.m. to avoid the exacerbated traffic on the I-10 West towards Los Angeles. From the start of my commute, there is little traffic, but as I approach Lincoln Heights, there is an influx of public transportation and school buses. The streets get narrower, and the cars feel close enough that I could look over my shoulder and say hello to the driver. Griffin Avenue is the vessel of the community, it connects popular local businesses, work routes, freeway entrances, homes, and my school Lions Academy. There is a

lot of foot traffic as I close into the school parking lot. As a routine, I see an elderly man carrying his granddaughter's backpack over his shoulder and walking her to school. He takes out his wallet and walks over to Maricela, a street vendor in front of campus, and orders two hot champurrado and tamales. For the most part, these are the interactions and movements I see taking place moments before school starts. Although these moments are valuable to consider, I know that there are more thoughtful events and relationships that occur here in Lincoln Heights. It's just a matter of unraveling them through attending and carefully observing the elements of unity that happen in this community.

### **Culture and Language**

When I got hired at Lions Academy, I conducted a self-guided tour of the city to have familiarity with my surroundings and essentially discover what the day-to-day life looks like in the community after school hours. I drove around the block and noticed a remarkable resemblance between local Broadway street and the famous callejones located in Downtown Los Angeles. There's no coincidence in the similarities, noting that Downtown Los Angeles is only about a fifteen-minute drive away. There were street vendors selling traditional Latin food such as tamales, tacos, champurrado, corn esquites, and more. You can hear vendors hollering their deals from each corner to pull in more customers. Kids running around playing with the vibrant electric toy cars. The streets are tightly packed with cars parked parallel, and adults rushing to check their time left on the meters. The residents rely heavily on public transportation in order to get from one destination to another. People are walking at a fast pace and picking up their necessities on the way home; It's rush hour in Lincoln Heights and I've experienced a slight glimpse of it.

After looking back at the establishments on Broadway and Griffin, I realized that the majority of them were places that catered to the Hispanic/Latino population. Across the school, there are several dollar world stores, food trucks, local grocery stores, and street vendors ready to sell to their community. The items displayed along clothespins follow a Hispanic flair, from artisan knick-knacks to traditional vibrant hand-woven dresses. By selectively displaying Latin culture, it's become evident that vendors are well aware of who their consumers are and they cater to their demand. According to the 2008 Census, the population consists of 70% Latino, 25% Asian, and 5% other. About 74% of the residents are foreign-born, however, even this percentage is a diverse background of Latin American countries such as Honduras, Mexico, and Guatemala. Since the 1960s, Lincoln Heights has always been a city with a population from Latin American backgrounds, such that the community itself remembers those times with captivating murals that reflect the early Chicano movement. I've come to believe that murals are forms of expressive art that convey the community's celebrations, tragedies, and/or aspirations for future generations. The mural's location and the message are associated with keeping the diverse Latin American lives strong and serves to remind the residents of their cultural heritage.

Lions Academy is indicative of Lincoln Heights rich diverse population. We are a dual-immersion school that focuses on students home language, Spanish, as a valuable asset to learning. The curriculum for students in the lower grades is written in Spanish, as the grades increase students are receiving both Spanish and English curriculum. Thus, all the teachers and staff at Lions Academy are fluent Spanish speakers. Lions Academy has a great reputation in Lincoln Heights, as the only school in the area that supports Spanish speakers with a

dual-immersion curriculum. Most teachers are residents of the area, which means they are knowledgeable of the circumstances families endure in terms of financial hardships and crimes.

The teachers who live in Lincoln Heights understand the difficult it is for people to be out after dark due to the city's high rate of crimes. Based on Trulia's recent crime rate data (2018), Lincoln Heights has had 402 counts of theft and 187 counts of assault. It is possible that due to these circumstances, the majority of households are secured with tall gates and signs that read "no trespassing" or "beware of dog" all around the gates. I've been advised by parents and staff to not stay on campus past 8:00 p.m for safety reasons. It's this precaution that a lot of residents take in order to attain basic safety. This is one of the reasons why the community itself is so tight-knit because they look out after one another. Based on informal conversations I've had with a parent, they have each other's phone number to alert one another about suspicious activity occurring in their area. As one parent states, "we take shifts of who takes care of who in this area because it's better to have more than two eyes on things." It is possible that the impeccable close-knit connections that neighbors have with each other are dependent on the number of crimes they endure together. It's the shared experience that holds them together, but I assume that these deep connections are based on more than just fear.

Lincoln Heights lays over a hilltop and the home's square footage overlap with one another. Lions Academy is in the midst of the neighborhood which makes it easier for families to walk their children to school and it makes it harder for residents to leave their homes due to the foot and car traffic in the morning. Every morning it's chaotic; Families stop and talk, eat and walk. I can't help but notice how close in proximity the houses are, not to mention the diverse styles that each one has. As the office of historic resources states, " Houses in Lincoln Heights

vary in architecture and include examples of Victorian-era, Arts and Crafts, and Period Revival styles.” As the front of the campus as my focal point, I look around and notice that there are Victorian-era two-story homes, apartment complexes, studios, and mini-neighborhoods that have a similar look to a motel. Each home is closely paired to the next, and that may be indicative of the relationship that the members of the community have with the school and themselves.

By observation, I’ve noticed that the main streets and home driveways are filled with cars. Before making an assumption, I talked to Mrs. Johnson, the front office clerk, and she said that a lot of our students live with each other. She explained that extended family members live under the same roof because living expenses are rising at a rapid rate. It’s true that the town is having similar economic troubles as Downtown Los Angeles, as maps reveal that the average household size is 5.6 and 76% of residents rent their homes. Also, out of those who rent their homes, the average household income is \$30,000, which is similar to Downtown’s income. Based on Lions Academy’s SARC report, 92% of students enrolled identify as part of the socially disadvantaged group and 80% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. These are all factors that determine Lincoln Heights as an impoverished community. That is to say, these housing situations are forcing families to cooperate and support each other emotionally and financially. There are financial hardships that residents are experiencing at this moment, but besides this, there is still this strong bond of support they offer one another to stay afloat in this economy.

Because the homes are so close together, the conversations and relationships with neighbors are much closer. There seems to be a presence of unity and support between all members, including the vendors. I walked out to the closest street vendor in front of the school to

purchase a corn exquisite, and he said he was out, but says his comadre Lucy across the street sells delicious ones. Before I left, he made small talk and asked if I enjoyed being the new teacher at Lions Academy. I was shocked to think that he knew this information, and it turns out he was one of my student's uncle. He was very polite and began to tell me all about how community members are very involved in the school. He referenced the construction of the school playground as major signs of community and parent involvement. He said back in 2008 the school staff and parent volunteers spent their summer building the playground in the front and back of the school. This was a full-effect effort towards beautifying the school and showing the progress it had made in community building with members of Lincoln Heights. After talking to him, I became familiar with the kind of relationship the school has with the community. Similarly, I experienced this school-community bond first-hand in practice, as he knew who I was and explained how quick the grapevine was in Lincoln Heights.

This notion of coming together is a sense of community and family members to work together and improve the lives of the students today and for future generations to come. Lions Academy recently opened up their doors to the community in an effort to beautify the school once more. In September, the school announced their beautification event to the entire school and community by placing a large poster outside of their gates. Students and families were invited to come to help the school paint the hallways and restrooms and to enjoy a lunch-in afterward. As a social justice school, we wanted our hallways to represent notions of social justice issues being resolved, so local muralist and students expressed it through creative art. I got to witness, bright colors bring the mural to life on our walls and have students, as well as families, feel this sense of community at home and school. The color scheme was a light-hearted

yellow and four black handprints from a family in our community were imprinted on the wall right below the saying sunshine and love. After the event, everyone gathered on the basketball courts and set up tables to start the lunch-in. No one was just sitting around, everyone was on deck helping with setting up chairs, table cloths, grilling, and serving food. There were teachers and parents working together serving homemade Spanish rice, beans, enchiladas, and carne asada to all participants. A parent pulled out their loudspeaker and blasted Juan Gabriel songs all evening, this event was similar to the social gatherings Hispanic/Latinos have when they celebrate an occasion. There is a harmonious social gathering taking place at Lions Academy, and maybe the parents feel like they're home away from home just like I did.

This community has so much to offer their residents in terms of schools that are dual-immersion, youth centers, after-school programs, extracurricular activities, and cultural/heritage events. The main source of extracurricular and educational enrichment is available to students and residents at Plaza de la Raza Cultural Center for the Arts and Education which is about a 2-minute drive away from campus. Plaza de la Raza's programs and events are designed specifically to revitalize and preserve Latin culture and heritage while simultaneously instilling academic success for all students through tutoring programs. Most programs offer beginners and advanced courses in Mariachi, Salsa dance, and painting artisans. According to Plaza de la Raza's website, "The students that attended Plaza's School of Performing and Visual Arts are children and teenagers, ages 5-18, and 95% of who are from poverty to low-income families." Because Lincoln Heights is a predominantly Latino disenfranchised community, the Plaza offers a Quince Night for girls to have access to dresses, musicians, and caterers for a very low cost or take home donations. They value Hispanic culture and attempt to prosper it through

hosting events at this multicultural center. This multicultural arts center is providing students at a young age the opportunity to see value in themselves, culturally, socially, and emotionally.

Events that highlight culture and linguistic diversity are what keep the community fundamentally stronger in unison.

As an intern at Lions Academy, I've encountered the rich opportunities offered to my student after school and in the community, but given the circumstances of in the community, they also need professional social-emotional support. Because I come from a similar community, I understand the social-emotional stress students endure will impact their efforts and contributions to academia. I agree with Huynh, Tran-Chi, and Nguyen's research (2018) that states "teaching experience and the teacher's educational background affect the teacher's perception of the necessity, importance, concern, and barriers to the implementation of SEL programs in primary schools." Because I've encountered similar community struggles, I am more open to applying an SEL program or pedagogy in my classroom to alleviate these emotions. Based on student conversations, I know that at the end of the day, my students are going back to broken homes, divorced parents, foster care, and financial hardships which impact their emotional stability. Lions Academy does not have an on-site counselor to support these students. They only offer counseling services to students who have an IEP or 504 plan. I've gotten to know my student's narrative; They're merely nine years old, but they've experienced migration-related trauma, homelessness, exposure to drugs, and violence in their community. During my internship, I've spent time talking to students before and after school about their lives and who they are. I have 21 out of 24 students in my class who classify as ELs, and out those 21 I have 13 students who recently migrated to the United States within the last two years. They feel



the urge to express the frustration and fear they endured as young migrants crossing a dangerous path. I provide them with the listening ears, but they need someone to consult them professionally. I facilitate morning meetings every Friday to provide students with a safe space and platform to engage in social-emotional conversations. They use this as an outlet to surface the negative manifesting emotions that impede them from gaining social-emotional stability. It's a space where we all feel connected because at the end of the day we share common struggles as well as achievements. As an educator, I can offer Social-Emotional learning and check-ins, but it's also important for students to receive extra guidance through a school counselor.

### **Community Events and Community Members**

Lions Academy has resourceful and kind-hearted educators and staff that seek the student's best interest in terms of academics and social well-being. Since most staff are residents of Lincoln Heights, they are well aware of the negative influences in the community: gangs, criminal behavior, homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, and mental health problems. In order to counter these negative influences, two amazing primary teachers founded the LA bike club. As a community effort, both parents and staff fundraised money to purchase used bikes and helmets. After a year of fundraising and searching thrift shops all over Los Angeles, they were able to purchase twenty-five used bikes for students. Mr. Obama and Mr. Ortega worked effortlessly to call local businesses, news channels, and community centers to sponsor them for the benefit of providing students with safety courses and helmets. A couple of weeks before writing this paper, Mr. Obama was able to get in contact with Olympian Gideon Massie and Channel 4 news and they agreed to air a segment on their news channel about LA bike club's great impact on student achievement, behavior, and physical exercise.

Students in the LA bike club gear up to ride 11 miles around the community every Friday after school from 3:30-6:30 p.m. Parents, administration, teachers, and community members all tag along with the club to ride their bikes and experience the wonders of fresh air, relationships, and exploration. Before we take off, parents are gathered in the back parking lot handing out slices of oranges, trail mix, and water bottles to students. There are parents who attend these ride alongs every week, like Gloria who says she enjoys working closely with the school to improve the community as a whole. You can see 25 students from fourth and fifth grade pumping each other up and buckling their safety helmets on for each other. While this is happening, Channel 4 newscaster is filming Gideon Massie talking to a group of students about his career and explaining what dedication and hard work feels and looks like. There's a lot of commotion and thrill as students prepare to embark on a fruitful bike ride with a famous cyclist and be accompanied by people who care for them each and every day at Lions Academy.

I've ridden a couple of times with them before the news channel was introduced, and I know that Friday mornings I'm asked the same question: Please tell us you're going to bike club with us, Ms. Martinez? My response is always of course! Bike club is a way for students to build confidence and relationships with locals and peers. I've taken this opportunity to connect with my students and see how joining this club has positively impacted their behavior and social skills needed to succeed in the "real world."

LA bike club usually rides slowly down to the LA river bike trail and makes two stops: one at the bike cafe to eat snacks and the last one is the local park so students can go play before jumping back on to the bikes. The local cafe has donated money to the LA bike club in support of their efforts to keep their minds and bodies healthy. There are safety procedures that teacher

need to ensure on the road, in order for students to cross safely. We first need to cross busy city intersections, so teachers will ride faster to each crosswalk and hold off any on-going traffic to yield so that the entire group is together. Luckily, we've had a positive experience with this, as some drivers pull down their windows and ask questions about who we are and what we do. It's truly amazing how involved and supportive the community is towards providing students with the best academic and social success.

Because this bike ride is a total of 11 miles, we know that some students may want to give up and go home. This helps students put a growth mindset to practice and understand the real-life application to it to become a better version of themselves. Our bike path does not compare to the idiom of smooth sailing but is exemplary of real-life obstacles and accomplishments we share throughout a lifetime. Mr. Obama and Mr. Ortega have compared the bike route to real-life obstacles and students apply a critical lens to problem-solve the situation in order to do better the next time. For instance, Mr. Obama saw that a student fell off his bike, Mr. Ortega helped the student up and tells him "there will be times where you want to give up, but getting up and dusting yourself off will be the first step towards success." These reminders and comparisons to real-life examples help students shift their fixed to a growth mindset. It's the little things that can create a huge impact on a person.

As we kept riding, Mr. Ortega decided to make a stop by Eastlake Juvenile hall, which is about a ten-minute bike ride from the school. He asked students to all stop and stand next to their bikes. Mr. Ortega is aware that students are exposed to negative influences in the community, but he used this juvenile detention center as a symbol of those influences. He says, "You end up here if you don't behave, do your work, respect your elders, or follow the rules. We come here

together at LA bike club to avoid trouble and understand what the rules are. We want you to understand that at a young age, there are rules in which you need to follow, but if you don't there are also consequences to your actions! I don't want to see any of you in here, what I want to see is you become successful and come back to tell future generations the same thing!" Overall his statement was empowering to students because he recognizes the potential these students have and wants them to realize they are strong enough to neglect these influences and march strong to achieve their goals.

I had a chance to talk to Mr. Obama about the work he does with Mr. Ortega in bike club. He told me that LA bike club hopes students understand the importance of these seven goals: fitness, exercise, exploring, community outreach, bonding, engagement, and self-confidence. He relays that students are able to value their community riding alongside their peers and building relationships with others as they embark on this rewarding experience together. It's a healthy form of liberating their minds and focusing on unity, perseverance, and success. As mentioned before, Mr. Obama attempts to compare the challenging topography to actual life situations and help students see that a growth mindset is applicable in both scenarios for the better. In addition, he works closely with the 4th and 5th-grade teachers to recruit students who normally have behavior issues, in order to use this club as a positive reinforcement for targeted behavior in class. Because a lot of students in the club talk about it at school and emphasize the amount of fun they're having, all the other students want to join as well. Mr. Obama had previously worked with incarcerated youth, and he said that most of them believe that they wouldn't be where they are now if they had something or someone to care about. In a sense, they were looking for inner motivation and someone who showed they cared about them. Mr. Obama feels that this may be

what our students need in Lincoln Heights, a group of people who show them what it is to be and feel loved. He hopes that LA bike club is the love and care students' need in order to stay out of trouble in our community. Mr. Obama and Mr. Ortega use this bike club as an incentive program for students, but most importantly it's an opportunity for them to be a feel a part of a larger loving family.

We have students who don't have an actual family to go back home to or even food to eat. For these reasons, Mr. Obama and Mr. Ortega wrote letters and a scheduled meeting with local businesses to help them sponsor their club. After months of effort, they were able to make connections with Dinos Diner and Shakeys parlor in Lincoln Heights. Students in bike club are allowed to eat at these eateries for free twice a month with their families. As Mr. Obama says, "It's such a blessing to know that our local businesses understand and support our students in every way possible, especially after what they endure on a daily basis." These partnerships are what brings the community together in a way that reads "we too understand the hardships, and we will fight together to end negative impacts on our community." Dino's Diner has been generous enough to donate ten new bikes and club shirts for all students. Students are extremely grateful for these donations and have contributed to creating a video showing Dinos what an amazing contribution they've done. It takes a whole community to uplift the spirits of young children, and hope that they'll have a positive and sturdy route for future generations.

In addition to providing students with the tools to attain social-emotional stability, a non-profit organization called the Boys and Girls Club prepares students in LA bike club and Lions Academy for academic success. The Boys and Girls Club offers students access to STEM curriculum, homework supervision, artistic expression, and sports. Every day at 3:00 pm. the

G&B Club leaders come and tutor students on Math or English. They are essentially additional academic and extracurricular supports that the local community offers its students. In addition to this non-profit organization, there are also high school students who volunteer to tutor students after school. As part of their community service requirements, high school students are making themselves available to support the academic and social development of our elementary students. Lions Academy opens its gates for those who have the intention to serve their student population in the most beneficial manner. It's the strength of this community that provokes the youth to actively participate in a hands-on experience such as tutoring, to promote a brighter future for elementary students. I have the impression that students at Lions Academy are preoccupied with participating in extracurricular activities and academic resources available after school in order to help them reach their maximum potential.

### **School Site Research**

The city of Los Angeles is the hub of booming business and public affairs which fills up my daily route to work with hundreds of commuters. It's 7:00 a.m. and able to reach my destination right before traffic builds up on the main streets in Lincoln Heights. I'm able to walk on into Lions Academy, which was previously a salvation army hospital, and make my copies before that line of teachers show up too.

As mentioned before, the school used to be a salvation army hospital, and the classrooms as well as the atmosphere past 6:30 pm sometimes are reminiscent of the hospital functions. The principal and community members have tried to beautify the school using murals with joyful images, but it still does not feel entirely different. Our classrooms are not traditional rectangle classes, but they are the size of a community hospital emergency room. We have a dozen

hallways, large dusty basements, and no greenery. There are times when the elevators in our school disobey the buttons and go straight down to the basement, where they more use to be. My first experience on the elevator was indicative of this story. It went down to the basement and took a while to respond and come back up to the second floor. I pledged to myself that I would never take the elevator again. Many teachers and office staff have advised me not to stay after hours because they believe there is still an energy present from those times that lingers throughout the campus. I know it's not to scare me, and to some extent, I believe them because every teacher and staff member has either mentioned this or stated their experience after dark. It's an interesting twist, but even after knowing this I'm hoping that my positive disposition in the classroom is more observable to my students than my fear.

Lions Academy is an independent charter school that functions with a primary, middle, and high school in Lincoln Heights. The primary and middle school are located in the same building but divided by hallways. When approaching the front of our campus, the first thing you notice is the large black gate surrounding the school for safety concerns. Beyond these gates, you will see a large amount of vegetation and flowers blooming and ready to be plucked. Our student's most valued part of the school is the garden they plant themselves each year. Maybe because this is the only greenery available on site, but it's their most treasured possession at school. Students plant and harvest their own vegetables on campus and take them home to eat. This garden is so important to students, that even after school parents and children gather around the gates of the garden to see the plants daily growth. In order to get inside the front office/campus, you must be "buzzed" in by the office clerk to open the gate, once you're in your state your business if you're checking in as a visitor you must sign in and wait for the approval.

At 7:30 a.m. the school opens its gates to the public, and a swarm of students and parents come in. Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. Candy, and Mrs. Ortiz are the fearless ladies in the office who manage to effectively carry out the work at Lions Academy. They are our forefront soldiers that take the first hit Monday morning as they take phone calls, return emails, place mail into appropriate boxes, resolve parents' questions, and still have the courtesy to ask us about our days. The main office is our focal point on campus, as it operates the primary and secondary school at the same time. Because it's a tiny office space, you must ask permission to get by and retrieve your mail or else you'll have to wait until the office is finished with rush hour. Just behind the office is Mrs. Lola's office which is occasionally opened as a symbol of her open door policy. She's very attentive to parent/community involvement, student success, and enhancing teacher relationships. She is also our fearless leader, who paves the way for all students, staff, and teachers to attain success.

Lions Academy is considered a great dual-immersion school that works on providing students the tools to succeed in an evolving 21st-century world. Because most of our students are ELs, the program capitalizes on utilizing cognates and additional minutes on the ELD curriculum to provide students with the fundamental knowledge needed for proficiency in literacy. Our student population is largely ELs, and it's a place where recent immigrant students can learn English while using their native language to support them. These are the benefits of having a dual-immersion program in the midst of a community that has high rates of foreign-born and Spanish speaking residents. The community is prideful of their work at the school, and we are proud to state that with support of volunteers and after-school program leaders, Lions Academy was ranked 1st place in the school districts robotics and engineering competition.



The layout itself has challenges for students and staff, in terms of comfort. The school's parking spaces are on the same lot as the basketball courts and playground. Therefore, the basketballs and dodgeballs being used by students throughout the day and in the after-school program directly hit our cars. It's a large campus that holds about 641 students which include ETK and 1st-8th graders. When there are events such as the valentines day dance, the school combined the elementary and middle schoolers in the multi-purpose room. Students from both parties felt uncomfortable being in the same room celebrating a holiday. It's a matter of understanding how to divide the space on campus for students to act on their social-emotional development.

As a communal effort to place a positive impact on students' daily lives, the school enforces these norms: be respectful, responsible, and safe. Teachers are told to keep the classroom rules in accordance with the three B's which are stated above. When students demonstrate one of these norms, teachers and respected staff hand out lion dollars, which is our incentive. These incentives can be redeemed at the lion store, which contains fun little gadgets, pencils, erasers, notebooks, and more or they collect them to attend PBIS events. These PBIS events range from carnivals, movies, video game trucks, bouncy playhouses, and more! The school really promotes and emphasizes positive behavior while students diligently work on showing respect, responsibility, and safety all year long to get admissions to these events. It's almost a win-win situation for teachers and students.

Lions Academy is a social justice school, which means we emphasize a positive character trait every month as our mandala word. Teachers are asked to pick a student who represents the mandala word and recognize them with a speech and certificate at the student of the month assembly. These assemblies are core to recognizing outstanding behavior and rewarding them

with a chorus chant and special pictures with teachers and family members. It's a time when the student's school spirit fills the room and our Mascot Lion comes out to and invites the students to sing the school chant in English and Spanish. The student's families are in the back with floral arrangements, balloons, and teddy bears ready to give their child accompanied by a huge accomplishment hug. The energy in this room is very lively and upbeat as it's a celebration of school spirit and norms being followed.

Lions Academy is an individual charter school, and our superintendent is always on the lookout for grants and opportunities that will provide our students with the best education possible. For instance, the superintendent and principal worked diligently on an art grant application. Once they submitted it, the grant committee recommended Lions Academy to receive one of the 2018 Student Support and Academic Enrichment (SSAE) grants for 760,000 dollars to expand our visual and performing arts program. We were the only Charter School that was recommended to receive this competitive grant. Indeed, this was one of the school's greatest accomplishment since the establishment of the charter. Because of this grant, we were able to expand our arts integration program by hiring a music teacher, purchasing new instruments, purchasing a readers theatre program, and distribute recorders for all grade levels. Thanks to our hardworking administration's efforts to uphold student success in academia, this will surely be an eventful year full of creative expression via art, theatre, and music.

We have large donors who are active at our school site and want to be a part of the classroom environment by conducting read-aloud every Tuesday. Ms. Jane, who donated \$100,000 to construct our literacy center, reads chapter books to my students while asking invigorating reading comprehension questions. She gets along well with students and shows an

interest in reading silly stories to students using her multitude of tones for each character in the book. In addition to building the literacy center, she supplied the school with a set of 25 windows desktops so students could have access to the internet on campus. She believes that students should be able to navigate the web for academic purposes and advancements as a means of preparing them for the 21st century. Teachers are allowed to sign up for a day to bring the students down to the literacy center and practice typing and researching skills on the desktops. Generally, our school climate reflects a light-hearted atmosphere for staff, teachers, parents, and students. When I was hired, the principal gave me a tour of the school and visited each classroom in which each teacher kindly welcomed me. Most of them offered support and resources I could use to get started in my teaching career. Over time, I've come to see that the educators at Lions Academy are the most selfless and generous people ever. We come together to address immediate calls for help and form a great team. For instance, Mr. Kenny, a 1st-grade teacher, and high school boys soccer coach sent a mass email to the primary informing us about the hardships his boys endure on a daily basis in terms of transportation and food. He asked the community and teachers for donations that could help the boys. That following day, teachers and community members collected endless amounts of donations ranging from soccer cleats, pre-paid bus passes, water bottles, and on the go snacks. It's through the collective efforts of a community in which the residents of Lincoln Heights rise above disenfranchisement. Lions Academy is set to help their students in any way possible, and it's also true in terms of the support in place for students with IEP, 504s, and GATE. Here at Lions Academy, we provide students with a multitude of opportunities to advance in literacy and mathematical skills through programs such as GATE. Mrs. Halpert plans and facilitates the GATE program, where students

are challenged to build and create projects in the field of STEM. In addition to the GATE program, the school has two full-time RSP teachers who are each designated to take care of students from either the upper or lower grades. The support is push-in, so students are receiving one on one instruction in class with the rest of general education. Generally, these are accommodations made for students on an IEP or 504 plan in order to support their learning needs.

Based on the school's website, Lions Academy's priority is abiding by the wellness policy. This policy highlights Lions Academy mission statement: we will prepare urban secondary students to succeed in college or on chosen career paths, to live to fulfill, self-directed lives, and to be effective in creating a just and humane world. This designated committee pledges to provide students with a wellness package including physical education, counseling, and social services, health promotion for staff; and student, parent/guardian, and community involvement. Since my internship at this school, I've seen most of these items on the agenda in practice, but not to the extent I hoped for. Our students are not close to social-emotional stability or wellness, and I believe the services that are missing at our school are based on social-emotional needs. In order to ease the trauma and emotional instability of our students, we need to serve them with professional help from those in the psychological sector of counseling and therapy. Lions Academy is currently working on employing an on-site counselor, which I hope will prepare them on navigating the depths of self-awareness and management.

### **School Mission and Demographics**

A mission statement has the same will power as an oath or a pledge. As a dual-immersion program school, our mission is to prepare students with high-powered, performance-based

assessment, and an integrated curriculum to promote critical thinking and intellectual depth. The close relationships between students and staff will be fond of understanding individual needs and interests to promote a community of well-rounded learners. Essentially, preparing students to take action on important social issues, to work alongside community mentors, and to enhance the learning power of these experiences through reflection and skill development in the classroom. This extensive mission statement is reflective of our identity as a school and drives our desire to educate future generations using a social justice framework. I believe that Lions Academy has well accomplished this mission statement through communal/parent involvement, restorative justice conflict resolutions, and diverse representation of social issues and resolutions plastered on our halls. Besides, teachers in the classrooms are activist and social advocates themselves who teach students about the variety of ways we too can help uplift disenfranchised communities and people of color from social justice issues. Us teachers serve to cultivate a new grassland of self-advocating students who will dominate the horizons of oppression and come home victorious.

Yes, my classroom and the school itself is pridefully representative of the mission statement. It's all we inform and talk about here at Lions Academy. Each classroom has two bulletin boards outside their door, one should display student work and the other focuses on a social justice issue. As of the month of March, I had read-aloud about important historical women in our lives and had deep open-ended conversations with my students. Afterward, each student needed to create a biography project on an important woman in history that interested them and present the information to the class. These biographies were an example of social justice issues presented in the classroom, but these projects only scratch the surface of our

in-depth social justice curriculum. Besides the curriculum, the school has social justice mandala words that students represent as a student of the month, and our murals outside and inside the school visually represent social justice issues.

The composition of my classroom population is linguistically and culturally diverse from the following countries: Honduras, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Paraguay. My students may all speak Spanish, but every country has thousands of linguistically varied dialects. Students have shared that knowledge with each other and are shocked to see how different cultures are to one another. Because it's a dual immersion school, teachers, staff, and administration are required to be fluent Spanish speakers. Not only are we Spanish speaking staff, but also the majority of us are first-generation college graduates. So we have shared the language and Latino/Hispanic experience which allows students to see that we're alike, yet different because we all have our own narrative.

I'm the youngest teacher at the site and everyone else is above twenty-eight years old. This has its pros and cons, but I try to focus on how my graduate education and exposure to impeccable education theories can be applied in my classroom to support student learning. I use my age, as leverage to understanding what is most popular interest in students and use that information to guide engaging lessons. My students are 4th graders, and this is the year where nine and ten-year-olds are experiencing different hormones and attitudes develop. As a young educator, I've learned how to be mindful of these changes and give them the space, guidance, and love from a distance to show them all the great things they could do.

My students are just learning how to multiply multi-digit numbers and long division, but from this point on I've noticed a gap in their education. Our job as educators is to close the

achievement gap as early as possible in order to prevent students from dropping out of school in the future. It's in my hands now to help students achieve academic success and prepare them for the following school year. A whopping 73% of students in Lincoln Heights graduate from high school, which means that 37% did not complete a high school diploma. In essence, a collective approach from teachers, parents, and the community is necessary to maximize the learning of every child.

Students who do not have this collective approach could be supported by programs such as Girls and Boys club or any other after-school program that assists with tutoring sessions. For instance, those at Lions Academy have a variety of options that improve student academic achievement such as tutoring with the teacher, all-stars after school program, and girls/boys club. It's typically the students who are apart of these programs that thrive academically and socially. They're surrounded by students their age, so developmentally they can practice social skills, and since there are trained academic professionals assisting students in small group instruction, they'll be able to grasp the content much more. For those who aren't enrolled in these programs, but still rank high achieving is due to the amount of quality parental involvement.

Parent involvement is complicated to explain because it varies from student to student. Research by Baker, Nzinga-Johnson, Santiago, et.al. (2016) suggests that "among parents and teachers, higher parent involvement was associated with better quality parent-teacher relationships as measured by several attributes, such as trust, warmth, and communication." I believe that parental involvement and communication is essential to the fluidity of trust and respect between parents, students, and teachers. I'm able to improve the quality of parent-teacher relationships after school every day when parents pick up their child. Moreover, parental

involvement is a mixture of variables and scenarios that are really only dependent on availability and comfort with knowing the content. For instance, I have a student whose parents are both street vendors and they make time to come to conferences to talk about their child's academic progress. I have parents who say they simply can't take a day off of work or else they'll see a decrease in their hours the following week. I'm completely understanding of the situation, because growing up my parents did not attend school events or parent conferences, however that didn't mean they didn't care about my education. My parents worked two to three restaurant jobs at a time and were afraid of their hours being cut if they asked for a day off. They showed me they cared about my education through signing my reading log, asking about my day at school, and so forth. I strongly believe that parental involvement is crucial to the success of students, but the form in which they receive it will differ from everyone else's.

I want to provide parents with a flexible schedule and arrangements to meet and discuss their child's progress in class. I know it's quick for teachers to think that parents do not care about their children if they don't attend school events or parent conferences, but that's not always the case. Here at Lions Academy, students' are picked up and signed out by a parent every day in front of the school. Because of this requirement, I've met with all parents and conduct informal conversations about their student's academic progress and overall behavior. Some parents have politely declined to meet in person for conferences due to their schedule, but we manage to arrange a time to speak over the phone or have handwritten messages sent to one another via reading log. I've created a space for parents to voice their concerns on their child's homework, which shows me that they check and have questions about the assignment. In addition, I have set up ClassDojo, an online app, that allows me to post images of student work



and direct message parents. This is a great use of technology, and it allows me to connect in unimaginable ways. These form of communication cater to those parents who cannot always make modifications to their work schedules.

### **Classroom Exploration**

On Monday mornings, the doors open and the whimsical music I play on my speaker blends into the air seamlessly while students walk into the classroom with revitalized energy from the weekend. Students bring their chairs down from the table which makes a rhythmic sound vibrating in the room. There is a nice stack of warm papers from the copier on my desk ready to be distributed to students. Students chorally sigh loudly as they notice that it's their homework packet for the week. Students rush to get in line at the sharpener to commence the day on point.

Twenty four beautiful faces look my way as I teach. The tables are placed in uniform rows because it works best in my disfigured "U" shaped classroom. Every student has a shoulder partner, except my four individual desks that are aligned in a row along the side of the room. These seating arrangements are meant for students who prefer to stand or be inconsistent motion throughout the lesson. A communal bookshelf is where the hand-sanitizer, tissues, baby wipes, markers, and other creative tools are stored for students of room 203 to share. Sticker graphs located in the front of the room to display student academic progress. Colorful interactive anchor charts are presented in front of the class to support student learning. Freshly picked flowers from students are placed in a small mason jar adjacent from my desk. Most corners are taken by piles of graded and ungraded student work, binders, curriculum, and headphone sets. Our temporary class pet, the pupa of butterflies, are checked daily by students to see if a butterfly will emerge

from its suffocating pupa. The room is evidently chaotic with different color schemes in every corner, but this mass chaos is our classroom and we value every bit of its imperfections as it's become a symbol of our growth in 4th grade.

Our classroom is community-oriented, photos that relay the memories the class and I have created with one another are displayed on a bulletin board. I try to update the pictures as much as possible to help students see our bonding throughout the year, but even though the same pictures will be up for weeks, students still gather in front of the board to point and smile at their photos on the wall. As I'm listening from the other side of the room, "Oh wow remember that day we..." or "That was my favorite day this year..." I acknowledge the impact it has on creating a culture in this classroom where everyone is represented and valued.

My teaching philosophy has always mentioned the general approach of providing students with academic and social-emotional support, but my internship placement and experiences thus far have prompted me to revisit my philosophy. I believe that my philosophy should focus primarily on advocating for students' social-emotional wealth as a foundational tool needed to stimulate deep learning. I'm dedicated to re-writing my philosophy of education to state: All students, especially those from disenfranchised communities, will have access to an emotional and academic support team and a liberating learning environment where students can acquire their maximum potential. I want to arrange a classroom environment that promotes a balance of growth socially, emotionally, and mentally. As Asiyari (2014) suggest, "conducive classroom physical environment is an agent of intellectual stimulation and important factor in strengthening the child's educational development." This means that teachers should focus on the configuration of the classroom in order to maximize the possibility of the child's academic

and personal development. This environment will thrive if I continue to focus on parent-teacher relationships, restorative justice conflict resolution, and a social-emotional lens applied to my pedagogy. Research suggests that “Restorative methods quite literally aim to restore damaged relationships through conflict resolution, encouraging offenders to assume responsibility for their actions, or activities designed to build relationships within the school community at large.”

(Haymovitz, Houseal-Allport, Lee, & Svistova, 2018) As part of my SEL framework, I want to emphasize a restorative justice conflict resolution to help students with community building and restoring to essentially improve peer relationships. Working at an underprivileged school community has pushed me to realize that social-emotional learning is a teacher’s best practice and will create a harmonious effect on students overall.

It’s the little details that make it count; I go to school and loosen up to be vulnerable and show students that I am just as human and imperfect like everyone else. By showing my students that I too make mistakes, have a hard time understanding the first time, and forget to do procedures in a certain way, I am showing that my mistakes are steps towards the process of learning. If you are willing to create an environment where mistakes are accepted as a form of trying, then students will feel more comfortable trying to learn from the mistakes instead of wasting time trying to aim for perfection. It’s about creating standards and structure within the classroom in a light-hearted way.

Our morning routine consists of a mini-check in to see how we are all feeling before the day starts, which gives me a glimpse of what direction my energy should take throughout the day. As Acar, Torquati, Garcia, and Ren (2018) suggest, “the positive aspects of teacher-child relationships have been found to compensate for negative effects of low-quality family-child

relationships on children's social functioning." If I'm able to counteract the negative relationships or energy that students have in the morning coming from home, then my bond with them over similar interest will be positively worth it all. I want to be in balance with my class, and by playing soft music in the background, purchasing class plants, and facilitating morning circles, I'm allowing my students to voice and express their concerns so I can help them navigate their feelings. We follow the three B's which are: Be respectful, Be responsible, and Be safe. This is our golden code, and if I believe students are in violation of these, I kindly remind them to state the three B's and questions their actions in accordance with these codes. It's a matter of maneuvering punishment to be more of a reflective moment as opposed to punitive to stimulate a lesson learned cycle to begin.

I have students reflect on their learning at the end of the day. What's the most important thing you felt that "stuck" to you. This prompt is very open-ended and does not ask in specific what academic content did you learn, but it's simply a way for students to practice self-awareness and management. They are connected to their thoughts and reflect on the choices and life lessons learned throughout the day. I've asked students to take the opportunity to even "talk to themselves" as a way to get them started on the reflection aspect of the day. If they don't have something they want to reflect on, I ask that they complete a gratitude journal entry. These entries are aimed to help students review their lives and list things they are grateful for. What happened today that made you smile or feel joy, and if they want to discuss what went wrong today, that's also acceptable. It's a moment where students are rewinding and truly connecting with their inner self to identify glows and grows for the day. These are essentially social and

self-care strategies that teachers should utilize in the classroom to provide students with moments of relief through the art of self-expression.

My lessons are designed to engage my students whether that be by using personal experience/narrative, culture, language, art, or interest. I find that my students who are predominantly ELs (19 out of 24) understand vocabulary terms when related to cognates or I use “acting it out” as a form of presentation to help students understand the context in which the word is used in. Because I have a diverse range of English learners in my class, I use a lot of visuals, color-coding, and anchor charts to relay the learning experiences even more clearly. All of my students are primarily from a diverse range of Latin American countries and I have one Chinese girl. I relate to my students lives in a variety of ways: I’m Hispanic, first-generation immigrant, bilingual, and we are culturally alike. If I can make a word problem be about how many tacos de Asada Jessica will be eating if she ate three every week for a total of five weeks interesting then I’ve done my job. If I can instantly have students engaged using popular songs like baby shark doo doo doo in my class to get a brain break and revitalize, I will do it because my students acknowledge that I’m making an effort to connect the content to their lives. I have a range of different learners in my class, from visual to audio to kinesthetic. It’s great because even within these groups, exist subgroups of identified GATE and IEP students who require varied modes of support. At Lions Academy, we have a GATE program that helps challenge students in the realm of engineering, robotics, and technology, but in class, we offer differentiated learning. I have two students who are GATE, and they are learning the same content as the rest of the class at a must quicker pace with more applied theoretical terms applied. They receive the same instruction, but different homework assignments to further

challenge their minds. In addition to our fantastic Wonders Curriculum, I'm able to provide students with online support in class. Students have their own laptop, and my GATE students are usually early finishers as well, therefore I use the Wonders Curriculum online to further solidify their understanding of the content. I have 3 IEPs, all that require me to make accommodations. These accommodations are fairly the same across the board: close to direct instruction, purposeful pairing, color coding, visual cues, and one-on-one instruction from RSP teacher. Because this is a push-in general education setting, the RSP teacher is here to provide each student with 90 minutes of support in ELA, literacy, and math. He takes all three students to the back table and does mini-lessons or follows my lessons in a smaller and receive set. Because our curriculum is available to students online, I will have them work on example problems online independently or with a group. It's a quick and easy way to provide me with formative assessment data to collect and use to determine what I need to re-teach certain topics. Students have access to BrainPOP, wonders curriculum, and prodigy. These are online sources they are welcome to use in class and at home to supplement their learning. Prodigy is an exceptional game that integrates math problems based on a standard. Therefore, our "free time" can be to play prodigy for 15 minutes before the end of the day. These games help reinforce content being learned, or review previous lessons in an engaging manner.

The 4th-grade curriculum provides teachers with extensive options on wonders, therefore as a grade level team, we decide on what skills and content will be taught. Our wonders curriculum can be challenging due to vocabulary and high Lexile stories, but it's these examples that we try to decode in order for students to be successful in doing on their own. Wonders is great, but the only issue is that we don't have a social science or science curriculum to follow

unless its in the form of an informative text in ELA. Thus, our 4th-grade team needs to review the science and social science standards and find things on teachers pay teachers or create our own lessons. This is difficult to follow and I know that we lack in providing students with hands on-lab activities or social science features that excite them to want to learn more. I want to bring their social science and science projects/assignments to life, and compare them to “real world” examples. In creating this opportunity I would integrate more dialogue and hands-on experiments to help students understand the process of scientific methodology. In essence, these rigorous opportunities would allow students to reach their full potential that fosters curiosity, inquiry, and dialogue.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout this experience, I’ve collected valuable information that has been instrumental to the adjustment of my teaching philosophy and pedagogy. I have learned more than I expected by interacting with long-time residents, educators, students, and family members. By engaging in meaningful conversations, I’ve bridged a gap between myself and the community by building relationships and sharing cultural and linguistics values with the Lincoln Heights community. This ethnographic study has allowed me to extract essential information from the community’s assets and funds of knowledge to integrate those values into the classroom environment. I’ve learned that although the community is exposed to negative influences, residents and local organizations work hand in hand to bring cultural and academic rich opportunities for the youth to focus on. It’s the community itself that prevails negative influences to support their youth and future generations to come. I’m looking forward to understanding the

relationships between the school, community, and I have in order to improve student success from a cultural, emotional, and academic standpoint.

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## PART D

As the day shines brighter and the wind gets warmer, I realize that Spring has finally arrived. There are a couple of months left before the school year comes to an end. Perhaps, this is a perfect time to reflect on my first academic school year as an intern at Lions Academy. It's these crisp moments in my teaching career that I will cherish forever because they shaped my understanding of the education realm. These past eight months have been overwhelming, yet, I enjoyed every bit of learning about the nuts and bolts of teaching. In essence, I felt like a sponge because I tried to absorb every bit of advice and best practice strategies through academic discourse and fellow teachers. Even though I still have a lot to learn, I look forward to the near future in which I will be given the opportunity to further develop my pedagogy. This next part here will guide you through my focus students' continued growth and my personal development as a socially just educator.

### **The Whole Class**

I'm forty miles away from home, and my first year as an educator is even more intense because I arrived to a school that was already in session for about a month. After multiple substitutes covering this class during the hiring process, they finalized their options and hired me as the fourth grade teacher. It was mid-week in September and students have not been introduced to routines, expectations, or procedures. So my first order as teacher of record was to introduce myself and set ground rules in order to establish a structured classroom. Despite this difficult



transition in the beginning of the year, the class was eventually able to shift their behavior and attitude towards meaningful collaboration with one another. The rough patch in the beginning was temporary, and the growth of my students and myself was on the horizon.

My students are social butterflies, so naturally, I sought to capitalize on this skill and expand their ability to engage in public speaking and group work. I decided that a lesson incorporating public speaking and a court justice would be relay the message of empowerment in the student's voice. It didn't take long for students to shriek in excitement about a room transformation and costumes to set the tone of an actual courthouse in session as seen in Figure 1. The process consisted of dividing the class to either oppose or agree with the question: Should fourth-grade students be allowed to use their phones at school? I gave each group articles about the pros and cons to the question posed, and they were responsible for researching their talking points. I observed students take on leadership roles and collaboratively work on each other's ideas regarding their defense to the refuting statements from the opposing side. Students are supporting and preparing one another in this process as they strategically set roles for each other to ensure efficacy and accountability. I promised my students that I would transform our classroom to look like the actual set up of a courtroom as seen on TV with *Caso Cerrado con Señora Polo*. My entire class was actively participating in this festivity and their final product was exactly how I pictured it to be. After endless research, collaboration in groups, and rehearsals for the event, they were victorious in their public speaking and listening skills.



*Figure 1.* Teachers and community members donated blazers and other professional attire as props to our *caso cerrado* event regarding debate and public speaking skills. This photo represents their excitement to try on the attire in preparation for rehearsals. My future lawyers. Personal photo.

My students triumph in competitions because they're ambitious and determined, but they're also very mean towards each other or the opposing side. For instance, at P.E. students are often divided into groups to compete and at the end of the game, the winners are bragging and name calling which leads to students tattling and crying. In class, students are often calling each other out on their mistakes in a derogatory manner or putting each other down because they

aren't "as smart" as the others. It's come to the point where students are bullying and calling out racial slurs to hurt each other's feelings. Even if I'm in the middle of a lesson, I stop everything and place my attention towards this dilemma. It's my way of demonstrating my commitment to a safe space in the classroom and validating students' voices. I make sure to relay the message of kindness and respect as it is a school-wide regulation. As an educator, I also want to emphasize the importance of social and moral development in a healthy way. Some of the strategies I've employed students to act on is based on conflict resolution and social-emotional learning. I begin with validating their strong emotions, giving them the space to decompress, and practicing breathing mechanisms to regulate their emotions. The next steps include allowing both parties to be self-aware and relax before confronting or blaming others. Afterward, students must listen to the opposite party and express their concern using I statements. In essence, this strategy has helped students not only work out their problems, but it instills a social-emotional component that aids the students understanding of self-regulation. In turn, this will help students learn about managing conflict effectively in order to experience fulfilling friendships and better social experiences throughout their life.

### **Academic Progress and Grade Level Assessments**

As part of my commitment to integrating social-emotional learning in our curriculum, I have invested in shifting the students fixed to a growth mindset in all social and academic areas. As a school-wide effort, Lions Academy wants teachers to focus on improving our student's math and English district assessments. According to their Winter 2018 NWEA assessments, seventeen out of twenty-three of my students ranked below the 21 percentile across the district. When analyzing the breakdown of the standards covered on the exam, I noticed that most

standards have not been covered yet. Teachers are supposed to follow a pacing guide in our math curriculum in order to cover most if not all chapters by the end of the year, however, my students need more time to practice these skills so they can excel in the following chapter. Therefore, the fourth-grade team decided that our students need to hone in on these foundational skills before moving onto the next chapter. However, the extra practice was excruciating for students, because they strongly believed they were terrible at math and wouldn't be able to get high scores. My job is to provide them with the tools and knowledge to decode the math problems, but also get them to develop a growth mindset. I can tell you that my students hate math and were explicitly verbal about it every day, so promoting a growth mindset, in the beginning, was challenging. It took a lot of positive reinforcement, short quizzes, and practical to build their mathematical confidence. It went from this one student falling asleep in class during our math block to avoid frustration to him fearlessly raising his hand to answer math questions. At the beginning of the year, grading math tests meant disappointment because no one would get above 75% and most of them would score below 40%. Now, most of my students are scoring above 60% and a handful is above 85% on math chapter unit assessments. Of course, I have celebrated this victory with them by inviting them to "tea with the teacher" during our lunchtime and small gestures of praise such as smelly stickers on their tests. These moments are only a glimpse of the improvement I saw in my students' math confidence and abilities, and it's definitely one of the proudest moments I've shared with them.

My main concern was to find strategies that would help students solve math word problems and explain their reasoning. My word problem lessons stressed the importance of the CUBES strategy and word clues. I color coded each letter to show the direct correlation to each

step of the strategy. The following explains the CUBES strategy: C stands for circling the key numbers, U stands for underlining the question, B stands for boxing keywords or clues, E stands for evaluating the problem, and S stands for solve. This provided a structure for students to follow so that they could simplify the problem. They quickly became familiar with the words times, divided by, equally, all together, etc. as key terms that identify the mathematical operation. By explicitly thinking aloud and modeling how to solve the problem using CUBES was key to their mathematical confidence. As seen in Figure 2, students are able to identify the word problems operation by utilizing the CUBES strategy. In addition to these strategies, I expanded on their knowledge of the content by using visuals, songs, relating it to real life scenarios and themselves to provide them with a multitude of ways to be successful in math. By providing students access to these means of success, they are able to become independent learners who take charge of their own education. This statement speaks volume to me as an educator, because together with the existence of equitable education in a socially just classroom, students will be able to thrive in abundance.

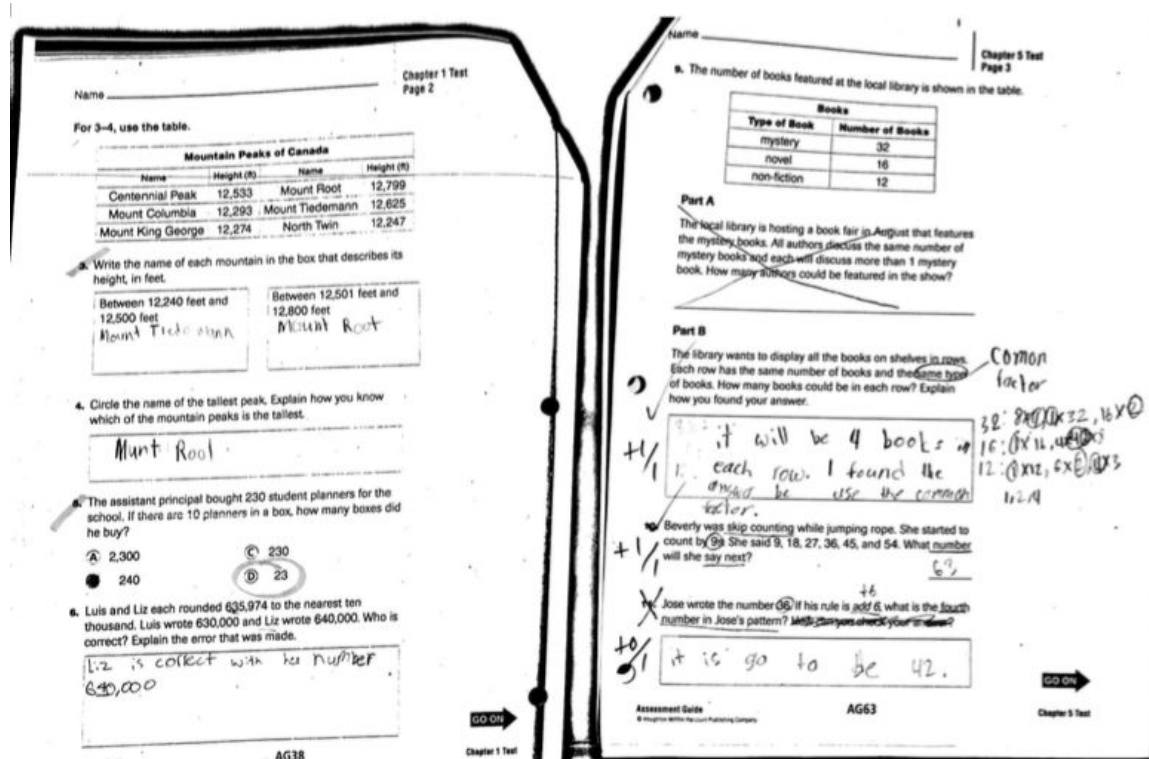


Figure 2. Chapter two is on the left side and the students did not apply CUBES. Chapter 5 test on the right is from the same student, but this time they are able to identify operations based on knowledge on key academic vocabulary and they use the CUBES strategy. Implementing the CUBES strategy has improved students understanding of word problems and increased their assessment scores. Personal photo.

Every child has the ability to learn, but they all require different needs in order to reach their maximum potential. As an effective educator, I seek opportunities for all students to access resources and strategies that cater to their learning style. For instance, one method that has evidently supported my students' memorization of their multiplication facts is by singing the multiples of a number to the rhythm of the Old McDonald song. It's a fun twist to math that students seem to enjoy. In addition to this, Lions Academy has invested in an arts integration

program that helps bring dance, theatre, visual arts, and music into our curriculum. Teachers are collaboratively working with the art teacher to incorporate arts into math and ELA content. Our students have a proclaimed interest in the arts, so by integrating art elements with math, it'll be a beneficial means to their understanding of math. As a culminating project to area and perimeter, students were able to build their own robot using grid paper and colored markers (refer to figure 3). Some were creative enough to recreate the characters from the video game Minecraft as their robotic figure. By using creativity and capitalizing on every learning style will provide students with the means for meaningful engagement and learning.



*Figure 3.* An example of student work posted in class after the introduction to the arts integration program. This student re-created a minecraft character in their area and perimeter robot activity. Personal photo.

In terms of language arts, students are progressively doing better on identifying the story's theme, main details, characters, setting, problem, and solution. This is due to the repetitive practice of ELD strategies and careful listening skills. As mentioned before, about 85% of my students are ELs, therefore my instruction for English is based on ELD strategies to prepare them for reclassification and the ELPAC at the beginning of the Spring semester. Based on my students ELPAC scores from the previous school year, most of them scored 1 or 2s on the listening and speaking portion. Therefore, a month before taking the ELPAC, I decided to drop the curriculum and focus on their listening, speaking, and writing skills.

As a first year educator, I sought the assistance of a mentor teacher on campus for academic resources that would help students in their listening skills. She is also our response to intervention instructor on campus, so she knows what strategies and sources are most effective to support our ELs. She handed me a folder full of graphic organizers and instructions on how to use them effectively using read alouds, visuals, and stories online. She recommended this website tool called Storyline Online which is where a person reads a story aloud using visuals and students are suppose to identify main ideas of the story. By using a graphic organizer, they are able to take notes on the story's plot, problem, solution, and theme of the story. These practice read alouds online range from 10 to 15 minutes, which prepares them to effectively take notes about the story during the actual seven minute listening portion of the ELPAC. Students are able to use their own classroom laptops to listen to a story and complete a graphic organizer,



while I take a smaller group and work on writing skills. Most of their writing require details and evidence from the text. In this case, the use of RAP strategies have helped them shift from using simple to complex sentences. When I use RAP in writing, I thoroughly explain my example of it by highlighting each portion in my sentence to reflect the strategy. I underline the first part of my sentence which Restates the question in my prompt. Next, I underline my Answer to the question in my response. Then, I underline the Proof of citing text evidence to support my answer. I make sure students are aware of these components because this is what makes a response stronger and evidently their writing. I've seen students use this ritually in their writing, and now even in their verbal responses during class discussions. It's great to see how they can apply this strategy in- and outside of their academic context. I have identified strategies that students can use to strengthen their written responses, but also give them a chance to critically apply their knowledge in various contexts.

**Whole class conclusion:** Overall recognizing and highlighting my students' abilities have a huge impact on their learning experience. By integrating the arts in math and ela has awaken my students artistic expression and mathematical confidence. In essence, teaching isn't about providing a one-size fits all curriculum. It requires teachers to extend their levels of rigor and creativity to hook their students on the learning objective, while providing them with the tools and strategies necessary to succeed. Of course this is my first year of teaching and in hindsight, there are a variety of strategies and instructional approaches I could have used to maximize my students learning, but teaching is all a learning experience in itself. As I aim to be an effective and socially just educator, I need to remember that this profession gains momentum through experience, scholarly materials, and paraprofessional collaboration. I hope that in the

future I'm able to continue my areas of growth and learn from my experiences as a way to tailor my pedagogy in support of all types of learners in my class.

### **The Individual Student Perspective**

Before I delve into my three focus students I want to discuss my general observation of them throughout this intensive study. In ethnography part b, I was asked to observe three students of my choice and identify their strengths and weaknesses in order to formulate an action plan. Since then, I've continued to watch my students blossom into renowned scholars at Lions Academy as one exits RTI, another is a distinguished dancer, and the last one exited therapy. I'm thrilled with joy to see my student excel in their academics and social well-being. They've all made growth this year one way or another, and I'm able to know about their accomplishments because they connected with me over lunch, at their dance rehearsals, and continued home visits. I'm overwhelmed with joy because this entire year I was able to experience my students' academic and social growth first-hand. Becoming the best teacher begins with building relationships with your students and their families. It's through this part of the study that I've been able to build relationships with my students and guide them towards their goals.

### **Focus Student 1: Jess Albores**

Jess, my shy and reserved student in class, is one of the main dancers that performed in front of a hundred people at the Bell Gardens dance competition. She dedicated four days out of the week two hours a day to perfect her form and dance choreography. I know this because she absolutely could not wait to tell me all about her moves and cordially invited me to her performance. You bet I drove to Bell Gardens on a Saturday morning to show my support because she and three other girls in my class were on the team. I am astonished by how much

Jess has socially matured in confidence and self assurance in such a short time by participating in a dance organization.

She demonstrated determination in this dance competition, and if she took that same energy and applied it to her academics she would be soaring high. I observed her take a risk at this dance competition as a flyer (someone thrown in the air and caught by four girls). I sense that her determination and confidence stems from her level of comfort and for my purposes I believe I should create a space that exerts this same energy. Jess and everyone else would thrive in a space that accepts and capitalizes on their interests, personalities, and funds of knowledge.

### **Action Plan Review and Progress for Student 1**

Earlier in the year, I was able to choose Jess as my first focus student because she was a mirrored silhouette of myself in elementary. She was afraid to express herself in class and distanced herself from peers to avoid negative interactions. She wouldn't participate in class or group discussions and would deviate from engaging in social activities. It was challenging to see her struggle in these area because it affected her ability to flourish academically and socially. I knew that my priority was to improve her social skills, which would eventually initiate her confidence to engage in meaningful academic discussions.

Every monday morning I would facilitate a google classroom mental health check-in and invite students to share a story about their weekend at the carpet. This would roughly take us about an hour to share our thoughts and greet each other. I felt that this opportunity gave students a platform to discuss their feelings, listen to others, and empathize with one another. This worked miracles with students, including Jess, she was able to start using statements such as "I feel..." which empowered her confidence. In a way, this initiated her attempt to speak to me about her

struggles in class. I allowed her to see that I'm physically and emotionally available to discuss potential roadblocks that prevent her from growing.

One day after school, Jess asked me if I could offer her tutoring opportunities on Mondays after school. I agreed to tutor her and our first session consisted of a venting therapeutic talk followed by crying. It turns out she strongly believed that girls were not mathematically intelligent, because her older brother said so, and her unit test results were below class average. (refer to figure 4) In this instance, I grabbed a book from my class library called *What would she do: 25 stories of Trailblazing Rebel Women* by Kay Woodward. I wanted to show Jess that women are capable of anything they set their mind to. I shared my own personal narrative about other people setting limitations on my capacity to succeed. According to Carranza (2018), "Personal narratives can inspire interest and enthusiasm among students, and they can also positively affect the creation of teaching strategies for teachers." By sharing my experience, I was able to connect with Jess and assure her that someone's belief should not determine your worth or capacity to fulfil a goal. After multiple sessions, I realized that we spent half our time on decompressing and the other on math word problems.

Perhaps Jess needed someone to understand her frustration in math using a social emotional lens. I began to work on discussing the importance of mindfulness and self love during our talks. Appreciating the little things in life will affect her outlook and nurture her well being. There is no physical documentation that shows her growth, but the gentle smile and high fives in the morning are signals of her development. In comparison, to her quietly coming into class and setting up her notebooks alone, to socializing and smiling with others about their weekend is a huge shift. Although she displayed signs of happiness, I know there were dark days for her and it

was out of my reach. She did not approach me to discuss her dark days, she would just put her head down completely and sniffle her nose all day. As an educator, we try our best to reach and impact our students in a positive manner, but I need to remember that I'm not professionally suited to deal with intensive sessions. In this case, Jess often showed signs of distress and she isolated herself from the rest. I suggest her next step towards emotional recovery is to seek the assistance of counseling through the school or a local counselling service. Because no matter how small or large the problem may be, it's a matter of feeling relieved after it's all done and over with.

Although I didn't feel equipped at providing Jess's complete emotional support, I expressed my concern to her family as soon as I could so they could seek additional support. Jess's family and I have gotten closer since the home visit, and we have this on-going communication regarding Jess's social well being. They too were concerned with the recent downfall in her confidence and joy, so I provided the Albores family with the information for a local counseling service.

My relationship to the Albores family has grown stronger every day because we keep in contact to ensure Jess's social and academic well-being. They express their concern and desire to help Jess succeed in math, which has led me to provide them with academic resources and online access to supplemental math practice on prodigy. Due to consistent communication with Jess's mom, I was able to find out that Jess enjoys role playing with money. I then self-created word problems that dealt with the exchange of currency, so that Jess could act out the word problems at home. In hindsight, this too was one strategy that helped Jess overcome her fear of word problems.

I recommend that Jess continue receiving emotional support through her counselor at home, and if possible, her next teacher should continue using CUBES to simplify math word problems. As seen in figure 4, Jess made a remarkable improvement in her ability to solve math problems using CUBES strategies. As a school whose mission relays the message of social justice, I believe that our student population benefits from social emotional learning. Dominguez and LaGue (2013) state that “the foundation of social and emotional learning is to create a caring and supportive learning environment and to enhance specific students’ skills to create a linkage between behavioral growth and academic achievement.” In this instance, Jess and other students would benefit from a social emotional framework that establishes a supportive learning environment. They would thrive academically and socially under this instructional approach. Therefore, I suggest her fifth grade teacher facilitates morning meetings to check-in with students or integrates a SEL framework in their pedagogy. Ultimately, doing this as a whole class would be beneficial for students to navigate their emotions in a healthy way and also strengthen their understanding of social awareness. I hope that by continuing this process, students and teachers are creating this safe space and light hearted community within the classroom.

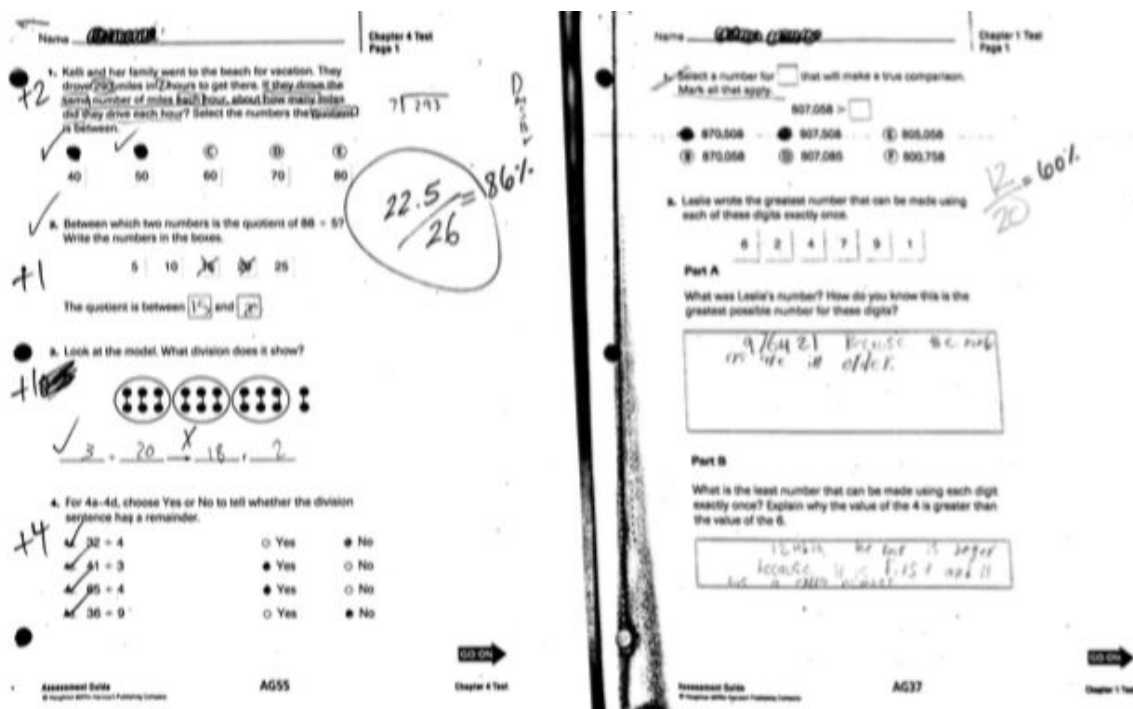


Figure 4. Jess's Chapter 4 test is on the left side and she scored an 86%. The exam on the right is Jess's Chapter 1 test which scored 60%. Her chapter 4 test is a result of utilizing the CUBES strategy as shown in question number one to help her identify the operation and important information in the math word problem. Personal photo.

**Student 1 conclusion:** From being this timid and reserved student to performing high-risk dance stunts in front of a crowd with a smile is a huge leap in confidence. I'm so proud of the progress that Jess made towards her goal and the level of comfort she's developed. There is this sense of maturity and responsibility that comes along with confidence, which will help her transition well into fifth grade next year. She was able to master her multiplication facts through song and apply herself in math by using CUBES strategies to solve word problems. The next step for Jess is to add details to her writing. She is able to write several paragraphs using simple sentences but leaves a lot of gaps in the detail component of her writing. I have no doubt she'll

continue to make progress and leave her future teachers dumbfounded by the amount of capacity she carries within.

**Focus Student 2: Chris Santos**

I was curious about getting to know Chris the moment I saw him wiggle the tip of his nose after every math lesson. Deep down in me, I wanted to know the reason why he wiggled his nose. Short after holding a conversation with him on the way to our lunchtime, he conferred it was because he did not understand the lesson. In addition to this, I choose him because his third-grade teacher was concerned that Chris might be a mute student. I wanted to know if I could modify my instruction or integrate a social-emotional learning environment to make him feel comfortable in class. However, I decided to carefully observe him at the beginning of class and he would indeed come in without saying a word all day. Then I hypothesized all of these situations in my head as to why he doesn't speak in class. I began to observe him at recess to see if he was behaving the same way, and to my dismay, I saw him running around laughing and conversing with his peers. This was a whole different side of Chris that I have never seen in class.

**Action Plan Review and Progress for Student 2**

After communicating this to his mother, she stated that he acts the same way at home. She struggles to get him to speak at home, and when he does, he looks away and speaks very softly between his teeth. We decided to take this manner to his RSP teacher to see if there were any social services that could assist him. Chris's next IEP was a reevaluation meeting and a psychologist would inform all parties about his social-emotional development.



He was observed in class and in extracurricular activities at school for about a week. He told his mother that he didn't like the tall lady that watches his every move in- and outside of class. After meeting with his psychologists, she revealed that he lacks intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to complete classwork or participate. In addition, he's learned that there are no real consequences in the class, school, or at home if he does not participate in these scholarly activities. He's not a behavior issue and that's why he's able to go under the radar and not participate in class activities or presentations.

These findings were further discussed at the re-evaluation meeting, and the psychologists referred to using a behavior chart to track his motivation to complete work. (Refer to figure 5) However, she explicitly says that both the teacher and parent have to follow through with praise or consequences on his chart or else it's useless to him. If he does not show progress in the areas she's suggested, then he will be transferred to a school where there is a smaller class size for more opportunities to benefit from one on one instruction. He agreed to abide by the contract, and from now on I need to score his areas of growth from 0-4 and have his mother sign off on the chart. The score is based on his preparedness to complete the tasks without prompting more than a certain amount of times. For instance, a score of 0 means I had to repeatedly ask him to take out his class materials and refused to do so. A score of 4 means he was able to take out his materials and participated in class discussion. If he receives 4's on his chart, he'll be rewarded with 30-minute increments of television or Xbox. This is meant to develop his extrinsic motivation to be an active participant in the class.

**Classroom Behavior Evaluation Individual**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

(4=Excellent, 3=Good, 2=Needed to be reminded, 1=Needs to work on, 0= Need to have a parent/teacher meeting)

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Comments
Prepared for class with all materials						
Followed Directions						
On task and using time appropriately						
Turned in HW						
Teacher's Initials:						
Parent Initials:						
Total Points per day:						

Total points for the week: \_\_\_\_\_

*Figure 5.* This screenshot is an example of Chris's classroom behavior evaluation chart. His psychologist has identified these as his four goals to accomplish this month. This will keep track of his progress towards intrinsic motivation.

Since the implementation of this chart, he's been more attentive in class and attempts to verbally participate but shy away sometimes and uses non-verbal communication to express himself. In my perspective, this is progress towards becoming a full-time active participant in the class. I believe that with sentence frames, oral practice, and comfort he will begin to approach this goal. I feel like he limits himself by not expanding on his personality in class. He's very capable of greatness as proven by his RTI teacher. She states that within the first two months of school he was able to test out of RTI, which is such a great accomplishment. I remember when he came back to class with his RTI exit certificate and he had a quirky grin on his face. His pals

in RTI patted his shoulders as he walked back to his seat with his certificate yielding the way.

This was a successful day for us all, Chris was grinning all day remembering his exit certificate of RTI, I was thrilled to see him show growth in his reading comprehension, and his mother hugged him after school to celebrate his accomplishment.

Because he exited the program, I made sure to personally congratulate him and told him that together we would choose a new book that matches his new AR book level. He agreed and we both took the time to look through the school literacy center to find a book he would be interested in reading. It was just the two of us in the library and he finally spoke to me! He told me he felt embarrassed to talk in class when I would pull out his equity stick from my jar to answer a question. I kept asking why questions to see what he would tell me, but it mostly went back to his level of comfort to talk in class especially after years in school being quiet and under the radar. He kind of smiled and chuckled as he said, “you’re like the first teacher to actually care if I talk in class.” I wasn’t surprised to hear that, but I was hopeful that he understood my intentions are for him to develop social skills.

Besides getting him to be an active participant in class, I want to focus on his English language development. For many weeks, I provided the entire class with an observation 4-square graphic organizer (refer to figure 6) accompanied by an image to support his writing. In figure 5, he shows promise in observing details in an image using a sentence frame, but I want him to work on composing a paragraph describing his observations. It’s a matter of expanding his ideas on paper to reach beyond the observations to making inferences about the image. I suggest Chris’s next steps are to utilize more graphic organizers, color code his answers to represent the RAP strategy to develop stronger written responses.

Carefully looking at something

## Observation 4-Square

Name: Christopher Date: 4/18/19

### I See...

- I see a lot of people at the park
- I see a lot of trees
- I see lots of boats
- I see trash on the ground
- I see a lot of people with umbrellas
- I see a lot of dogs
- I see a lot of people wearing hats

### I Wonder...

- I wonder why there is a lot of people at the park
- I wonder why there is a monkey at the park
- I wonder why they are so dressed up
- I wonder why there is trash on the ground
- I wonder why there is a man with no face

<h3 style="text-align: center;">I Think... </h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think there's a lot of trash on the ground because there aren't any trash cans.</li> <li>• I think it is so hot to wear a dress.</li> <li>• I think the umbrella is not helpful because they are probably sweating inside their dresses.</li> <li>• I think they are rich people because they are wearing fancy clothes.</li> <li>• I think the park is crowded of too much people.</li> </ul>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Caption or Title for Image</h3> <p><u>"A Sunday on La Grande Jatte"</u> by Georges Seurat a 1884 painting</p> <p><u>Pointillism</u> : A painting technique using tiny dots which becomes blended in the viewer's eyes.</p>
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Figure 6. Observation 4-Square graphic organizer that helped Chris fill in his observations of an image and move towards making an inference using the sentence frame “I think...” and expanding his idea using a form of text evidence by using the word because to explain his reasoning.

**Student 2 conclusion:** I’m hoping that he will continue to develop social skills and apply them in his fifth-grade class. His overarching goal was to participate in the verbal discussion, which is still in progress now because we implemented his behavior chart. In terms of academics, my advice to the fifth-grade teacher is to reward him with prodigy math games if he abides by the behavior contract. I also suggest color coding RAP strategies to get him

comfortable with using it in his writing. He shows promise and has a soft spot in his heart, especially when he mentioned me being the only teacher who has cared enough to see him participate in class. As teachers, we should be able to show our students we care, and by building that trust in a relationship we are creating a space or momentum for them to thrive on. As a social justice educator, I plan on creating an environment where every learner can flourish and exercise their maximum potential.

**Focus Student 3: Maria Roblero**

Recently, Maria has an invested interest in coloring detailed designs in her notebooks. She's developed a coping strategy to regulate her stress levels and it's been helping her get through state testing. In late September during our NWEA benchmark assessments, I remember her eyes drooping down and looking around the room as she bit her nails to distract her from testing. She suffers from test anxiety and her therapist has done a magnificent job by providing Maria with strategies to help.

According to her PowerSchool login, an online tool where teachers provide a report on the student, Maria has been identified as at risk of emotional instability. As part of our home visit interview, Maria's mom slightly admitted that her ex-husband's attitude towards them was aggressive and triggered Maria's emotional well-being. For a while now, Maria has been attending on-campus therapy sessions with Mrs. Joy. Mrs. Joy and I have been in contact with one another to work on incorporating strategies that would be helpful for Maria's social-emotional well being. She introduced me to breathing exercises and stress balls which can help reduce anxiety and panic attacks. Since we've practiced this in the class as a whole, I've seen a drastic shift from stressed to relaxed. In a sense, we practiced self-management skills and

social-emotional learning to reduce tension and relieve stress. With the support of Ms. Joy and me, Maria has been showing signs of self-regulation and practicing self-care.

### **Action Plan Review and Progress for Student 3**

As mentioned previously, Maria's drive to cope with her trauma has heavily relied on breathing and coloring to reduce tension and relieve stress. After three years of consistent social-emotional services by Mrs. Joy, Maria has successfully exited therapy. Maria has expressed a newly found confidence that has helped her move past indulging on stressful emotions and thoughts. She's taken charge of her own feelings by independently choosing to take a break in the middle of testing to regulate her emotions. As I'm monitoring exams, I look over my shoulder to see Maria's eyes closed and her finger outlining an infinity sign to track her breathing exercise. She tackles her anxiety head on and prepares herself during these breathing exercises, and to support her I've given her a stress ball as a stimulus to relieve anxiety or frustration. So far, it's been used as a coping mechanism and not a distraction to her in class. By emphasizing and supporting her social-emotional wellness, I have progressively implemented her ELA action plan.

As outlined in part b, Maria struggles with reading comprehension skills. Our wonders curriculum provides teachers with assessments and strategies to administer student growth in reading comprehension. I've been using these assessments to support Maria's understanding of the story's plot, characters, problem, and solution. Most of the **questions** begin with asking about the sequential order of a story and then become more complex such as theme and inferences. As a struggling test taker, I told her we would approach these questions as a guiding tool to identify important components of a story. In her case, the scaffolding support was in the form of graphic

organizers. We used basic flow maps to illustrate our understanding of the text. As we tried to get it in writing, I saw that Maria struggled with making observations of the text and images. So I used a graphic organizer that Mrs. Hernandez, the art teacher, uses to help students make meaningful observations and suggestions about a painting. It's called the Observation 4-Square and contains sentence starters such as I see..., I wonder..., and I think... to gradually help students to make an educated inference about a painting. (Refer to figure 7) In this example, I was able to leverage her cultural funds of knowledge because the painting we observed is by Mario Gonzalez, a young Guatemalan artist. Maria, who identifies as Guatemalan, was able to identify cultural significant attire and scenery displayed in the painting. I was able to tap into her experience and cultural identity to support her observations. As we filled in the graphic organizer, she was able to write complete sentences at the end relaying her inference of the painting. She expanded on her inference by incorporating the word because into her sentences and giving us details of the painting regarding cultural traditions. I believe this observation 4-square will help her identify the importance of images in the story to help her with reading comprehension.


**Observation 4-Square**

Name: ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Date: 4/12/19

I see...	I wonder...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I see mountain</li> <li>• I see a signature</li> <li>• I see a hat</li> <li>• I see a corkie</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I wonder why they don't have shorts</li> <li>• I wonder why they are teaching</li> <li>• I wonder how they're learning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think that the <del>class</del> colors they are wearing are the colors</li> <li>• I think that they're going to wear the shorts and the hats and the shoes</li> <li>• I think these class are in a class</li> </ul>	<p>First: Maria Gonzalez</p> <p>Second: La escuela "The School"</p>

I think...

Title for Image



*Figure 7.* Teacher-made observation 4-square worksheet. Student was able to take her observations and create simple sentences using the sentence frame provided. The student drew a banana smiling on the bottom left corner of the paper. Personal photo.

To Maria's fifth grade teacher, I recommend they practice reading comprehension skills through the online source called Storyline Online. It's a highly recommended website from the mentor teacher who is also the RTI instructor. Since Maria arrives tardy most days of the week, she misses instructional minutes in ELA and that may be a factor to her struggling in this area.



Therefore, she would benefit from sitting with a partner to listen to a story and fill in a flow map graphic organizer to aid her understanding of the plot and sequential order.

In regards to Maria's continued battle with testing anxiety, I suggest her teacher model and reinforce RELAX test-taking strategies. Most fifth grade ELA assessments require students to read more than two sources, so RELAX will give students a guide to follow and not burn out. The acronym RELAX stands for the following: Read the questions carefully and then the passage, examine every answer choice and eliminate wrong choices, look for proof in the passage, and always check your work. I find that Maria feels at ease when she can cross things off a checklist, so this is also a great resource for her to use during a test. It's a great tool that minimizes testing anxiety by providing her with clear instructions on how to take an exam. It's a reminder for the teacher to continue using a social-emotional wellness approach while also giving her the tools to independently succeed in academia.

**Student 3 conclusion:** After careful observation and monitoring, it's with great pride and joy that I can say Maria has developed self-awareness and management skills. I know that with more practice and exposure to new social-emotional strategies in a safe environment she will continue to prosper. I believed that Maria would be able to perform at her maximum potential in academia once she found a way to overcome the emotional roadblock. During this intensive study, I saw Maria's participation become more proactive during class and group discussions. I was especially amazed to see her take on a leadership role in our brain break and STEAM activities. It's evident that students who suffer from trauma need additional emotional support to thrive in all areas of academic and social development. I've learned that teachers and social-emotional paraprofessionals alike have a large role in providing students with the tools to

build self-assurance and confidence. By cultivating and promoting this type of confidence in the classroom, Maria and her peers will be more inclined to take part in social and academic activities. As an educator, I have the opportunity to positively influence my students and encourage them to feel proud of their abilities and accomplishments.

### **Professional Development**

In the past, I worked three part-time jobs while completing undergraduate coursework and I didn't feel tired, but being teacher tired is a whole other level. Being a first-year teacher is emotionally and mentally draining, especially when you pour your soul into it. I wanted to inform myself on how to improve my practice, but one year in the classroom is just a glimpse of teaching.

The first couple of months, I felt a mixture of hope, faith, determination, disillusion, and exhaustion. This was my first experience teaching in a class on my own, and I didn't have a solid foundation of building relationships with students or setting ground rules. I was constantly overthinking the idea of building relationships with students, and it was hard because I felt alienated from my students at first. It wasn't until I began home visits and leaving my door open during lunch that I started to see students engage in meaningful and in-depth discussions about themselves. Who knew having "tea with the teacher" would be something students found intriguing. Some students would bring items from home, show me baby pictures, and eventually, this would lead to bonding over our shared cultural norms and traditions. We are so alike, yet unique in our own ways which fascinated us all. All it took to connect with my students was vulnerability and sharing our commonalities. For instance, Cook and Coco (2018) suggest that "positive teacher-student relationships help develop students' emotional connection and sense of

safety that serves to enhance engagement in academic pursuits.” I felt strongly about this statement because it wasn’t until I formed a bond with my students in the class that I was able to see progress in their efforts to academically succeed. They understood my teaching strategies and intentions through the foundation of building a strong rapport with students.

By showing that I cared about them and held them to high expectations, I was able to gain the respect and care from my students. However, I did have a couple a student who I absolutely found challenging to connect with because he didn’t care for my expectations. I tried a lot of classroom management and behavior strategies to connect with him, but I was unable to reach him. There were days where I noticed a huge improvement in his behavior, but later that week it went back to square one in behavior issues. He wouldn’t listen to the authority of myself, veteran teachers, or administration which made it difficult to teach. I found myself addressing the students behavior often due to disrespectful behaviors and classroom disruptions, which took up a lot of instructional minutes throughout the week. I learned that using a strong tone of voice only angered him more and didn’t help ease the situation. Although I wasn’t equipped to provide him with social-emotional support he needed, I learned that maintaining a sense of patience and rephrasing my words help lighten the situation. For some time before winter break, he and I got along really well and he expressed his frustration with me in a cordial manner. I was so proud of the progress we both made in connecting, but it all fell apart towards the end. This experience was emotionally and mentally draining for me, but I overcame an obstacle in teaching which is learning to cultivate patience and perseverance. In the end, I learned that I had to choose my battles with him and that providing support in class wasn’t helping him to the extent he needed. Unfortunately, as a school and teacher, we were unable to provide him with the emotional

support he needed to overcome his trauma. As an educator, I felt like I failed him, but as I reflected upon the situation, I couldn't possibly provide him with all the moral and social support necessary for his development. All I can do is hope that eventually, he'll receive services that will support him so that he can thrive in life.

Since he's been transferred to another school, my students and I have been able to run an entire lesson without disruption, and I started implementing diligent small group instruction. My students struggled in math the most, so by incorporating these smaller groups of instruction, I was able to target their individual needs. I felt productive and efficient in this setting, and students feel the same way. As I reflect on my craft, I realized that my disposition in class directly affects my student's ambition to excel in a certain content area. For instance, I express my intense passion for math and my attitude towards math conveys enthusiasm. I've learned that students feed off of the energy you display in class, so even if I have to fake my happiness, I do so that students can demonstrate a willingness to learn the content. In addition, I try to engage students in learning math by using cultural norms and their funds of knowledge to make it more relatable. For example, I read a word problem and exchanged information to relate to our cultural traditions and food. Instead of Sally getting 3 slices of pizza, I said that Emily was at a posada getting 3 tamales for her grandmother. It's the little shifts in the narrative that interest students, and in most cases, I either related their work to cultural elements or substitute their names into the word problems. This was indeed one way to engage my students in learning about math word problems.

Moreover, I have made progress by implementing a UDL lens, using creativity in my lessons to engage my students, and analyzing assessments to modify my instruction. I've learned

to structure my instruction to meet my student's specific needs. My formal lessons focused on my ability to demonstrate growth in TPE 3 which highlights the teacher's flexibility to adapt subject matter curriculum, organization, and planning to support learning activities for all students. I feel like I'm slowly making progress towards mastering this TPE because recently I was able to shift my planned lesson on the spot to reflect my student's immediate needs. In many instances, I was able to check students understanding of the lesson and quickly adapt my lesson to focus on their needs. Although I've familiarized myself with the analytical portion of assessments, I believe I need to continue developing these skills. In order to approach this goal, I plan on meeting with the mentor teacher to review unit planning and identifying core standards. This meeting will serve beneficial to me because it'll guide my understanding of how to plan standards and learning objectives accordingly. I believe that most of the curriculum I currently have is overwhelming, and offers a lot of input, but its pacing seems confusing when I teach it to my students. I want to move away from strictly using the curriculum to organize my standards and potentially make learning even more meaningful. Once I accomplish this I will be able to quickly identify the standards I need to re-teach or cover in several weeks so students can master the skill.

As I reflect on my practice in the classroom, I can admit that my philosophy has become clearer now. About a year ago, I promoted a generalized statement about providing all students with the tools to succeed through exposure to academic language and resources. I didn't really feel connected to one aspect of my philosophy, but through my experience at Lions Academy, I have developed a stronger connection to supporting English learners using a dual immersion approach. The student body in my class consists of a diverse group from Latin American

countries, and are learning English as their second language. I was able to cultivate a strong relationship with students because of my own background, and in most cases, I understood the intimate struggles they faced in their community. I grew up in a similar community, so I have insight into the struggles and lack of resources they endure. By using cultural, linguistic, and communal values, I was able to provide my students with an enriched learning experience.

Essentially, Lions Academy is a school that emphasizes its students' academic and social success by leveraging their home language and cultural identity in the social justice curriculum. I feel aligned with Lion Academy's social justice approach and cultural celebration. I hope that as I continue to apply education theory and experience in the classroom, I'll be able to identify my students' assets and funds of knowledge and integrate it into my philosophy and academic practices.

I found a community of supportive teachers through a social media network, and they offered great insight on classroom organization, management, and relationships. In addition, a lot of teachers emphasized the importance of practicing self-care and love for the benefit of students and myself. I shared this wealth of knowledge with my students, and I implemented a glimpse of social-emotional learning through the use of mental check-ins. I used google forms to create a mental health check-in, and once students completed it I could retrieve the students' responses and determine who needed emotional support from myself or another adult. When I got the responses back I had a range of everything, and students whom I didn't think needed emotional support. It worked great, and I'm glad students were able to express their concerns with me. It was an efficient way to assess students emotions and allowing them to validate them. Although I believe morning circles are more personal, the google forms check-in (refer to figure 8) is

effective for myself to talk to those in need of urgent emotional support in a timely manner. Ever since I implemented this, students felt their emotions were validated and now it has become a part of our daily routine. This is strongly associated with Murran's multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching and critical race theory. According to Marrun (2018), "Multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, and critical race theory work to build inclusive school environments and welcoming classrooms that validate and affirm the multiple, changing, and fluid identities of students of color, while also maintaining high academic expectations for all students." By applying this framework in the classroom, I'm able to provide students with an environment that accepts their identity and fluctuating struggles in the community.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSCH4dUecqLbDPJ/54...

**Mental Health Check-in**  
Total points 0/0

You will be choosing one option that describes how you feel.

The respondent's email address (vmartinez@leadership.org) was recorded on submission of this form.

Section score 0/0

**Mental Health 101: Daily check-in**

☐ I feel great!

☒ I feel good.

☐ I feel meh.

☐ I am struggling but have support.

☐ I am having a hard time and wouldn't mind a check-in

If you feel comfortable, let me know what you're feeling. I want you to know I'm here to listen to you! :)

*Figure 8.* This screenshot shows the google form I created called Mental Health 101:

Daily Check-in. At the bottom students have the liberty to explain why they're feeling the

way they do. This helps me see who urgently needs emotional support to meet with me. Students take this check-in google form every day in the morning.

I believe an effective educator is someone who prioritizes social emotional learning elements in the classroom and establishes student-teacher relationships. In my defense, these were the most prominent of elements I established early on in my teaching career. I understand that teaching standards are important, but with a student population that endures high levels of trauma, I believe establishing a safe haven in the classroom should be the first on my agenda. For instance, creating a safe environment where there is flexibility includes moving spaces to work collaboratively with one another as shown in figure 9. I Students will flourish in their academic and social abilities if they're in an inclusive environment. Some ways I went about creating this environment was posting students work and always phrasing my sentences to say "our class" or "our rules" to justify the shared ownership of us all in the classroom. I reinforced a sense of community in the classroom in many ways, but the most impactful was dedicating a bulletin board to hold our memories in the form of photos from field trips and in-class celebrations.





*Figure 9.* Students are working collaboratively on math problems outside in the sunshine. This is also exemplary of low-stress and flexible arrangements to aid a social emotional learning environment. Personal photo.

I've identified one specific goal that I want to work towards next year at Lions Academy. It's a matter of providing students with immediate feedback on their work that will motivate them to learn from their mistakes and track their academic progress. I remember Mrs. Lola, our principal, came into the classroom to show me how she administers spelling test, provides immediate feedback, and appraisal. She collected the tests and assured students would receive their scores after lunch. She returned with their exams scored and identified the students who earned 100% on the exam to stand up and receive applause from their classmates. The rest of the

students were told to look at the grading scale on the whiteboard to see where they ranked.

Students were given the opportunity to retake the exam for a higher score and encouraged them to do it during their lunch or after school time. Students who did not try on the exam had a note that read “meeting with the teacher”. My overall take away was focused on how excited students were of their accomplishment and how it motivated others to do better the following week. She recognized the students' hard work and provided them with a grading scale to determine their academic standing. The students with the note on their exam were for the teacher to converse with the student about their academic progress. She showed them that she's interested in their learning and wants to provide them with the means to be successful. This is an example of how I want to begin providing meaningful feedback to students so that they are aware of their progress. According to Dessie and Sewagegn (2019) “It is clear that when feedback to students is given properly, use of feedback information can help to close the gap between students' current and desired performance.” Therefore, I will thoroughly analyze student assessments to determine their strengths and write feedback as an action plan to improve. I will facilitate mini-meetings with students throughout the year to discuss their progress and have them reflect on their learning thus far. In my opinion, this will be work in favor of students to become independent and responsible for their academic progress.

**Conclusion:** My experience at Lions Academy was filled with impactful memories. I will always cherish the foundational relationships I built with my very first students. As an educator, I thought I was going to be solely teaching them, but it turns out I had a lot to learn from them as well. There is a wealth of knowledge that students have coming from the community, and I was able to merge it along with learning objectives to honor their backgrounds

and identity. Being able to comprehend their unique personalities was made possible by attending community events and conducting home visits. I got to experience a whole other side of my students' life by visiting and interacting with their loved ones. Looking ahead, I will continue to seek opportunities to understand my students' funds of knowledge in order to create a richer and more-highly scaffolded learning experience for my students. This will guide my instruction and classroom environment to reflect a rich foundation of social justice in the classroom.

Although there were rough times during the first couple of months of teaching, I was able to move past it all and learn from my mistakes. Teaching is a stressful and highly responsive vocation that requires consistent reflection. Reflection is what makes us powerful educators. I was uncomfortable about reflecting on my practice, and even more so watching a recording of myself was difficult. I didn't want to engage in a mental process that critiques my pedagogy, because I was afraid of thinking I wasn't good enough. However, I learned that the reflection process is connected to the desire to understand and act on promoting a better learning experience for myself and students. The most resourceful type of reflection is determining one skill and honing in on it through questioning and creating an action plan to improve it.

### **Final Ethnography Conclusion**

I was an educator and an observer in my own classroom. The nature of observing the elements of teaching in a low socioeconomic community was invigorating and supplemental to my understanding of Lion Academy's and CGU's social justice mission statement. I quickly learned that the community and school members work in unison to improve the quality of education for the students in Lincoln Heights. I too wanted to be a part of this effort, and I was able to do so through understanding and knowing my students. I've learned how valuable cultural and linguistic factors are in creating a socially just classroom environment. My students' engagement in the classroom was due to the integration of those two factors.

I was remarkably nervous about this project because it required me to approach a new journey with sincere vulnerability. I had a misunderstanding of what it meant to teach, I believed it was a nine to five profession. After a week of teaching, I found that belief to be false because I went home every day strategically thinking about ways I could provide students with a rigorous learning experience. But beyond that, I was also recalling the emotional trauma that my students were talking about in our morning circle meetings. This is a mentally and emotionally draining vocation, and it takes a lot of passion, patience, and love to care for and educate the future leaders of this nation.

Now, I'm not afraid of being in a state of vulnerability, because I know this is what every educator needs to initiate a strong connection between their students, community members, and school staff. During this study, I was able to do this through home visits, informal conversations with parents after school, and at community events. I see that these are the outlets to reaching and building this connection, so I plan on doing these things to learn about my future students.

The information I receive through these relationships is key components to creating a safe and inclusive classroom environment.

I am thankful and grateful for every learning opportunity I was presented with this year, and I'm planning on using it to become an effective educator. Back in Spring 2018, I knew I wanted to work in a low socioeconomic community based on a false belief that they lacked the resources to be academically and socially successful. What I didn't comprehend at that time was that they have a rich source of cultural, historical, and linguistic knowledge that educators can honor and utilize in the classroom to expand the opportunities of student success. These are the elements that provide students with the means to grow academically and solidify their identity. Social justice is about equity and what better way to provide students with equity than capitalizing on their funds of knowledge. The rich sources of information from their background will contribute to the establishment of a socially just classroom environment where students can flourish. It's an effective educators job to access and apply this valuable information to the curriculum so that students can receive an equitable education. I am committed to impacting my students' lives in a way that validates their funds of knowledge as vital to our classroom community.

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## Appendix A



*Figure 1a.* My students trying on their professional attire in preparation for our class debate.

Personal photo.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter 1 Test Page 2

For 3-4, use the table.

Name	Height (ft)	Name	Height (ft)
Centennial Peak	12,533	Mount Root	12,799
Mount Columbia	12,293	Mount Tiedemann	12,625
Mount King George	12,274	North Twin	12,247

3. Write the name of each mountain in the box that describes its height, in feet.

Between 12,240 feet and 12,500 feet  
Mount Tiedemann

Between 12,501 feet and 12,800 feet  
Mount Root

4. Circle the name of the tallest peak. Explain how you know which of the mountain peaks is the tallest.

Mount Root

5. The assistant principal bought 230 student planners for the school. If there are 10 planners in a box, how many boxes did he buy?

Ⓐ 2,300      Ⓒ 230  
Ⓑ 240      Ⓓ 23

6. Luis and Liz each rounded 635,974 to the nearest ten thousand. Luis wrote 630,000 and Liz wrote 640,000. Who is correct? Explain the error that was made.

Liz is correct with her number 640,000

GO ON →

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter 5 Test Page 3

8. The number of books featured at the local library is shown in the table.

Type of Book	Number of Books
mystery	32
novel	16
non-fiction	12

Part A

The local library is hosting a book fair in August that features the mystery books. All authors discuss the same number of mystery books and each will discuss more than 1 mystery book. How many authors could be featured in the show?

Part B

The library wants to display all the books on shelves in rows. Each row has the same number of books and the same type of books. How many books could be in each row? Explain how you found your answer.

Common factor  
it will be 4 books in each row. I found the common factor.  
32: 2x16, 4x8, 8x4  
16: 2x8, 4x4  
12: 3x4, 6x2  
1, 2, 4

9. Beverly was skip counting while jumping rope. She started to count by 9s. She said 9, 18, 27, 36, 45, and 54. What number will she say next?

63  
she will skip counting by 9s.

10. Jose wrote the number 63. If his rule is add 6, what is the fourth number in Jose's pattern? Write down the number.

to 51 it is go to be 42.  
63: 6x11, 4x15, 3x21

GO ON →

AG38      AG63      Chapter 5 Test

Figure 2a. Implementing the CUBES strategy has improved students understanding of word problems and increased their assessment scores.



Figure 3a. Maria re-created a minecraft character in their area and perimeter robot activity  
Personal photo.

Name: Jessie Martinez Chapter 4 Test Page 1

1. Kelli and her family went to the beach for vacation. They drove 200 miles in 2 hours to get there. If they drove the same number of miles each hour, about how many miles did they drive each hour? Select the numbers the quotient is between.

☒ 40 ☒ 50 ☐ 60 ☐ 70 ☐ 80

2. Between which two numbers is the quotient of  $88 \div 57$ ? Write the numbers in the boxes.

5   10   15   20   25

The quotient is between 15 and 20.

3. Look at the model. What division does it show?

3  $\div$  20 = 18  $\div$  2

4. For 4a-4d, choose Yes or No to tell whether the division sentence has a remainder.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> $32 \div 4$	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> $51 \div 3$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> $95 \div 4$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> $36 \div 9$	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Assessment Guide AG55 Chapter 4 Test

Name: Jessie Martinez Chapter 1 Test Page 1

1. Select a number for  $\square$  that will make a true comparison. Mark all that apply.

$607.058 > \square$

☒ 670.508 ☒ 607.508 ☐ 606.058  
☒ 670.058 ☐ 607.085 ☐ 600.758

2. Leslie wrote the greatest number that can be made using each of these digits exactly once.

6 2 4 7 9 1

Part A

What was Leslie's number? How do you know this is the greatest possible number for these digits?

9 7 6 4 2 1 because 9 is the largest digit.

Part B

What is the least number that can be made using each digit exactly once? Explain why the value of the 4 is greater than the value of the 6.

1 2 4 6 7 9 because 4 is less than 6, so 4 is in the tens place and 6 is in the ones place.

Assessment Guide AG37 Chapter 1 Test

Figure 4a. Jess's Chapter 4 test is on the left side and she scored an 86%. The exam on the right is Jess's Chapter 1 test which scored 60%.

### Classroom Behavior Evaluation Individual

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

(4=Excellent, 3=Good, 2=Needed to be reminded, 1=Needs to work on, 0= Need to have a parent/teacher meeting)

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Comments
Prepared for class with all materials						
Followed Directions						
On task and using time appropriately						
Turned in HW						
Teacher's Initials						
Parent Initials:						
Total Points per day:						

Total points for the week: \_\_\_\_\_



*Figure 5a.* This screenshot is an example of Chris's classroom behavior evaluation chart.



Carefully looking at something

# Observation 4-Square

Name: Chris Martinez Date: 4/10/19

I See...  I Wonder... 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I see a lot of people at the park</li> <li>• I see a lot of trees</li> <li>• I see lots of boats</li> <li>• I see trash on the ground</li> <li>• I see a lot of people with umbrellas</li> <li>• I see a lot of dogs</li> <li>• I see a lot of people wearing hats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I wonder why there is a lot of people at the park</li> <li>• I wonder why there is a monkey at the park</li> <li>• I wonder why they are so dressed up</li> <li>• I wonder why there is trash on the ground</li> <li>• I wonder why there is a man with no face</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think there's a lot of trash on the ground because there aren't any trash cans</li> <li>• I think it is so hot to wear a dress</li> <li>• I think the umbrella is not helpful because they are probably sweating inside their dresses</li> <li>• I think they are rich people because they are wearing fancy clothes</li> <li>• I think the park is crowded of too much people</li> </ul>	<p>"A Sunday on La Grande Jatte"</p> <p>by Georges Seurat</p> <p>a 1884 painting</p> <p>* Pointillism : A painting technique using tiny dots which becomes blended in the viewer's eyes.</p>


I Think...  Caption or Title for Image

Figure 6a. Observation 4-Square graphic organizer that helped Chris fill in his observations of an image and move towards making an inference. Personal photo.

**Observation 4-Square**

Name: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Date: 4/12/19

I see...  	I wonder... 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I see mountain</li> <li>• I see a signature</li> <li>• I see a hat</li> <li>• I see a cartija</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I wonder why they don't have shorts</li> <li>• I wonder why they are teaching</li> <li>• I wonder what they're learning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think that the <del>class</del> clothes they are wearing are the uniform</li> <li>• I think that the kids need to wear the shorts and the shirts to wear shorts</li> <li>• I think these class are in a jungle</li> </ul>	<p><u>Artist: Mario Gonzalez</u></p> <p><u>Pinchita la escuela</u> "The School"</p>

I think... 

Title For Image

Figure 7a. Teacher-made observation 4-square worksheet. Personal photo.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSch4dUecqLbDPJl54...






**Mental Health Check-in**  
Total points **0/0**

You will be choosing one option that describes how you feel.

The respondent's email address (vmartinez@leadership.org) was recorded on submission of this form.

Section score **0/0**

**Mental Health 101: Daily check-in**

	
<input type="radio"/> I feel great!	<input checked="" type="radio"/> I feel good.
	
<input type="radio"/> I feel meh.	<input type="radio"/> I am struggling but have support.
	
<input type="radio"/> I am having a hard time and wouldn't mind a check-in	

If you feel comfortable, let me know what you're feeling. I want you to know I'm here to listen to you! :)

Figure 8a. This screenshot shows the google form I created called Mental Health 101: Daily Check-in.



*Figure 9a.* Students working collaboratively on math problems outside in the sunshine. Personal photo.