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El Poder / The Power: Latino/a Literature Inclusion in the Florida High School Language Arts Classroom as a Contributing Deterrent to the Latino/a Dropout Rate

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El Poder / The Power:

Latino/a Literature Inclusion in the Florida High School Language Arts
Classroom as a Contributing Deterrent to the Latino/a Dropout Rate

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Secondary Education
College of Education
University of South Florida

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Keywords: Hispanics, Hispanic Literature, high school English, secondary English,
minorities, culturally based education, culture based education

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family: my husband Scott who has supported me, pushed me, guided me, encouraged me and has just been there for me. Your sacrifices are not in vain; my daughter Zoë who has made me realize that the moment is often what matters most and that laughter and love can indeed save you from despair; my older daughter Destiny who has learned through her own mistakes (and reminded me in the process) that sometimes things are done for a reason even if that reason isn't known all the time. Thank you all for being patient with me and with this work. Trite as this next line sounds, I really could not have done it without you.

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I'd also like to thank José Valiente, fellow Hillsborough High School colleague and USF alumni, and fellow Latino, who in a time of need helped me out in order that I might complete this degree. He truly embodies the motto that *we must lift as we climb*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	iv
Abstract	v
Research and Findings on Latino/a Literature Inclusion	
Introduction	1
What Others Have Done: Culture-Based Education	3
The Numbers.....	7
Curriculum Concerns	12
And What Is a Latino/a?	17
“America Creates Americans” Latino/a Literature Defined as Part of U.S. History	20
“Language Is the Only Homeland.” – Czeslow Milosz ... But What If You Reside in Two Languages?	27
What about the Teachers?	31
Including Latino/a Literature in the Secondary Classroom	39
Conclusion.....	42
Latino/a Literature Unit Plan	
Latino/a Writers and Identity	47
Summary of Unit Requirements.....	48
Unit Schedule	49
Lesson: Introduction to Identity	50
What Is Identity? Anticipation Guide.....	51
Latino/a Writers: What They Mean to Our Literary World	52
Lesson: Coat of Arms. What Influences Your Identity?.....	54
Lesson: Piri Thomas and Esmeralda Santiago	56
Lesson: Character Quotes.....	59
Final Assessment for Identity Unit Plan	62
Latino/a Literature Guide	
Using Latino/a Literature to Complement a Secondary English Language Arts Classroom	64

Colombia	
Films	66
Fiction - Adult	67
Young Adult (YA) Fiction	67
Nonfiction	67
Children’s Stories	68
Classic and Contemporary Musical Artists	68
Cuba	
Films	68
Fiction - Adult	69
YA Fiction	69
Nonfiction	69
Cuban Books About Tampa	70
Children’s Stories	70
Classic and Contemporary Musical Artists	70
Dominican Republic	
Films	70
Fiction - Adult	71
YA Fiction	71
Nonfiction	71
Children’s Stories	72
Classic and Contemporary Musical Artists	72
Mexico	
Films	72
Fiction - Adult	73
YA Fiction	73
Nonfiction	74
Children’s Stories	74
Classic and Contemporary Musical Artists	74
Puerto Rico	
Films	75
Fiction - Adult	75
YA Fiction	75
Nonfiction	76
Children’s Stories	76
Classic and Contemporary Musical Artists	76
Other Central and South American Countries	
Films	77
Fiction - Adult	77
YA Fiction	78
Nonfiction	78
Children’s Stories	79
Anthologies and Collections	79
Poetry Resources	81

Works Cited82

Appendix 1: Bibliography of Latino/a Writers.....89

About the Author End Page

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of the Resident Population, by, Race/Ethnicity Region and State: 2008	9
Table 2: Number and Percentage Distribution of Public School Enrollment in the United States and 20 Largest Public School Districts, by Race/Ethnicity: 2007–08	10
Table 3: Status Dropout Rates	12
Table 4: Number and percentage distribution of full-time teachers, by school level, sector, and selected teacher characteristics: School years 1999–2000 and 2007–08	33

ABSTRACT

Curricula throughout the country, specifically in the School District of Hillsborough County (SDHC), do not encompass diverse subject matter as it relates to Latino/a students. The primary argument posed in this thesis is that consistent engagement to Latino/a writings in the English language arts classroom can be a positive force that contributes to an increased rate of retention of Latino/a youths in high school and a higher percentage of Latino/a high school graduates. This Latino/a literature can be in the form of supplementary reading material that teachers will have access to that will include Latino/a literature from various authors that represent the full spectrum of what the Latino/a experience is and how it is an integral part of the American kaleidoscope of literature. This thesis examines how culture-based education, currently used with American Indians, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiians, directly correlates to Latinos/as in regards to culture, learning methodology and academic achievement. Included is a full unit plan and a literature guide for teachers to use that includes a plethora of Latino/a literature divided by specific country of origin of author(s) as well as genre.

RESEARCH AND FINDINGS ON LATINO/A LITERATURE INCLUSION

Introduction

“When Latino students were a small percentage of the population, this maybe didn’t need to be a significant concern of policymakers. But when one out of five students is Latino, this isn’t a Latino issue, this is an American issue.”

Peter Zamora,
a regional counsel for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund,
as told to the *Washington Post*. (Sack-Min, 7)

The United States Census Bureau released its 2010 Census numbers and they showed what past trends have indicated. The number of people categorized as Latinos/as increased 43%. The percent of the population in the U.S. that is of Latino/a origin is 16.3%. While these numbers may be meaningless, or of no consequence, to educators in Maine or Vermont, where the Latino/a population in 2010 was 1.3% and 1.5% respectively; they are quite relevant to those teaching in California (37.6%), New Mexico (46.3%), Texas (37.6%), and Florida (22.5%) where this research is focused (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

The notion of “diversity” and “multi-culturalism” recur in education courses, both as separate or integral sections of the curriculum. Standard IV in the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is: Fairness, Equity and Diversity. An excerpt from the handbook states:

Accomplished teachers value diversity among students ...
[They] understand that literacy, by its nature, encompasses diverse subject matter and builds on the unique characteristics of each learner. Teachers of adolescents and young adults infuse their teaching with examples and perspectives representing a broad range of cultures and backgrounds. (24)

This thesis will argue that as it stands, curricula throughout the country, but specifically in the School District of Hillsborough County (SDHC), do not “encompass diverse subject matter,” as stated in the above excerpt, as it relates to Latino/a students. The argument posed is that consistent engagement in the English language arts classroom to Latino/a writings can be a positive force that contributes to an increased rate of retention of Latino/a youths in high school, and a higher percentage of Latino/a high school graduates. This Latino/a literature can be in the form of a supplement that teachers will have access to that will include Latino/a literature from various authors that represent the full spectrum of what the Latino/a experience is and how it is an integral part of the American kaleidoscope of literature. This thesis will examine how *culture-based education*, currently used with American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians, directly correlates to Latinos/as in regards to culture, learning methodology and academic achievement.

The label “Latino/a” will be examined and defined. As Frank de Varona, former Region Superintendent of Schools in Dade County, states in the

introduction to his book *Latino Literacy*, "A given Latino may trace his or her ancestry to virtually any spot on the globe. But in the American mosaic, the Latinos have coalesced into a distinct, identifiable and very special group of Americans" (xv). Latino/a literature will also be defined as well as compared and contrasted with world literature. This thesis will propose that there exist options for teachers to use in their classrooms based on the demographics in their particular classes, options that include more than the token authors that persist in current curricula, and that encompass a fuller meaning of what it means to be Latino/a in the United States. Language and its impact on identity will also be discussed – a topic that is essential for teachers to be aware of in regards to Latino/a students. Included also is a full unit plan which teachers can then alter and use at their discretion based on the demographics and grade level of their classes. The last part of this thesis is a literature guide for teachers to use that includes a plethora of Latino/a literature divided by divided by specific country of origin of author(s) as well as genre.

What Others Have Done: Culture-Based Education

Like Latinos/as, Native American nations "represent dramatically different histories and cultures" (Starnes, 385-86). In studies done with American Indian and Alaska Natives, [along with Native Hawaiian], the central role of culture is an important component in academic success. B. A. Starnes, in her article, "What We Don't Know Can Hurt Them: White Teachers, Indian Children," states the

following, "...Whether the approach is referred to as culturally responsive, "nativized," place based, culturally infused or "bottoms up," an astonishing amount of data illustrates that when students' culture is "tapped" in the classroom, it "builds a bridge to school success" (Starnes qtng. Reyhner, Lee and Gabbard, op cit, Zwick, T. and Miller, K. (1996) & Reyhner (1994), 386).

Culture-based education has been studied, investigated and researched in regards to American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians. This thesis makes the correlation between these ethnically diverse groups and Latinos/as because the same methodology can be applied to them beginning with Latino/a literature. Of the three strands of findings that have emerged in regards to American Indian nations, the second strand supports this thesis: "There is a positive relationship between students' academic learning and their strong sense of cultural identity" (Starnes qtng. Miller Cleary & Peacock, et al., 386). This same logic can and should be applied to Latino/a students. As with American Indians, they are an ethnic minority that, in most cases, has a different home language than English. Their cultural background, while different from the majority Anglo culture is – like the Latino/a culture as well – an integral part of the American tapestry.

The Federal government also recognizes the importance of an education that emphasizes community, culture, and tradition. In 2004, President Bush issued an Executive Order in regards to American Indian and Alaska Native Education, "to assist American Indian and Alaskan Native students in meeting the

challenging student academic standards of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) in a manner that is consistent with tribal traditions, languages and cultures” (Bush, 2004).

There are also three federal laws which represent the possibilities for culturally based education (CBE) in the United States: Title VII of the Indian Education Act, the Native Languages Act, and the Union Religious Freedom Act. The programs supported by these statutes include approximately 145 Native language preservation programs which include grants to American Indian tribes, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians (McCardle, 3).

Starnes and Beaulieu cite numerous studies that include programs (such as KEEP and the Alaska Native Curriculum Immersion Program) that provide “sustained evidence of academic growth” (Starnes, 387) and that continuously and specifically cite culturally based education (Beaulieu, 54).

In a presentation to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs (May, 2011), Shawn Kana `iaupuni states that culture-based education is “the grounding of instruction and student learning in the values, norms, knowledge, beliefs, practices, and language that are the foundations of a culture” (Kana `iaupuni, 2011, slide 4).

She states, “Recent theories place culture at the center of debates surrounding relevance, relationships, and rigor in learning processes. Culturally responsive/relevant education recognizes cultural gaps between home and school as part of the achievement gap and calls for increased cultural relevance

in education to engage, support, and empower learners (Kana `iaupuni qtnq. Castagno and Brayboy 2008, 10). Her recent research is impressive because it provides “quantitative data linking student outcomes to culturally relevant educational approaches” (9). In Hawaii, as in other parts of the nation, there have been gaps in educational results that range from lower achievement to higher dropout rates. She discusses both “cultural deficit” and “cultural compatibility” theories that place shortcomings and lack of success on the home life, language difference and cultural mismatch. In keeping with the Cognitive theory which reasons that students learn more when prior knowledge is both activated and connected to the new information they are learning (Demmert and Towner 2003), this thesis asserts that Latino/a literature can directly be used to activate this prior knowledge.

The quantitative evidence was provided by Kana `iaupuni in a “large scale empirical study” that was the first of its kind. She sums up the results as follows:

The findings are consistent with prior qualitative studies, indicating that culture-based education strategies positively impact student outcomes, and especially Native Hawaiian student outcomes. Specifically, the analyses indicate a set of nested relationships linking the use of culture-based education (CBE) strategies by teachers and by schools to student educational outcomes: first, CBE use positively impacts student socioemotional wellbeing (i.e.,

identity, self-efficacy, social relationships); second, enhanced socioemotional wellbeing, in turn, positively affects math and reading test scores; and third, the analyses suggest a smaller, statistically significant relationship between CBE use and math and reading test scores, most notably when teachers' use of culture-based strategies is supported by overall use of culture-based strategies in the school. (12)

This thesis will not go into a comparative study between American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Latinos/as because that is not the purpose. But in citing the evidence in this section, a comparison between the various ethnicities is unavoidable. American Indians and Latinos/as both comprise of heterogeneous groups within their respective monikers. Within these groups are different histories based on particular tribes, nations or nationalities; and overgeneralization and stereotyping of both groups often occurs. The major contrasting point between the two is in the numbers. Latinos/as make up 15.1% of the U.S. population, while American Indians and Alaska Natives make up 0.8% and Native Hawaiians (and other Pacific Islanders) make up 0.1% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

The Numbers

In July 2010, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which is part of the United States Department of Education, released a report entitled,

"Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups." NCES's report has been the main source of data for this research, and gives further evidence to the need for consistent engagement of Latino/a literature in the English language arts high school classroom. Unlike other data-collecting agencies, including those at the local and state levels, this federal entity addresses all education needs it considers high priority.

In relation to the assertion in this thesis regarding educators' needs to consider an increased amount of Latino/a literature in the English language arts curriculum, consideration must be given to the changing faces of the students taught by teachers today. NCES statistics show the following: "In 1980, the White population represented about 80% of the total population. This percentage decreased to 69% in 2000 and to 66% in 2008. In contrast, the Latino population's share of the total population increased from 6.4% in 1980 to 12.6% in 2000 to 15.4% in 2008. The percentage of the total population who were Black increased from 11.5 to 12.2 percent between 1980 and 2000. Since 2000, the growth rate for the Black population has been similar to the growth rate of the overall population; thus, the Black population continued to represent 12.2% of the total population through 2008" (Auld, 6). Thus, while the percentage of African Americans in the United States has remained constant, the data to follow will show that the U.S. Latino/a population has increased overall, and dramatically in some pockets of the United States.

According to this "Status and Trends" report from NCES, this is not an anomaly. This pattern of population growth is expected to continue. States the report, "... the [Latino/a] population is expected to grow at a faster rate than most other races/ethnicities. In 2025, about 21% of the population is expected to be of [Latino/a] ethnicity" (Auld, 7). In Florida, the Latino/a population was already at 21% in 2008. Note chart below:

Table 1. Percentage distribution of the resident population, by race/ethnicity, region, and state: 2008

Region and state	White	Black	Latino	Asian	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Two or more races
United States	65.6	12.2	15.4	4.4	0.1	0.8	1.5
South	62.0	18.8	14.8	2.5	0.1	0.7	1.2
Alabama	68.4	26.2	2.9	0.9	#	0.5	1.0
Arkansas	75.6	15.5	5.6	1.0	0.1	0.8	1.3
Delaware	68.3	20.4	6.8	2.8	#	0.3	1.3
District of Columbia	33.1	53.1	8.6	3.3	0.1	0.3	1.4
Florida	60.3	15.0	21.0	2.2	0.1	0.3	1.2
Georgia	58.1	29.6	8.0	2.8	0.1	0.3	1.2
Kentucky	87.8	7.6	2.4	1.0	#	0.2	1.0
Louisiana	61.9	31.7	3.4	1.4	#	0.6	1.0
Maryland	57.7	28.8	6.7	5.0	0.1	0.3	1.5
Mississippi	58.7	37.0	2.2	0.8	#	0.5	0.8
North Carolina	67.2	21.2	7.4	1.9	0.1	1.1	1.1
Oklahoma	71.4	7.7	7.6	1.7	0.1	7.7	3.9
South Carolina	65.2	28.1	4.1	1.2	#	0.4	1.0
Tennessee	77.1	16.5	3.7	1.3	#	0.3	1.1
Texas	47.4	11.3	36.5	3.3	0.1	0.4	1.1
Virginia	67.0	19.5	6.8	4.8	0.1	0.3	1.6
West Virginia	93.5	3.5	1.1	0.7	#	0.2	0.9

Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Latino ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Table 4: Estimates of the Population by Race and Latino Origin for the United States and States: July 1, 2008 (SC-EST2008-04), released May 14, 2009, retrieved May 15, 2009, from <http://www.census.gov/popest/states/asrh/SC-EST2008-04.html>.

But how do all these numbers relate to public schools? According to the American School Board Journal, in the fall of 2008 some 50 million students entered school and “about one in five of those students were Latino” (Sack-Min, 6). Enrollment in public schools is also going to continue to set new records for the next nine years, “capping at about 54.1 million in 2017” (Sack-Min, 6). Florida boasts 5 of the 20 largest school districts in the United States. The School District of Hillsborough County (SDHC) is the 8th largest in the nation. The following chart shows that though the School District of Dade county has a Latino enrollment of 62.8%, and the School District of Orange County has 32%, the School District of Hillsborough County is next highest in Latino/a enrollment in Florida with 29.1% of total enrollment being Latino/a. This is almost 1/3rd of the student body in the district.

Table 2. Number and percentage distribution of public school enrollment in the United States and 20 largest public school districts, by race/ethnicity: 2007–08

	State	Total enrollment	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	American – Indian/ Alaska Native
Total, United States	†	48,397,895	100	55.8	17.0	21.2	4.8	1.2
Total, 20 largest public school districts	†	5,241,310	100	21.3	28.3	40.2	9.8	0.3
New York City Public Schools	NY	989,941	100	14.2	31.7	39.7	14.0	0.4
Los Angeles Unified	CA	693,680	100	8.8	10.9	73.7	6.4	0.3
City of Chicago	IL	407,510	100	8.2	47.9	40.2	3.4	0.2
Dade County School District	FL	348,128	100	9.3	26.6	62.8	1.2	0.1
Clark County School District	NV	309,051	100	36.1	14.2	39.7	9.2	0.8
Broward County School District	FL	258,893	100	31.2	38.6	26.6	3.4	0.2
Houston Independent School District	TX	199,534	100	8.0	28.4	60.3	3.2	0.1
Hillsborough County School District	FL	193,180	100	44.3	23.3	29.1	3.1	0.3

TABLE 2 – cont.

	State	Total enrollment	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Islander	American – Indian/ Alaska Native
Hawaii Department of Education	HI	179,897	100	19.4	2.3	4.6	73.0	0.6
Orange County School District	FL	174,142	100	35.0	28.1	32.0	4.4	0.4
Philadelphia City School District	PA	172,704	100	13.4	63.4	16.9	6.1	0.2
Palm Beach County School District	FL	170,883	100	41.8	30.1	24.8	2.8	0.5
Fairfax County Public Schools	VA	165,722	100	51.0	11.3	17.9	19.5	0.3
Dallas Independent School District	TX	157,804	100	4.8	28.7	65.3	1.0	0.2
Qwinnett County	GA	155,618	100	38.0	28.3	22.7	10.8	0.1
Montgomery County Public Schools	MD	137,717	100	40.1	22.9	21.5	15.2	0.3
Wake County Public Schools	NC	134,401	100	54.7	27.7	11.6	5.8	0.3
San Diego Unified School District	CA	131,577	100	25.3	13.5	44.4	16.3	0.5
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	NC	131,176	100	35.8	43.7	15.4	4.6	0.5
Prince George's County Public Schools	MD	129,752	100	5.1	74.2	17.4	2.9	0.4

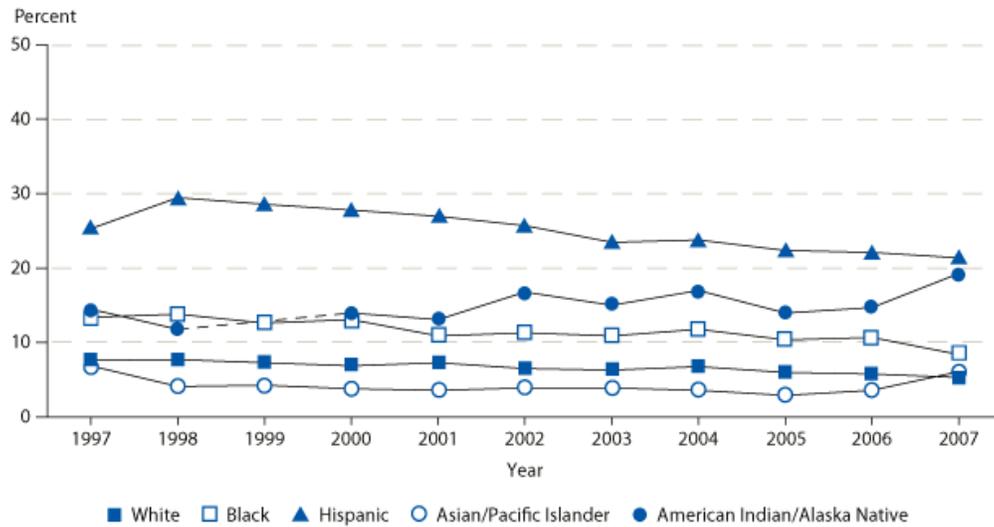
† Not applicable.

NOTE: Total enrollment, including students with missing race/ethnicity information, is 48,910,025. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2007–08.

The significance of these numbers becomes clear when you relate them to the dropout rates. According to Auld, between 1997 and 2007 the nationwide dropout rate decreased nationwide from 11 to 9%. Though the Latino/a dropout rate did decrease as well, it is still higher in percentage than all other ethnic/racial groups at 21% in 2007 compared to 25% in 1997 (Auld, 94). Note the chart that follows. The triangles at the top correspond to Latinos.

Table 3: Status Dropout Rates



NOTE: The data presented here represent status dropout rates. The status dropout rate is the percentage of civilian, non-institutionalized 16- to 24-year olds who are not in high school and who have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or equivalency credential such as a GED). It includes all dropouts, regardless of when they last attended school, as well as individuals who may have never attended school in the United States, such as immigrants who did not complete a high school diploma in their home country. The 1999 data for American Indians/Alaska Natives have been suppressed due to unstable estimates. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 1997–2007.

Curriculum Concerns

As many have pointed out, ability and motivation are two of many factors that influence teaching and learning. Teachers in overcrowded and under resourced schools, for example, face problems beyond the force of sheer will. Patel Stevens and Piazza, in their article, "Dear President Obama and Secretary Duncan: You are Looking through the Wrong Window," offer a different view to the President and Secretary of Education: "Imagine the view of education from the perspective of recently arrived immigrant students, and you will look through a window in which these students already are the experts of their lived realities

but need mentorship in how to become critical consumers and producers of texts that represent and actively reshape their worlds” (Patel Stevens and Piazza quoting Morrell, 2008, 513-514).

Note the part here about texts that represent their world. This is one of the major factors that, this thesis argues, can contribute to a decline in the Latino/a dropout rate. There is a group of students that don't see themselves in the literature or writings they are exposed to in their English language arts classrooms in many public school systems, including the School District of Hillsborough County. A close look at the English class curriculum in all grades, based for the past three years on *SpringBoard* (*SpringBoard* is a research-based English and mathematics curriculum based on College Board standards for college success. It is aligned with Florida's Sunshine State Standards, and designed to prepare students for Advanced Placement (AP) courses and college-level work), reveals that, to some extent, so-called multi-cultural or diverse literature has been watered down to mean inclusion of some African American writers with some (but not enough) splashes of Mexican-American writings and other varied world literature texts. There is little to no representation of Caribbean or South American writers in the current curriculum, though the populations of the district, county and state show the numbers are sufficient to warrant their inclusion. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, Hillsborough County Public Schools had a total enrollment of 193,180 students. Of those, 29.1% were Latinos/as (see Table 2 on page 7).

There are other professionals, including English language arts teachers, who have noticed the lack of varied Latino/a representation in U.S. high school English curriculum; and *SpringBoard* is not the only publisher/company ignoring this literature. Mary Alexandra Rojas in her article “(Re)visioning U.S. Latino Literatures in High School English Classrooms” (recently published in NCTE’s *English Education* journal), also notes that certain authors are used to represent the entire Latino/a population. She states: “Textbooks and supplementary readings and materials are usually limited to the same authors. *Elements of Literature* (2007), for example, a commonly used high school textbook published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston (which recently merged with McDougal Littell to publish anthologies under Holt McDougal), usually reproduces the work of Gary Soto, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Rudolfo Anaya, Julia Alvarez, and Sandra Cisneros” (Rojas, 264-265).

So, who decides what gets placed in these textbooks? Well, according to Torres-Saillant, it’s politics and economics that determine whether “the number of Dominican, Puerto Rican, or Colombian readers is large enough to make the publication of a book authored by a member of one of those communities worth the investment” (Torres-Saillant, 2003, 7). Rojas states, “This lack of diversity proves a limited understanding of the heterogeneity of the U.S. Latino population. [In fact], when diverse traditions of U.S. Latino literatures and varied language usage are not considered, the selections that are made become token additives to curricula in the appearance of inclusion” (265).

Poey, in *Latino American Literature in the Classroom*, notes that universalized assumptions, begotten from partial or inadequate understanding of diverse traditions and cultures of Latinos/as, produce grave political and social consequences. She states that some Latino/a students shun their language to disassociate themselves from its devalued status (60).

The following is a breakdown of the Latino/a authors inside the *SpringBoard* English Textual Power books levels 4 (9th grade) through 6 (11th grade) as well as Senior English.

Level 4 (9th grade)

Unit 1: Includes an excerpt and short story from Sandra Cisneros, one poem from Gary Soto and one poem and an excerpt from Luis J. Rodriguez (all three Mexican-Americans). Unit also includes one excerpt from Judith Ortiz Cofer (Puerto Rican).

Unit 2: No Latino/a authors, one short story from Argentinian author (world literature): Liliana Heker.

Unit 3: One poem from Latino author (original nationality not given) Julio Polanco and one poem from Sandra Cisneros. Includes poem from Chilean author (world literature): Pablo Neruda.

Unit 4 and Unit 5: No Latino/a authors (focus is on *Romeo and Juliet* (4) and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (5)).

Level 5 (10th grade)

Unit 1: Includes one poem from Teresa Paloma Acosta and one poem from Pat Mora (both Mexican-American).

Unit 2: One excerpt from Richard Rodriguez (Mexican-American).

Units 3, 4 & 5: No Latino/a authors (focus on *Things Fall Apart* (3), *Antigone*, *Julius Caesar* (4), and *An Inconvenient Truth* (5)).

Level 6 (11th grade)

Unit 1: Includes one poem from Martín Espada (Puerto Rican).

Units 2, 3 & 4: No Latino/a authors (focus on *The Crucible* (3) and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (4)).

Unit 5: Includes one essay from Sandra Cisneros (Mexican American) rest of focus is on novel *Into the Wild*.

Senior English (12th grade)

Unit 1: One poem from Luis Rodriguez and an excerpt from Sandra Cisneros (Mexican American) and one poem from Edward Montez (original nationality not given).

Units 2, 3, 4 & 5: No Latino/a authors (focus on *Othello* (2) and *The Arrival* (3)).

And What is a Latino/a?

There are varied sources that have tried to define this label. Chosen for this thesis are a select few that most clearly get the meaning across. Frank de Varona, who was the Region Superintendent of Schools in Dade County, himself a Latino of Cuban descent, states in his book, *Latino Literacy*, what most students and teachers don't realize, but should: That "no ethnic group's story is more bound up with the American experience than the Latinos', especially if we include their Spanish and Indian forbearers. With the exception of the Indians, no other group (*Mayflower* or otherwise) has lived here longer. The Spaniards were the first Europeans to touch ground in most of the New World around the dawn of the sixteenth century. Juan Ponce de Leon's 1513 expedition to Florida was the first to the future mainland United States. Pedro Menendez de Aviles founded Saint Augustine, Florida, the first permanent European settlement in North America in 1565, more than half a century before the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock" (xvi).

Little taught fact: "Spain explored and came to rule approximately 80 percent of what is now the United States" (de Varona, xvii). So, in essence, when we speak of Latinos/as, we are speaking of a group of Americans that have been underrepresented in the canon of literature. It has only been in the last 10 years that authors like Cisneros and Cofer have been able to be included in high school curriculums, but it's still an under representation. "[The story of Latinos/as] is a story that is central to understanding America's past and present,

and critical to anticipating America's future" (de Varona, xv). The English language itself is laced with at least 400 words of Spanish origin: words such as: *bodega, rodeo, rancho, hacienda, corral, sombrero, adobe, patio, plaza, tornado, cigar* come directly from Spanish or from Indian languages by way of Spanish (de Varona, xvii). This is how de Varona defines Latinos/as:

Technically, Latinos are people of various racial backgrounds whose ancestors lived in Spain or Latin America. They may speak Spanish at home, or may have learned it in school, or may not know it at all. They come in every color – or better, in the words of a Puerto Rican poet, "all colors tied." This should be no surprise since the majority of Latinos are *mestizos*, or people of mixed Spanish and Indian descent. (xvi)

This definition was only partially suitable. The following is from the Introduction to the book *The Latino Reader*:

Although loosely united by a common heritage as native Spanish speakers (or their descendants), the numerous Latino groups in the United States are as ethnically, racially, and socioeconomically heterogeneous as the more precise names they prefer: *Méxicanos, Puertorriqueños, Cubanos, Dominicanos, Salvadoreños, Colombianos*, and so on. Each Latino subgroup represents not only a distinct culture and geographic area of the Americas, but also a

specific history vis-à-vis the United States. Using the term “Latino” and the more official “Hispanic” to describe the culture of this population is also problematic. “Hispanic” is rejected by many authors as too reductive in its association with Spain and Spanish culture, thereby ignoring the indigenous and/or African heritage of many Latin American and Caribbean peoples. “Latino” is perceived as a more useful, if still unsatisfactory, label, as it is based more neutrally on an identity shared through the use of Romance languages. (Augenbraum & Fernandez Olmos, xii)

Many writers are troubled by this question of definition. Earl Shorris asked, “How shall the category be defined? By ancestry? Surname? Subject Matter? Or geography?” (Scott qting Shorris, 58). In her book *Breaking Boundaries: Latina Writing and Critical Readings*, Asunción Horno-Delgado and her co-editors concluded that: “A Latina is a woman of Latin American origin or descent who resides more or less permanently in the United States, who may choose to express herself in Spanish or English or both, but who identifies with a Latin heritage rather than opting to assimilate into the dominant Anglo culture of this country” (Horno-Delgado, 58). For some, the option to assimilate is not even there. As Bebe Moore Campbell observed of the protagonists of Sandra Cisneros’s *Women Hollering Creek*, “These aren’t European immigrants who can learn English, change their names and float casually into the mainstream. These are brown people with glossy black hair and dark eyes who know they look

different, who know the score, and so they cling to their culture like the anchor it is" (6).

"America creates Americans"

Latino/a Literature Defined as Part of U.S. History

In *Reading U.S. Latina Writers: Remapping American Literature*, Alvina Quintana asks, "How do we define U.S. Latino/a writing [and] distinguish it from American and [/or] Latin American literary production?" (2). She points out what many Latinos/as have known, but what may not be well known to others: Latino/a writing is not new, nor is it just a twentieth-century phenomenon. She states that because of its "transnational focus on dual identity," it has often been diminished in value in university or academic settings and relegated to the margins of the other mainstream literature canons" (3).

It has also been mistaken and/or combined with world literature. When English language arts teachers at Hillsborough High School in Tampa were asked through an informal email survey to list three Latino/a authors they were familiar with, several included Gabriel García Márquez and Isabel Allende. While Allende – through some of her later works that include United States settings – may be considered a Latina writer, Gabriel García Márquez is not a Latino writer. He is a Latin American writer. His work is influenced by his country of origin, Colombia. And while he may have visited the United States, this is not his residence. His work does not define the struggle of living in the 'hyphen' which is what many

Latino/a works do. Augenbraum and Olmos in the introduction to *U.S. Latino Literature: A Critical Guide for Students and Teachers* write, "...there has often been some confusion about classifying these works as "Latino." They are indeed different from the Latin American texts that are also used in [some] classrooms. Stemming from an intercultural literary tradition with influences from European, Latin American, and, often, U.S. "ethnic" fiction, U.S. Latino literature has elements of each but belongs in its own category" (xiv).

This thesis calls into question the past conventional interpretations of literary traditions and asks what it is that makes a piece of writing "American?" If it's a question of national identity, this is by far one of the key components that differentiates Latino/a literature from Latin American or world literature. Critic Jean Franco stated that Latino/a writers "no longer have to choose between assimilation and national identity but can fashion 'original personalities'." Latino/a writers have turned being *ni de aqui ni de alla*, neither from here or from there, from a liability into an advantage" (Augenbraum and Olmos quoting Franco 1997, xviii). "Being American and becoming *Americanized* is one of the thematic conflicts that define the Latino/a literature of the 1960's and 1970's, the era of the emergence of Latino/a writing in the United States. It is the period in which Latinos/as began to forge a distinct tradition in poetry, drama, and fiction, the fruits of efforts sown painstakingly generations before by writers, scholars, and researchers" (Augenbraum and Olmos 2000, xiii).

Latino/a literature, like other literature, stands as an important “creature and a creator of culture” (Kevane quoting Greenblatt, 1). It is a fundamental segment of American literature. It comprises of novels, poems, short stories and essays by writers who are *American* – in the sense of being a part of the United States, not the continents of the Americas. The differences lie in a variety of factors. Most Latino/a authors maintain close ties to their Spanish linguistic and cultural heritage. States Kevane in the introduction to her book *Latino Literature in America*, “Their stories invite readers to explore and learn about Latino/a culture and at the same time, to transcend cultural differences in order to better understand and accept the Latino/a communities found across the United States” (2). Gabriela Ventura in the introduction to her book, *U.S. Latino Literature Today* concurs, [Latino/a literature seems to] “open windows to worlds that are perhaps new or unexplored, and in this way encourage the reader to see this literature as one that is not foreign, but very much a part of the United States” (xi).

Latino/a communities existed in the U.S. since the early 19th century; some would argue that there have been “Latinos/as” in the mainland U.S.A. since before this country was even founded. Kevane adds, “Many Puerto Ricans and Cubans, for example, funded and organized their struggle for independence from Spanish rule while living on the mainland [some right here in Tampa]. Mexicans, previously known as *Californios*, *Tejanos*, or *Nuevo Mexicanos*, for

example, have lived on the mainland since Mexico's independence in 1821" (6-7).

The Spanish Caribbean islands of Cuba, formerly known by its indigenous name, Ciboney, the Dominican Republic, indigenously known as Quisqueya, and Puerto Rico, whose native name was Borinquen, along with México and most of the territory of Central and South America, were colonies of Spain for almost 500 years. The emerging and ever expanding United States has sustained a complicated relationship with these former Spanish colonies. Specifically (and most relevantly for this text) the War of 1898, also known as the Spanish-American War, consolidated U.S. control in the Caribbean. Puerto Rico became a commonwealth while Cuba became independent, but with certain restrictions. The U.S. also became very involved in Dominican Republic politics and occupied both islands several times in the early part of the 20th century.

In 1848, after Mexico lost the Mexican-American war to the U.S., the Mexican President, Antonio Lopez de Santa Ana "ceded 55% of Mexico's territory – most of what is today Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas and parts of Colorado, Nevada and Utah. They received, in exchange, \$15 million. Mexico was allowed to retain everything south of the Rio Grande or, as Mexicans called it, the Río Bravo. What was formerly known as *El Norte de México* (Northern Mexico), now became the American Southwest" (Kevane, 5). This was known as the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and "it transformed more than 80,000 Mexicans into residents of the United States. As the playwright and filmmaker Luis

Valdez's oft-cited remark appropriately recalls, "We did not come to the U.S. at all. The U.S. came to us" (Augenbraum and Olmos 1997, xii-xiii).

So, though migrations continue from Mexico, and are a source of political, social and economic debates, particularly regarding illegal immigration, the intertwined history of these juxtaposed neighbors has to be considered and kept in mind when any discussion of Latino/a literature emerges. "Puerto Ricans and Cubans are considered, after Mexicans, to be the other two major Latino/a subgroups; with their strong Spanish and African roots, their presence is felt in the U.S. via the political exile communities of New York City and South Florida" (Augenbraum and Olmos, xiii). There were major migrations from Cuba because of the emergence of the Castro regime, with sporadic waves of migrations to follow. Puerto Ricans arrived in their greatest numbers during the 1950's, partly because of the increasing wartime labor market and also because the Jones Act had made all Puerto Ricans U.S. citizens. "Encouraged by postwar economic boom and newly affordable air transportation, the Puerto Rican population grew to 675,000 (with half a million in New York) and 900,000 by 1960" (de Varona, 129).

Other countries that have added to the ever growing Latino/a Diaspora mostly because of political turmoil – internal or otherwise generated by outside sources including the United States – include the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Colombia, and Venezuela. Emigrants have arrived, in one way or another, to the United States in search of the elusive, yet perpetual promise of

the American Dream. It merits mention that some of them have come as exiles or political refugees because of the turmoil within their countries, and arrive here more as a means of survival than as a way to be better off economically.

Though the people have been here, the voices were not heard or spread until the late 1960's and 1970's when small presses began to publish the work of Latinos/as. As Herrera-Sobek wrote:

The conquered Mexican-American population became a voiceless entity, frequently described by the terms *invisible* and *silent minority*. Denied their history, their literature, their language, and their culture, Mexican-Americans' artistic expressions were marginalized and ignored by the mainstream Euro-American community. And although *Chicanos* resisted colonization and oppression, as is evident in court records throughout the Southwest, and as narrated in resistance *corridos*, or ballads, such as the "Ballad of Gregorio Cortez," it was not until the 1960's that this ethnic group began to reassert itself into the national consciousness. (Augenbraum and Olmos 1997, xiv-xv)

The 1970's saw the emergence of Tomás Rivera's *Y no se lo trago la tierra / And the Earth did not Devour him* (1970), Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972) and Jose Antonio Villareal's *Pocho* (1970). Writers like Pedro Pietri and Miguel Piñero established the Nuyorican Poet's Café during the 1970's in New York City; both of them received praise from the mainstream literary

establishment. The women responded in kind in the 1980's with a literature that responded to the "limitations of the dominant society and of their own cultural groups. Such authors as Sandra Cisneros, Cristina Garcia and Julia Alvarez illustrate the aesthetic flowering that has broadened the expanse of a Latino/a writing no longer circumscribed aesthetically, linguistically, or ideologically" (Augenbraum and Olmos 2000, xiii).

What these writers, and many others that have emerged since then, assert, display and reinforce through their writings is that they write as a reflection of their time. Some Latino/a writers "were born in their country of origin: Cristina García in Cuba, Judith Ortiz Cofer in Puerto Rico, Junot Díaz in the Dominican Republic. Others, like Julia Alvarez, Oscar Hijuelos, Sandra Cisneros, and Rudolfo Anaya were born in the United States. Ernesto Quiñonez was born in Ecuador, but his family came to New York when he was a year and a half old. Alvarez returned to Santo Domingo almost immediately after she was born. This migration to and from and between mainland and island attests to the bicultural nature of these authors" (Kevane, 10). Geographically speaking – Latino/a authors' locations span great and varied distances between their original homelands and their new ones. "From Anaya's small towns of New Mexico to García's trips to and from Havana and Miami; from Alvarez's town of Burlington, Vermont to her characters' home in New York and back to the town of Cibo in the Dominican Republic; from Díaz's *campo* in Santo Domingo to Washington

Heights, all of the authors draw on their urban and rural landscapes to emphasize how the sense of place affects the individual" (Kevane, 10).

Ralph Waldo Emerson stated in *The American Scholar* (1837), "Each age must write its own books; or rather each generation for the next succeeding. The books of an older period will not fit this" (Augenbraum and Olmos quoting Emerson 1997, xix). The Editors of the *Columbia Literary History of the United States* also admit that it is no longer "possible or desirable, to formulate an image of continuity when diversity of literary materials and a wide variety of critical voices are, in fact, the distinctive features of national literature. The research and criticism of the last thirty years has revealed that the history of the literature of the United States is not one story, but [instead], many different stories" (Augenbraum and Olmos 1997, xix).

"...Language is the Only Homeland." – Czeslow Milosz

... But What if You Reside in Two Languages?

Alvarez, Cisneros, and Cofer, among other Latino/a writers, predominantly write in English, but pepper their narrative with words in Spanish, what some call code-switching. Though they predominantly write in English, these authors seem not to be able to escape the Spanish. It is not a coincidence that Cofer and Alvarez are English professors. English is the language of survival when you are a child in this country. Frances R. Aparicio writes in her essay "On Subversive Signifiers: U.S. Latina/o Writers tropicalize English," that Latina writers, including

Cofer and Cisneros, "write in English because that has been the language of their education and intellectual formation, proof that the cultural conquest has had its consequences. Yet a close reading of their lexicon and syntax reveals the underlying presence of Spanish in most of their works" (Aparicio, 796-7).

Alvarez's book, *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*, is an exploration of the strong relationship between language, power and identity politics. The title itself is an acknowledgment of these conflicts. The García girls lost their accent. Is this a good thing? What did they gain and what did they lose besides their accent? Nobel prize winner in literature Czeslow Milosz stated, "Language is the only homeland." But what if you reside in two languages? Therein is the struggle of the bilingual. Alvarez, like other contemporary Latina writers of her generation, uses memory as a tool, honoring her past through her writing. States Alvarez in one of her interviews, "I am a Dominican, hyphen, American. As a fiction writer, I find that the most exciting things happen in the realm of that hyphen – the place where the two worlds collide or blend together" (Qtd. in Stavans, 552).

In his book, *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*, Rodriguez recounts how as a child he made the conscious decision of giving up one language for another. By doing so, he states, he assimilated into American culture. He cites this decision as the first step toward his success as an academic and a writer. More so, he concludes that Mexican-Americans must either "assimilate" completely or remain "alien," powerless and silent on the

fringes of American society. But in this same story, he recounts the loss of communication and, therefore, closeness he and his family shared. Silence and broken English were the prevalent sounds in his house. When his book was published, it was well received by both academia and the public. One of his essays is included in Unit 2 of the 10th grade *SpringBoard*. It was touted by the anti-bilingual language movement as proof that bilingual education was a waste of time and money. The book immediately became the center of a heated debate that continues to this day.

Opponents to his view have written counter essays. Mexican-American writer, Tomás Rivera, explicitly said Rodriguez had a “colonized mind” (Rivera, 12). Other critics have also broken down and analyzed Rodriguez’s rhetoric and concluded that: “there is more to assimilation than language” (Villanueva, 19). With personal comparisons in his essay, Villanueva counters Rodriguez by citing the monolingual Puerto Rican and Mexicans who “have never known Spanish” and yet are not on equal footing with their non-Latino/a counterparts. He argues, “If language alone were the secret to assimilation, the rate of Puerto Rican and Mexican success would be greater” (Villanueva, 20).

In sharp contrast to Rodriguez’s rhetoric, there is another *Chicana* voice that talks of the power of language and its effect on identity. Gloria Anzaldúa, in her 1987 book, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, devotes the chapter “How To Tame a Wild Tongue” to this discourse. Though she’s been called a cultural traitor for speaking the “oppressor’s language” (English), and been told that she’s ruining

the Spanish language by speaking “*Chicano Spanish*” – considered by purists a mutilation of Spanish – Anzaldúa argues that Chicano Spanish is a “border tongue which developed naturally ... it is a living language” (55). She continues and asks eloquently:

For a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo; for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castilian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to ... Anzaldúa, 55)

Anzaldúa’s study of the border consciousness of Mexican-Americans continues to function as the reigning theoretical work on how this kind of back and forth movement impacts the identity of bicultural Latino/a writers.

In writing in different genres, as some Latino/a writers do, they are using all the vehicles at their disposal to find the meaning of themselves and placate that incessant drive to write what they see, hear, smell, taste and touch. They are doing literary code-switching. Sometimes, prose is not enough and poetry comes into play. Transposing between genres is like transposing between languages. There is an internal shift that then also imposes on the reader the necessity to shift gears when reading the multi-genre works these writers present.

What about the Teachers?

It's not just the lack of inclusion of Latino/a literature that contributes to Latino/a youth's disengagement with school. It's also a question of teacher engagement with the students in question. Yes, President Obama was partially correct, but most teachers are not looking for monetary incentive. Lisa A. Mazzei in her article, "Silence Speaks: Whiteness Revealed in the Absence of Voice," discusses her qualitative research project from which two notable findings emerged. They were: "the realization that the white teachers who participated in the study [including Mazzei] had little or no experience of themselves as having a "racial position" and that their experience of having lived in a world of white privilege severely limited their ability to see or express themselves as 'Other.' This lack of awareness led to noticeable silences in the conversations related to race, racial position, and racial identity, subsequently reflected in the pedagogical and curricular decisions made by teachers" (Mazzei, 1125). That is, "teachers teach the way they are taught" (Hinton and Berry quoting Ridgeway, 2004, 288). Hinton and Berry argue that some teachers may be "reluctant to teach multicultural literature for [reasons such as]: fear of difficult topics such as racism; little, if any, use of such literature in their districts; or fear of parents' responses" (288) and these may be because that was how they were taught. Some educators, on the other hand, may embrace multicultural literature because that's how 'they' were taught.

States KaaVonnia Hinton:

When my eighth grade teacher, new to the profession and to our district, shared Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (1976) with the class and added several pieces of Black literature to the classroom library, it was a pivotal moment for me. For the first time in my life, I realized that I was not alone in the world. There were other black girls having experiences similar to mine and some had grown up and written them down ... This one simple act – handing me a book written by and about blacks – changed my life. (Hinton & Berry, 285)

Still, pre-service teachers, Mazzei points out, ask questions such as, "Why do we need to talk about it? Isn't it best if we don't notice it? Isn't it an issue because we [You] keep making it an issue?" Her response is to consider these questions and the silence that sometimes stifles her class discussions, and "attempt to further ascertain their relevance, and to formulate pedagogical responses so [she] can get students to talk about it. So that we *can* adequately prepare teachers to recognize when they are responding to their students based on their own biases, stereotypes, and ignorance in order to help future teachers not just mouth the mantra of a culturally relevant pedagogy, but actually mean it and enact it" (Mazzei, 1127).

A teacher’s attitude and/or perceptions are not always exposed in what they say, but instead in what they don’t say – which is consistent with the notion of the hidden curriculum that becomes part of what is taught.

This research is emphasized because the disparity between the ethnicity and/or race of public school teachers and their students continues. In 2007-2008, at the secondary level, 83% of teachers were white, 7% black, 7% Latino/a and 3% Other (See Table 4 below). There is a cultural gap that will always exist between these teachers and their racially/ethnically diverse students. This, not taking into consideration socio-economic differences, is a potential hindrance to teachers teaching and students learning. Case in point, there is cultural information and specific guidelines that teachers are supposed to acquire through an ESOL endorsement (via the District or an accredited university); and though they touch upon cultural differences in one or two of the courses, they are minimal, and don’t fully address the issue of using material that the students can relate to.

Table 4. Number and percentage distribution of full-time teachers, by school level, sector, and selected teacher characteristics: School years 1999–2000 and 2007–08

Teacher characteristic	Secondary					
	1999–2000			2007–08		
	All	Public	Private	All	Public	Private
Total, number ¹	983,100	919,800	63,300	1,093,400	1,032,800	60,600
Total, percentage	100.0	93.6	6.4	100.0	94.5	5.5
Sex	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Male	45.0	44.8	46.9	41.7	41.3	47.1
Female	55.0	55.2	53.1	58.3	58.7	52.9
Age	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 30	16.5	16.2	20.2	17.6	17.5	18.6

Table 4 cont.

Teacher characteristic	All	Public	Private	All	Public	Private
30–39	21.6	21.7	20.0	25.6	26.0	17.9
40–49	30.7	30.9	28.1	23.2	23.3	20.6
50–59	28.1	28.3	26.1	26.2	26.1	27.3
60 and over	3.2	3.0	5.5	7.5	7.0	15.6
Race/ethnicity ²	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
White	86.2	85.9	91.0	83.5	83.1	89.6
Black	6.4	6.7	1.8	6.7	7.0	1.9
Hispanic	5.2	5.1	5.7	6.9	7.0	5.7
Asian	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.7
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	—	—	—	0.2 †	0.2 †	‡
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0.9	0.9	0.4 †	0.5	0.5	0.5
Two or more races	—	—	—	0.9	0.9	0.6
Highest degree earned ³	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than bachelor's	1.5	1.5	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.4
Bachelor's	48.8	48.9	47.5	44.6	44.5	46.3
Post baccalaureate	49.7	49.7	50.5	53.6	53.7	52.3
Master's Education specialist or professional diploma	4.7	4.8	3.1	6.2	6.3	4.4
Doctoral or first-professional	1.2	1.1	1.8	1.6	1.5	2.9
Average base salary, in constant 2009–10 dollars ⁴	\$51,200	\$51,900	\$40,600	\$51,600	\$52,100	\$43,800
Base salary, in constant 2009–10 dollars, percentage ⁴	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Less than \$30,000	4.4	3.3	19.9	2.3	1.8	11.2
\$30,000–\$44,999	38.4	37.7	48.7	36.8	36.2	48.0
\$45,000–\$59,999	30.0	30.4	23.2	35.1	35.5	28.1
\$60,000–\$74,999	18.6	19.4	6.3	17.6	18.1	9.6
\$75,000 or more	8.7	9.1	1.8	8.2	8.5	3.1

— Not available.

† Not applicable.

1 Interpret with caution. The standard error of the estimate is equal to 30 percent or more of the estimate's value.

2 Reporting standards not met (too few cases).

3 "Less than bachelor's" includes teachers with an associate's degree and those without a postsecondary degree; in 2007–08, it also includes those with vocational certificates. "Education specialist/professional diploma" includes teachers with a certificate of advanced graduate studies in 1999–2000 and 2007–08. See glossary for the definition of first-professional degrees and a list of these degrees.

4 Average base salary was calculated in 2009–10 school year constant dollars and adjusted using the Consumer Price Index (CPI). For more information on the CPI, see supplemental note 10.

Table 4 cont.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. For more information on the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), see supplemental note 3.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Teacher and Private School Teacher Data Files," 1999–2000 and 2007–08 and "Charter School Teacher Data File," 1999–2000.

Linda Labbo quoted several student's assignments and showed in her article that the journey for teachers to become better to prepare to teach those of different cultures is not an easy one. She quotes one teacher who says she doesn't have a 'culture': "I'm just plain vanilla and white mayo on white bread. I'm just like everyone else in my little town where I grew up" (41). In this same manner throughout the article, she uses examples to see the different concepts we have to tackle, from the very concept of culture, which to some was a "fleeting, intangible thing that was hard to grasp" (41), to "unexplored assumptions about the uniqueness of middle-class life experiences" (42). She ties it all together by saying that the golden rule – treating others as you would want to be treated – is what should rule; which, despite the intent of her golden rule, does mean inherently balancing the curriculum.

But, it has to go beyond that. The differences have to be acknowledged and explored through varied texts that reflect the demographics of the classroom. After a teacher builds and nurtures a sense of community by acknowledging both the differences and similarities of all the students in the classrooms, then can she / he from that point move the class forward without the unspoken prejudices that could suffocate and kill the spirit of a class. "Academic achievement of ethnically diverse students will improve when they are

taught through their own cultural and experiential filters” (Gay quoting Auld & Kawakami, 1994; Foster, 1995; Gay, 2000; Hollins, 1996; Kleinfeld, 1975; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). This is where a supplement containing works of Latino/a literature, for the teacher to get familiar with, would benefit those teachers that want to engage their students, but either don’t know where to look, or don’t have the time to research for these texts.

Most teachers are aware, or if not should consider, that students will come in with their own pre-conceived notions of others. And it’s usually based on culture and media influences that promote stereotypes; stereotypes which students then bring into the classrooms. This is especially true of the reluctant readers of any race or ethnicity. These kids’ schema is based on an edited version of reality, one that doesn’t come from books, but rather the mass media and their own particular home environment. Like students, states Geneva Gay in her article, “Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching”: “Many teachers also are hard-pressed to have an informed conversation about leading multicultural education scholars and their major premises, principles and proposals. What they think they know about the field is often based on superficial or distorted information conveyed through popular culture, mass media, and critics” (Gay, 107).

But knowing you have a problem is the first step. Taking into considerations each student’s individuality will go a long way into creating a strong sense of community in a classroom. States Patthey-Chavez, “School

achievement is shaped by the parallel worlds constructed by students and teachers in school settings, and both groups draw on larger socio-cultural repertoires to manage the experience” (Patthey-Chavez, 35). In her qualitative study, she examines the cultural dynamics resulting from the advent of the “minority-majority” in an inner city high school with a large (more than 80%) Latino/a population (abstract). Though her study focuses on the experiences of one high school, it does present the readers with observations that extend beyond her study. For example, she states, that high school students are expected to come “to the schools with a set number of skills, including English language skills and English literacy” (36).

This, however, is not always the case. Part of the challenge in teaching in general, but English language arts in particular, lies in the partial, non-existent, or misconstrued understanding of the particular culture of students by their teachers. This is not to say that teachers do not try to empathize with the very different lives their students may live in comparison to theirs; rather, there is more to the issue here than just lack of cultural knowledge on the part of the teacher. At issue is the realization that “culture” is a construct that occurs daily in a classroom. “Thus, joint activities are vehicles for a continuous, interactively accomplished and inherently variable negotiation of a given social group’s identity, values, and existential projection into geographical space and historical or mythical time. In effect, “culture”, as it is understood through practice theory, is something actively produced and displayed, not a monolithic label implying

uniform beliefs and values" (Patthey-Chavez, 37). Arthur Applebee, in his article, "Discussion-Based Approaches to Developing Understanding: Classroom Instruction and Student Performance in Middle and High School English", states, "...contexts within which literacy is used and learned lead to particular ways of thinking and doing – culture (including the culture of the classroom), language and cognition are inextricably intertwined. This recognition, in turn, implies that the social processes of the classroom and the individual development of students need to be examined simultaneously, with the ultimate goal of a better understanding of the nature of teaching and learning" (Applebee et al., 688). He continues to state that non-mainstream students do much better when instruction builds on previous knowledge and current ideas and experiences, as opposed to traditional instructional approaches.

Again, another scholar stating that the best way to capitalize on student's strengths is to use the diverse background of the students as a launching pad for the theme of the unit. There are many ways to accomplish this using either poetry, short story or excerpts from novels by Latino/a writers and still remain true to the overall themes of the current *SpringBoard* curriculum that cover the themes of Coming of Age (9th grade), Cultural Awareness (10th grade), the American Experience (11th grade), and Perspectives (12th grade).

Scott Page states in his article, "The Power of Diversity", "Most differences that we see across identity groups are not essential. They're not hard coded into our genes. They originate in communities and in cultures and are reinforced by

daily practice. People act the way they do because they're conforming to the people around them" (32). So the teacher, within the community that she/he creates in her/his classroom, is one of the key components in, not just building an atmosphere where learning can take place, but is also a direct influence in the self-perception and continued growth (academic and emotional) of her/his students.

Including Latino/a Literature in the Secondary Classroom

The idea of the inclusion of Latino/a literature in the secondary classroom is not new. SDHC's *SpringBoard* curriculum includes several works by writers that are labeled within the curriculum itself as Latinos/as. Yet, the inclusion is minimal in comparison to the rest of the texts featured in *SpringBoard* – specifically in the 11th and 12th grade levels. One of the primary goals of this work is to provide teachers with the essential data needed to create lesson plans that include Latino/a literature that reflects the demographics of their classroom and incorporate these works into the unit theme they are working on (i.e. Coming of Age in 9th grade). The need in the classroom seems to be for anthologies and/or textbooks that can assist teachers in identifying themes, trends, connections, and the many varied voices that would fit in with a particular teacher's curriculum within the works of Latino/a authors; and what better place to shed light onto this subject matter than in an English language arts classroom.

Teachers, then, have a responsibility to be constantly conscious in assessing the language needs of their students, both English Language Learners (ELL) and non-ELL. They need to be conscious of, as well as be able to identify, learn and even engage in *code-switching*. *Code-switching* here defined as the ability to “switch from one register (or sublet) to another in everyday life (high, low, working jargon, etc.) according to the social context” (Sutton, 138). For example, a teacher would not address her/his Principal the same way she/he would address one of her/his sibling or other family member. This thesis was not written in the dialect of everyday language, but rather in the subject-specific jargon of academic texts.

One clue that teachers have to a student’s familiarity with the standard language (English) is not just their particular dialect – which might be deceiving in itself – but by their fluency levels. States Sutton, “Fluency in the range of sociolects and registers varies greatly between speaker and writers of the same language, according to familiarity with the relevant situation, level of education, breadth of reading, etc.” (136). Those student who were not read to a lot as young children and whose exposure to reading remained lacking throughout their school years for one reason or another – these are the kids who are going to be in high school, and maybe even graduate, with a severely limited vernacular.

This is where teacher awareness comes into play. By realizing and consciously acknowledging and using the fact that some students’ schema is

different than their own - particularly if they are of a different race or ethnicity – teachers can better serve their students’ needs on all of Maslow’s Hierarchy’s levels. The following classroom practices were identified by Langer (1995) as particularly important in supporting all students’ meaning making:

- Teachers treat all students as capable envisionment-builders with important understandings and potential contributions to classroom discussion;
- Teachers use instructional activities, such as discussion, to develop understandings rather than to test what students already know;
- Teachers assume that questions are a natural part of the process of coming to understand new material, rather than an indication of failure to learn, and that questions provide productive starting points for discussion; and
- Teachers help students learn to examine multiple perspectives (from students, texts, and other voices) to enrich understanding rather than focusing on consensus interpretations.

(Applebee, 691)

The last point particularly resonates and reinforces the argument presented in this thesis. Latino/a literature can be used to assist teachers in helping their students examine multiple perspectives. It can be, if used by all

English language arts teachers who teach Latino/a students, a very strong deterrent to the Latino/a dropout rate.

Conclusion

On October 19, 2010, President Obama signed the Executive Order on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans in the East Room of the White House. Within this Order, in Section 2, one of the Initiative Objectives is as follows:

Reducing the dropout rate of Hispanic students and helping Hispanic students graduate from high school prepared for college and a career, in part by promoting a positive school climate and supporting successful and *innovative dropout prevention and recovery strategies that better engage Hispanic youths in their learning*, help them catch up academically, and provide those who have left the educational system with pathways to reentry.

(Obama, d, 1, v) (italics added by author)

Note the italicized lines within this context, specifically: 'recovery strategies', 'better engage Hispanic youths'. This thesis contends that by substantially increasing the Latino/a literature within the secondary English language arts curriculum – including Reading classes – Latino/a students will become more engaged, not just in their language arts classes, but in other classes as well. "Schools play an important role in shaping [the] racial identities

[of students] because they are one of the few social settings where kids interact with people from different backgrounds" (Noguera & Akom, 31). It is also here that students look for affirmation of themselves. When the literature that they read includes characters with backgrounds similar to their own, it has the potential to positively affect their self image, which in turn can impact their academic performance. Latino/a literature has the ability to uproot and/or debunk racial stereotypes that permeate society still, and most negatively affects Latino/a as well as African American students.

Again, the key words in President Obama's executive order were "strategies that better engage Hispanic youths." Using literature that Latino/a students can relate to is an effective way for teachers to solidify relationships with these students – relationships that can possibly deter a Latino/a youth that may be considering dropping out. States Miriam Witmer in her article, "The 4th R in Education – Relationships:" "Reading, 'riting, rithmentic and *relationships* are the foundations of effective education...it is clear that healthy and productive relationships play a huge part in student as well as teacher success" (Witmer quoting Epstein, 2001). She further asserts that teachers need to be aware of the "principles and constructs of educational psychology" which can help them make proactive decisions that would foster relationships and, consequently, student success. As she delved into this 'relationship' factor in regards to educational psychology, she cites research to support her claims: "Learning occurs only when what is being presented is meaningful enough to the student

experience ... Furthermore, relationships in the classroom have an impact on student achievement because the brain does not automatically or perceptually separate cognition from emotions" (Witmer quoting Caine and Caine 1994, 224).

Latino/a literature used within the curriculum and based on the demographics of each individual class, will further foster and develop teacher-student relationships that can act as a possible deterrent to dropping out. More research from Witmer relates two underlying principle of what Rogers and Renard (199) call "relationship-driven teaching:"

The first principle is taken directly from Steven Covey's concept of "seeking first to understand" (Rogers and Renard quoting Covey, 1989). Covey explains that we need to understand other people before we can expect them to understand us. This principle alone stresses the importance of educational psychology in teacher preparation programs. "[All] teachers must be keenly aware of the developmental stages and needs of their students in order to more fully understand them. The second underlying principle of relationship-driven teaching involves managing the learning context, not the learner" (Rogers and Renard 1999). When we create learning situations that foster intrinsic motivation rather than seek to dominate or control students, students are more likely to want to learn (Rogers, Ludington, and Graham 1998).

In their article, "Disparities Demystified: Causes of the Racial Achievement Gap All Derive from Unequal Treatment," Pedro Noguera and Antwi Akom point out that "despite its faults, public education remains the most

democratic and accessible institution in the country. In fact, in the post-welfare reform period, it is virtually all that remains of the social safety net for poor children” (31). And where else can the cultural bridges be built, if not in school?

Rebecca Powell Stanard asserts, “Dropping out of school should be viewed as a process rather than an event” (219). She further states that “interventions must be developed to address the problem on multiple levels. Intervention and prevention strategies must be comprehensive, flexible and *culturally specific...*” (31). What she concludes her article with is that, “The failure of students to complete a high school education is a problem that has serious consequences not only for the individual, but also for society” (220).

As President Obama and many other people are aware, finishing high school “remains the first and most important step to productive adulthood, a prerequisite to higher education, career and business success, and seminal to the wealth-building capacity of the vast majority of Americans. Earning a high school diploma remains the No.1 predictor of who is likely to make it in society, how far they are able to go, and what they are able to earn and achieve” (Graves, 6).

By conducting this research, and imploring the SDHC to act upon it, this thesis elicits to better the lives of Latino/a students, to keep them from dropping out, and to help them to become responsible adult citizens with a chance for educational and career success. The road they are on has many potholes, detours and diversions. The teachers in the SDHC and possibly others in the state of Florida, would welcome a guide that could help them make sense of this

notion of *Latino-essness* that could, as well, quickly and efficiently provide them with lesson plans and a literature guide that would give them a plethora of works to choose from. They would want what most teachers would want – lesson plans and information that can help them do their job – teach.

For some teachers of color, seeing the differences between their students and themselves, and identifying with them is easy. But, for most teachers who are not Latina/o or African American, or any other race or ethnicity for that matter, the easiest way is to ignore the differences and say, “Oh well.” But that path of least resistance does not help the struggling students. The cultural differences need to be looked on as an opportunity, a bridge to higher learning and more understanding – on both sides of the desk – rather than as an obstruction that at best is ignored, or at worst, serves to hinder the students’ chance of learning.

Where else is the diversity more evident than in our public schools? It is here that educators have the opportunity to combat the bombardment of stereotypes and, at the same time, convey through literature the message that “*Si se puede / Yes you can succeed*” to all students, those considering dropping out now and those that may consider it in the future.

LATINO/A LITERATURE UNIT PLAN

Latino/a Writers and Identity

In using *SpringBoard*, SDHC divides each year's literature into an overall theme that binds the works throughout the school year. In 9th grade the overall theme is Coming of Age, in 10th grade it is Culture, in 11th it is the American Dream, and in 12th it is Perception and Perspectives. The Unit Plan that follows can be used at any level, though it lends itself best to the themes in 9th and 10th grade. As well, the Unit could be used in its entirety in 9th, 10th, or even 11th or 12th grade Reading classes (Intensive Reading A, B, C, III or IV).

The texts used in this unit are suggestions. But the teacher, perhaps based on the demographics of the classroom, could use a variety and multiple combinations of texts (see Literature Guide). This unit is meant to be implemented in its entirety and take approximately two weeks, but lessons can be pulled and inserted, at the teacher's discretion, throughout the year.

The project that ties the Unit Plan together is the two Coat of Arms. The first done on day two as part of the introduction to *Identity*; the latter used as part of their assessment, in which students will be placed in groups in order to make a Coats of Arms of one of the authors covered in the Unit.

The Unit Plan includes the Sunshine State Standards covered in each lesson. ESOL modifications can include using Spanish language versions of the texts (when available).

Summary of Unit Requirements

- The following texts or literary works will be needed:

“Jibara” excerpt from *When I was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago

Down These Mean Streets excerpt by Piri Thomas

“The Maid’s Daughter” from *Yo!* by Julia Alvarez

- The following projects can be used in this unit:

Latino/a Identity Project- long project; introduce on third day but do not complete until last day.

- Assessments:

Unit will include assessments in the following forms:

Essays

Quizzes

Online activities

Projects

Journal entries

- Handouts/Exit Slips

This unit includes several handouts along with exit slips

Unit Schedule

- Day One Activity: KWL Chart: Latino/a writers Presentation on Latino/a writers
Assessment: Use KWL and Exit Slip Handouts
- Day Two Activity: Internet activity on Latino/a writers.
Assessment: Complete Latino/a Writers – What They Mean to Our World handout; finish KWL chart
- Day Three Activity: Coat of Arms
Assessment: Coat of Arms handout. Teachers use rubric of your choice, sample Coat of Arms
- Day Four Activity: Coat of Arms, continued
- Day Five Activity: Piri Thomas and Esmeralda Santiago – bios & comparisons
Text Used: *Down These Mean Streets* – excerpt and *When I was Puerto Rican* excerpt: “Jibaro.”
Assessment: Exit Slip: Writing Assignment
- Day Six Activity: Thomas / Santiago – con’t: Picture Walk of PR & NYC
Text Used: “Jibaro” excerpt, con’t.
Assessment: Exit Slip and Venn Diagram. Re-write essay.
- Day Seven Activity: Character Quotes – Julia Alvarez
Text Used: *Yo* – excerpt: “The Maid’s Daughter”
Assessment: Written Protocols and Reflections
- Day Eight Activity: Character Quotes, continued
- Day Nine Activity: Coat of Arms Final Product
Text Used: Student’s choice
Assessment: Coat of Arms handout. Teachers use rubric of your choice, sample Coat of Arms

Lesson: Introduction to Identity

Objective: To introduce students to the definition of Identity as well as the authors we will be studying for this Unit.

Sunshine State Standards

LA. 910.1.7.1 – The students will use background knowledge of subject and related content areas, pre-reading strategies (e.g., previewing, discussing, generating questions), text features, and text structure to make and confirm complex predictions of content, purpose, and organization of reading selection.

Preparation:

1. Prepare and review Power Point Presentation
2. Prepare and make copies of an Anticipation Guide for this Unit
3. Bring in lap top
4. Make copies of the power point slides

Materials

- 1.) Magazines
- 2.) Lap top
- 3.) Copies of Power Point Presentation
- 4.) Assign students to bring in pictures that are disposable of themselves, their family members, friends, etc. for their Coat of Arms.

Process

- 1.) Hand out the KWL chart, Anticipation Guide and Exit Slip Worksheet (1 minute)
- 2.) Assign students to complete the left side of the Anticipation Guide (5 minutes) and first two columns of KWL chart
- 3.) Have students in their groups (of three) review their answers for the Anticipation Guide section and KWL (5 minutes)
- 4.) Collect Anticipation Guide (2 minutes)
- 5.) Present the Power Point Presentation (15 minutes)
- 6.) Hand back their Anticipation Guide and Exit Slip Worksheet (5 minutes)
- 7.) Assign students to complete the right side of their Anticipation Guide as well as their Exit Slip (10)- minutes) (They keep KWL for tomorrow)
- 8.) Collect Hand out the *Anticipation Guide and Exit Slip Worksheet* (5 minutes)

Assessment:

Students will be assessed on their *Anticipation Guide* as well as their written responses to questions found on their *Exit Slip*

Name: _____
Date: _____

What is Identity? Anticipation Guide

Agree or Disagree **Identity is shaped by one's belief** Agree or Disagree

Agree or Disagree **Friends help shape one's identity** Agree or Disagree

Agree or Disagree **family shapes one's identity** Agree or Disagree

Agree or Disagree **Appearance influences identity** Agree or Disagree

Exit Slip:

What is identity?

What are some things on which your identity is based?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Latino/a Writers: What They Mean to Our Literary World

Directions: The following bulleted directions will guide you through using the Internet as a tool to explore Latino/a writers and how they have contributed our literary world. Please remember all Internet policies and punishment for breaking any rules. This assignment will be completed using a partner and will be due at the end of class...Happy Exploring!!!

- Go to Google search engine and type some of the following key words:

“Latino/a writers”,

- Be sure that the website is a reputable site by going through the proper steps.
- After surfing several sites and writers, choose one writer to focus on. Give the following information:

Writer chosen:

Famous works she or he is know for:

Choose one of the above works and give any noteworthy information that websites have portrayed as being a great contribution to society:

- Give the following websites in which you found any information:

- Reflection: Tell me in two to three paragraphs your reaction to this activity. Here are some questions to get you started:
- Were you surprised at the number of Latino/a writers there are?
- Were you impressed with their literary works and how they are contributing to American literature?
- Had you previously read any of the works found before today?

Lesson: Coat of Arms. What Influences Your Identity?

Objective:

The Students will make a coat of arms and write a paragraph explaining why selected each picture used in the shield,

Florida Sunshine State Standards

SS.A.2.2.3

The student understands various aspects of family life, structures, and roles in different cultures and in many eras (e.g., pastoral and agrarian families of early civilizations, families of ancient times, and medieval families).

LA.910.6.1.1 – The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, and graphs) aid the reader's understanding.

Materials

- Computer lab
- Rubric, one per student
- Sample coat of arms
- Magazines, Newspapers
- Students own disposable pictures
- Scissors
- Coloring Utensils
- Glue
- Hand out of Coat of Arms

Preparations

1. The teacher should have already assigned students to bring in disposable pictures
2. The teacher should explain the what a coat of arms is and how to do it
3. The teacher needs to make sure to go over the rubric in which their coat of arms will be assessed
4. The teacher needs to make sure he/she has all materials

Procedures

(Day One)

1. Pass out Hand outs (5 minutes)
 - a. Hand out assignment for coat of arms
 - b. Hand out rubric in which their coat of arms will be assessed
2. Explain Hand outs (10 minutes)
 - a. Explain the assignment
 - b. Explain the rubric
3. Show examples of coats of arms.
4. Ask the students to explain what the pictures and/or symbols mean.
5. Ask the students how a coat of arms describes a person or family.
6. Ask the students to brainstorm what their coat of arms might look like and why they would use certain pictures and/or symbols.
7. Allow students to work either collaboratively or individually on their coat of arms making sure to type a paragraph on Microsoft Word why they decided to pick each picture(35 minutes)
8. teacher will be circulating around the room or between the lab and the classroom assisting students in creating/completing their own coat of arms

(Day two)

9. Students will continue working on their Coat of Arms (25 minutes)
10. Teacher will be circulating around the room assisting students in creating/completing their own coat of arms.
11. Students will present their final copy of their Coat of Arms (35 minutes)

Assessments

1. Each student writes a paragraph explaining why he/she selected the pictures and/or symbols for the coat of arms. Assess the paragraph according to rubric of teacher's choice.

Lesson: Piri Thomas and Esmeralda Santiago

OBJECTIVE: To familiarize the student with the text of these two authors and to further enhance the definition of identity and its relation to the Coming of Age story.

Sunshine State Standards:

LA.1112.1.7.1 - LA.1112.1.7.8: Reading Comprehension - The student uses a variety of strategies to comprehend grade level text.

LA.1112.2.1.1 - LA.1112.2.1.9: Fiction - The student identifies, analyzes, and applies knowledge of the elements of a variety of fiction and literary texts to develop a thoughtful response to a literary selection.

LA.1112.3.1.1 - LA.1112.3.1.3 Pre-Writing - The student will use prewriting strategies to generate ideas and formulate a plan.

LA.1112.3.2.1 - LA.1112.3.2.3 Drafting - The student will write a draft appropriate to the topic, audience, and purpose.

Preparation:

1. Have overhead of PR and NYC pictures ready.
2. Have overhead of Thomas and Santiago covers
3. Prepare and make copies of Piri Thomas and Esmeralda Santiago – Coming of Age in America packet that includes all work that needs to be turned in.
4. Prepare and make copies of Thomas and Santiago text.

Materials:

1. Copies of Piri Thomas and Esmeralda Santiago – Coming of Age in America packet for each class.
2. Class set of highlighters
3. Overheads of PR and NYC pictures.
4. Class sets of Thomas and Santiago text.

Part One

Begin with Bellwork on board: Respond to the following in your journals:

“What makes someone an American?” “What is an American?”

(Give 5 to 7 minutes to write while you take attendance)

Ask for volunteers to share their answers with the class. Discuss different views.
(5 to 10 min)

Give packet out:

Piri Thomas and Esmeralda Santiago – Coming of Age in America.

Show overhead of Thomas and Santiago. Go over brief biography of each and definition of Coming of Age story and how it ties to identity. (5 to 7 min)

In space provided, ask students to fill in examples of contemporary Coming Of Age stories. (5 minutes)

The rest of this period is given to students to read Piri Thomas section and respond to questions on packet.

Their Exit Slip is the writing assignment on either their fathers or change in their lives. Collect at end of class.

Part Two

Begin with Bellwork on board:

Respond to the following in your journals:

“What is most memorable to you from Piri’s story yesterday?”

“How do you think this story will compare with today’s story?”

(Give 5 to 7 minutes to write while you take attendance)

Turn to page two and using overhead show pictures of Puerto Rico and New York City. (5 min)

Have students fill out PICTURE WALK handout (part of packet) (10 min)

Chunk Read “Jibaro” by Santiago. Model and scaffold, *Say Something* after each paragraph. After reading, have students respond to questions on packet.

Have students do Exit Slip which is Venn diagram comparing both readings in groups, which they present to class.

Assessment

Their exit slip will be their final assessment for Part One and their completed Venn diagram for part two.

ESOL Modifications:

Place ESOL students in heterogeneous groups if possible, with more advanced ESOL students in same groups as less proficient English speakers. Allow extra time for writing in journal (before reading) and provide with bilingual dictionaries.

While reading, be animated with expression and gesture, if possible. During Questioning (purpose setting) ask some yes or no questions directly to ESOL kids to both check understanding and involve in class discussion.

During written protocol activity, allow ESOL students to use drawings to notate their reaction to text. Encourage use of dictionary to further elaborate on their responses.

After reading – make sure ESOL student is partnered with either another ESOL student or a student who will not have problems sharing his or her thoughts more comprehensively. Again, ask some yes or no questions specifically aimed at ESOL students and allow extra time for responses.

Lesson: Character Quotes

Behavior Modifications: Students will be able to infer personality traits of a character.

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to help students become interested in characters and make predictions about them and their relationships to one another.

Materials: Quotes from particular character in text being read in class. Copy of text/novel. (Suggested text: "The Maid's Daughter" from *Yo!*)

Before Reading: *Activating Background, Building Personal Connections*

Students will answer two sets of questions on board in their notebooks/journals. Then in small groups, they will discuss their answers. (Note: *italicized information is for instructor to use to create increased interest in story to be read*)

(Write on board before beginning of class)

- 1) What are or were some of your nicknames, or those of your friends? What do nicknames indicate about people? How can nicknames be both positive and negative? *Think about the following: Authors use names and nicknames to reveal character. Did someone ever mistake you for someone else? Did you let them?*
- 2) When was a time that you were positively or negatively surprised by an action of someone you knew? Why did the action seem out character? How did it change how you felt and thought about that person? *There will be surprises in the story.*
- 3) What is someone like who is "sarcastic"? "Brazen"? "Patient"? *These are words that are used to describe characters in this story.*

During Reading: *Modeling and Purpose Setting*

I will read the first few paragraphs of the story and provide a think-aloud of everything I am thinking, feeling, noticing, and doing as I read.

After reading the first few paragraphs, ask students the following:

What is their impression of Primitiva? Would you want to be her friend? Why or why not?

What is your perception of Yolanda?

Do you think we will be exploring positive relationships, negative relationships, or both?

Guided Reading Activity

Assignment to students:

As students read the rest of the story on their own, they will complete a written protocol. As they read, they are to write down the things they are thinking, feeling, seeing, doing, and connecting to on the lines next to the place in the story where you are doing these things.

Students will respond to the italic phrases. All of the phrases have to do with character. How do these phrases help us understand the characters and illuminate the story meaning, re: relationships?

As students read instruct them to build meaning about the following:

How is this story about relationships? What is effective and ineffective about Primitiva's relationship with Yolanda?

After Reading: *Student Reflection*

Instruct students to go through their protocol comments and try to characterize their reading. Were the things they wrote most about "seeing" or visualizing the story? Or were they mostly questions? Or connections to their lives or other stories they'd read? Were there a lot of feelings in it? Or was there something else that typified the reading?

Pick out some of these answers and share them with a partner.

With your partner, revisit the guided reading questions: How is this story about relationships? What is effective and ineffective about Primitiva's relationship with his students?)

Questions for group discussion:

How do we feel about Primitiva by the end of the story? Why? What about Yolanda?

What does this suggest about the nature of good relationships and perhaps relationships based on socio-economic status in particular? What is the author trying to communicate to us through this story?

How do you feel about this message from the author and do you accept, adapt, or reject this vision of relationships?

How can your thinking be applied to the relationships in your own life?

ESOL Modifications:

Place ESOL students in heterogeneous groups if possible, with more advanced ESOL students in same groups as less proficient English speakers. Allow extra time for writing in journal (before reading) and provide with bilingual dictionaries.

While reading, be animated with expression and gesture, if possible. During Questioning (purpose setting) ask some yes or no questions directly to ESOL kids to both check understanding and involve in class discussion.

During written protocol activity, allow ESOL students to use drawings to notate their reaction to text. Encourage use of dictionary to further elaborate on their responses.

After reading – make sure ESOL student is partnered with either another ESOL student or a student who will not have problems sharing his or her thoughts more comprehensively. Again, ask some yes or no questions specifically aimed at ESOL students and allow extra time for responses.

Final Assessment for Identity Unit Plan

Objective:

Students will be teamed up in groups of three and assigned to make a coat of arms on one of the authors we learned about in this unit. Students will also be required to write a paragraph for each picture explaining why they chose it.

Florida Sunshine State Standards

SS.A.2.2.3

The student understands various aspects of family life, structures, and roles in different cultures and in many eras (e.g., pastoral and agrarian families of early civilizations, families of ancient times, and medieval families).

LA.910.6.1.1 – The student will explain how text features (e.g., charts, maps, diagrams, sub-headings, captions, illustrations, and graphs) aid the reader's understanding.

Materials

- Computer lab
- Rubric, one per student
- Sample coat of arms
- Magazines, Newspapers
- Students own disposable pictures
- Scissors
- Coloring Utensils
- Glue
- Hand out of Coat of Arms

Preparations

5. The teacher needs to make sure to go over the rubric in which their coat of arms will be assessed
6. The teacher needs to make sure he/she has all materials

Procedures

(Day One)

1. Pass out Hand outs (5 minutes)
 - i. Hand out assignment for coat of arms on an author
 - ii. Hand out rubric in which their coat of arms will be assessed

2. Explain Hand outs (15 minutes)
 - i. Explain the assignment
 - ii. Explain the rubric
 - 2.) Allow students to work either collaboratively or individually on their coat of arms making sure to type a paragraph on Microsoft Word why they decided to pick each picture (35 minutes)
 12. teacher will be circulating around the room or between the lab and the classroom assisting students in creating/completing their own coat of arms
- (Day two)
13. Students will continue working on their Coat of Arms for their picked author (25 minutes)
 14. Teacher will be circulating around the room assisting students in creating/completing their own coat of arms.
 15. Students will present their final copy of their Coat of Arms of their author (35 minutes)

Assessments

1. Each student writes a paragraph explaining why he/she selected the pictures and/or symbols for the coat of arms. Assess the paragraph according to rubric of teacher's choice.

LATINO/A LITERATURE GUIDE

Using Latino/a Literature to Complement a Secondary English Language Arts Classroom

This guide was generated in an attempt to consolidate both common and not so common Latino/a authors from a wide range of nations, including the countries where most Latinos/as in the U.S.A come from (Mexico, Cuba and Puerto Rico). Chances are, teachers in today's classrooms in Florida will encounter students from these countries predominantly, but as well from any of the other Latin American countries that have become part of the ever-growing Diaspora. The structure of the entries comes from Joan F. Kaywell's *Adolescent Literature as a Complement to the Classics: Addressing Critical Issue in Today's Classrooms*. Chapter 6, specifically, cites information on world and U.S. demographics as well as a design for a world literature course that could also be adapted to Latino/a literature. Following this chapter in her book is an appendix of world literature by continent and country, which is the precursor to the format used in this thesis' literature section, albeit here the works are divided into five specific Latin American countries followed by a sixth part encompassing works from other Central and South American countries.

The majority of the entries in this thesis come from *Latino Literature: A Guide to Reading Interests*, edited by Sara E. Martinez with a Foreword by Connie Van Fleet. Annotations of selected works can be found by referencing these texts. The works listed can also be looked up through quick Internet searches. In addition to the annotations, Martinez includes subject matter and related works for each entry, a great source for any teacher. Martinez divides her work by category (i.e. fiction, romance, testimonials). In this thesis, however, they are divided by the authors' country of origin so that teachers can choose works based on the demographics of their classes. Publication dates and total pages are included so teachers can also use this information to plan their lessons accordingly. In addition, the appendix at the end of this thesis features an alphabetized bibliography of all authors listed in this section. If a work of fiction is part of a short story collection, it is labeled as such within the Fiction section. It should be noted that many Latino/a writers write 'compilation' works – that is, a book that includes both poetry and short stories within its pages.

Teachers of Latino/a students are also encouraged to watch some of the films listed here in order to gain some understanding of their students' schema. Any of the films can be looked up on IMDB for quick summaries. They should also read texts themselves before introducing them into the classroom. This pre-reading serves to ensure age-appropriateness of text and suitability of topics that are to be discussed.

Another way to gain familiarity of a student's schema is to read some of the classic literature from that student's particular country. Most titles have been translated to English and are available through varied sources. Teachers can err on the side of caution by being familiar with authors such as Gabriel García Marquez (Colombia), José Martí (Cuba), Junot Díaz (Dominican Republic), and Mario Vargas Llosa (Peru) among others.

Both classic and contemporary musical artists are also included in each country's category in order to give teachers another point of reference. Having some knowledge of musical artists that Latino/a students are most likely familiar with can help a teacher establish or consolidate rapport with these students by having additional knowledge of their schema.

At the end of this guide, there are various anthologies and collections that feature excerpts and/or full text versions of stories in this guide. As well, many short stories by some of the authors listed can be found in these anthologies. Criteria used for inclusion in this guide included this author's personal reading preferences and past experience as well as book sales, high reading numbers, and high quality publishers of selected titles.

COLOMBIA

Films

The Two Escobars (2010) documentary, directed by Jeff and Michael Zimbalist
(1 hr. 40 mins.)

Mary Full of Grace (2004) starring Catalina Sandino Moreno, directed by Joshua Marston (1 hr. 41 mins.)

Love in the time of Cholera (2007) starring Javier Bardem and Benjamin Bratt, directed by Mike Newell (2 hrs. 19 mins.)

Fiction- Adult

Paradise Travel (2001) by Jorge Franco (228pp)

Tales from the Town of Widows (2007) by James Cañon (340pp)

YA Fiction

Celebrating the Hero (1995) by Lyll Becerra de Jenkins (192pp)

So Loud a Silence (1996) by Lyll Becerra de Jenkins (154pp)

The Treasure of Diogenes Sampuez (1979) by James Munves (186pp)

Boy Kills Man (2006) by Matt Whyman (152pp)

Nonfiction

Pimps, Hos, Playa Hatas, and All the Rest of my Hollywood Friends (2006) by John Leguizamo (280pp)

Out of War: True Stories from the Front Lines of the Children's Movement for Peace in Colombia (2001) by Sara Cameron (186pp)

Secrets of Colombian Cooking (2004) by Patricia McCausland-Gallo (251pp)

Children's Stories

The Monkey People: A Colombian Folktale (1995) by Eric Metaxas and
illustrated by Diana Bryan (32pp)

Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia (2010) by Jeannette Winter (32pp)

Classic and Contemporary Musical Artists

Carlos Vives – *Clasicos de la Provincia, El Amor de mi Tierra* (Cumbias and
Vallenatos)

Grupo Niche – *No Hay Quinto Malo, Etnia, A Golpe de Folklore* (Salsa)

Los 50 de Joselito – *Pa'Que Nadie se quede Senta'o* (Merengue, Salsa)

CUBA

Films

American Experience: Fidel Castro (2005) documentary (2 hrs.)

The Lost City (2005) starring and directed by Andy Garcia (2 hrs. 24 mins.)

Dirty Dancing: Havana Nights (2004) starring Romola Garai and Diego Luna,
directed by Guy Ferland (2 hrs. 26 mins.)

Fidel: The Untold Story (2003) starring Fidel Castro and Harry Belafonte,
directed by Estela Bravo (1 hr. 31 mins.)

Thirteen Days (2001), starring Shawn Driscoll and Kevin Costner, directed by
Roger Donaldson (2 hrs. 27 mins.)

Fiction- Adult

Holy Radishes! (1995) by Roberto G. Fernández (298pp)

The Second Death of Unica Aveyano (2004) by Ernesto Mester-Reed (259pp)

A Handbook to Luck (2007) by Cristina García (259pp)

Dreaming in Cuban (1993) by Cristina García (245pp)

The Aguero Sisters (1997) by Cristina García (299pp)

YA Fiction

Haters (2006) by Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez (351pp)

Cuba 15 (2003) by Nancy Osa (304pp)

Cubanita (2005) by Gaby Triana (208pp)

From Amigos to Friends (1997) by Pelayo "Pete" Garcia (242pp)

Flight to Freedom (2002) by Ana Veciana-Suarez (224pp)

Nonfiction

Next Year in Cuba: A Cubano's Coming-of-age in America (1995) by Gustavo Pérez Firmat (213pp)

Exiled Memories: A Cuban Childhood (2002) by Pablo Medina (135pp)

Letters of Love and Hope: The Story of the Cuban 5 (2005) by Nancy Morejón
with Alice Walker (editor) (190pp)

Cuban Books About TAMPA

Tristan and the Hispanics (1989) by Jose Yglesias (265pp) - YA

The Cigar Roller (2005) by Pablo Medina (178pp)

Black Cuban, Black American: A Memoir (2000) by Evelio Grillo (134pp)

Children's Stories

Martina the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale (2007) by Carmen Agra Deedy
and illustrated by Michael Austin (32pp)

Classic and Contemporary Musical Artists

Celia Cruz – *Quimbo Quimbumbia, Azucar Negra* (salsa, guaracha)

Gloria Estefan – *Mi Tierra, Conga* (sons, boleros, salsa)

Buena Vista Social Club – *At Carnegie Hall* (sons, boleros, salsa)

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Films

In the Time of the Butterflies (2001) starring Salma Hayek and Edward James
Olmos, directed by Mariano Barroso (1 hr. 35 mins.)

Extraordinary Women (2009) documentary, directed by Yiladalina Tatem Brache
(1 hr. 35 mins.)

Fiction- Adult

Let It Rain Coffee (2005) by Angie Cruz (292pp)

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao (La breve y maravillosa vida de Oscar Wao) (2007) by Junot Díaz (Translated by Achy Obejas, 2008) (340pp)

Saving the World (2006) by Julia Alvarez (368pp)

Song of the Water Saints (2002) by Nelly Rosario (256pp)

How the García Girls Lost Their Accent (1991) by Julia Alvarez (290pp)

YA Fiction

Before We Were Free (2004) by Julia Alvarez (192pp)

Finding Miracles (2004) by Julia Alvarez (264pp)

In the Name of Salome (2000) by Julia Alvarez (353pp)

Soledad (2001) by Angie Cruz (237pp)

Divas Don't Yield: Four Chicas, One Car, Tons of Baggage: A Novel (2006) by Sofía Quintero (354pp)

Nonfiction

Something to Declare (1998) by Julia Alvarez (300pp)

God and Trujillo: Literary and Cultural Representations of the Dominican Dictator (2005) by Ignacio Lopez-Calvo (224pp)

Children's Stories

Mi Abulelita (2008) by Rebecca Newth (32pp)

The Color of My Words (2004) by Lynn Joseph (Trinidad) (144pp)

Classic and Contemporary Musical Artists

Johnny Pacheco – *La Perfecta Combinación, Tres de Café y Dos de Azucar* (also with *Fania All-Stars*)

Proyecto Uno – *Pura Gozadera* and *In Da House* (merenrap)

Anthony Santos (of Aventura) – *Generation Next, We Broke the Rules* (bachata, hip hop, reggaeton)

MEXICO

Films

American Me (1992) Starring Edward James Olmos, William Forsythe, Sal Lopez, directed by Edward James Olmos (2 hrs. 5 mins.)

Mi Familia (1995) Starring Jimmy Smits, Esai Morales, Edward James Olmos, directed by Grace Montoya (2 hrs. 8 mins.)

Zoot Suit (1981) Starring Daniel Valdez, Edward James Olmos, directed by Luis Valdez (1 hr. 43 mins.)

Babel (2006) Starring Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett, directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu (2 hrs. 23 mins.)

Fiction- Adult

The Guardians: A Novel (2007) by Ana Castillo (211pp)

El Indio Jesus (2000) by Gilberto Chavez Ballejos and Shirley Hill Witt (257pp)

Crossing Vines (2003) by Rigoberto González (216pp)

Silver Mendez Series (2000-2003) by Gary Soto

Nickel and Dime (2000) (189pp)

Poetry Lover (2001) (206pp)

Amnesia in a Republican County (2003) (200pp)

The Mixquiada Letters (1986) by Ana Castillo (132pp)

The Jumping Tree: A Novel (2001) by René Saldaña (192pp)

Caramba! (2004) by Nina Marie Martínez (360pp)

YA Fiction

Sister Chicas (2006) by Lisa Alvarado (264pp)

Bless Me, Última (1999) by Rudolfo Anaya (262pp)

The House on Mango Street (1984) by Sandra Cisneros (128pp)

Esperanza Rising (2000) by Pam Muñoz Ryan (288pp)

Becoming Naomi Leon (2004) by Pam Muñoz Ryan (246pp)

Pillars of Gold and Silver (1997) by Beatriz Eugenia de la Garza (260pp)

Mexican White Boy (2008) by Matt de la Peña (247pp)

Nonfiction

Living Up the Street (1992) by Gary Soto (176pp) (short stories)

Why you crying? My Long, Hard Look at Life, Love and Laughter (2004) by
George Lopez (194pp) (biography)

Americanos: Latino Life in the United States (1999) by Edward James Olmos, Lea
Ybara and Manuel Monterrey (176pp) (biography)

Nobody's son: Notes from an American Life (1998) by Luis Alberto Urrea
(184pp) (biography).

How Did You Get to be a Mexican? A White/Brown Man's Search for Identity
(1999) by Kevin R. Johnson (245pp) (biography)

Children's Story

The Lizard and the Sun: A Folktale in English and Spanish (1999) by Alma Flor
Ada and illustrated by Felipe Davalos (48pp)

Big Bushy Mustache (1998) by Gary Soto (32pp)

Classic and Contemporary Musical Artists

Banda el Recodo – *El Alma de Simaloa* (banda, rancheras, Mexican cumbias)

La Luz Roja de San Marcos – *Vallenato a la Mexicana, Canta Calixto Ochoa*
(Mexican cumbias, vallenatos)

Selena – *Selena, Amor Prohibido* (Latin pop)

Thalía – *Thalia, Arrasando* (Latin pop)

PUERTO RICO

Films

West Side Story (1961) starring Natalie Wood and George Chakiris, directed by Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise (2 hrs. 32 mins.)

El Cantante (2006) starring Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony, directed by Leon Ichaso (1 hr. 46 mins.)

Feel the Noise (2007) starring Omarion Grandberry and Giancarlo Esposito, directed by Alejandro Chomski (1 hr. 26 mins.)

Fiction- Adult

No Matter How Much You Promise to Cook or Pay the Rent, You Blew it Cauze

Bill Bailey Ain't Never Coming Home Again: A Symphonic Novel (2003) by Edgardo Vega Yunque (638pp)

Flight of the Swan (2001) by Rosario Ferre (262pp)

The House on the Lagoon (1995) by Rosario Ferre (407pp)

YA Fiction

Call Me Maria (2004) by Judith Ortiz Cofer (127pp)

The Meaning of Consuelo (2003) by Judith Ortiz Cofer (185pp)

Emily Goldberg Learns to Salsa (2006) by Mical Ostow (200pp)

Blood Fugues (2005) by Edgardo Vega Yunque (270pp)

Going Home (1999) by Nicholasa Mohr (192pp)

Nonfiction

Silent Dancing: A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood (1990) by
Judith Ortiz Cofer (168pp)

When I Was Puerto Rican (1994) by Esmeralda Santiago (288pp)

Almost a Woman (1999) by Esmeralda Santiago (336pp)

The Noise of Infinite Longing: A Memoir of a Family and an Island (2004) by
Luisita Lopez Torregrosa (286pp)

Memoir of a Visionary: Antonia Pantoja (2002) by Antonia Pantoja (199pp)

Once a King, Always a King: The Unmaking of a Latin King (2003) by Reymundo
Sanchez (286pp)

Children's Story

The Golden Flower: A Taino Myth from Puerto Rico (2005) by Nina Jaffe and
illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez (32pp)

Juan Bobo and the Horse of Seven Colors: A Puerto Rican Legend (1998) by Jan
Mike and Illustrated by Charles Reasoner (32pp)

Classic and Contemporary Musical Artists

Tito Puentes – *Timbalero Tropical, Kings of Mambo* (salsa, mambo, Latin Jazz)

La India – *Dicen que soy, Sobre el fuego* (salsa)

Hector Lavoe – *La Voz, El sabio* (salsa)

Jennifer Lopez – *On the 6, J.Lo* (Latin Pop, Hip Hop, Pop)

OTHER CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Films

Sin Nombre (2009) starring Marco Antonio Acuirre, directed by Cary Fukunaga
(60 mins.)

The Bridge of San Luis Rey (2004) starring Robert De Niro, directed by Mary
McGuckian (2 hrs.)

Secrets of Lost Empires: Inca (1996) documentary (50 mins.)

Fiction- Adult*

*I have noted subject matter in parentheses at end of entry. If it differs from author's nationality, then I provide it next to his or her name.

The Heiress of Water (2006) by Sandra Rodriguez Barron (Puerto Rican) (299pp)
(El Salvador)

The Peruvian Notebooks (2006) by Braulio Muñoz (271pp) (Peru)

Family Resemblance (2003) by Tanya Maria Barrientos (250pp) (Guatemala)

Only a Kiss Away (2001) by Lourdes Carvajal (203pp) (Costa Rica)

Death in the Andes (2007) by Mario Vargas Llosa (288pp) (Peru)

The War of the End of the World (1981) (*La Guerra del Fin del Mundo*, 1981) by
Mario Vargas Llosa (Peruvian), translated by Helen R. Lane (568pp)
(Brazil)

The Real Life of Alejandro Mayta (1998) (*La Historia de Mayta*, 1984) by Mario
Vargas Llosa, translated by Alfred MacAdam (310pp) (Peru)

Zorro (2005) by Isabel Allende (Chilean) (444pp) (Mexican-Americans)

YA Fiction

Delia's Way (1998) by Olga Berrocal Essex (186pp) (Panama)

Marisol and Magdalena: The Sound of our Sisterhood (1998) by Veronica Chambers (141pp) (Panama)

Quinceañera Means Sweet 15 (2001) by Veronica Chambers (189pp) (Panama)

The Holy Spirit of My Uncle's Cojones (1999) by Marcos McPeck Villatoro (298pp) (Salvador)

Nonfiction

American Chica: Two Worlds, One Childhood (2001) (*American chica: dos mundos, una infancia*, 2003) by Marie Arana (309pp) (Peru)

The Country Under my Skin: A Memoir of War and Love (2003) by Gioconda Belli (380pp) (Nicaragua)

A Crew of One: The Odyssey of a Solo Marlin Fisherman (2002) by Carlos Bentos (204pp) (Uruguay)

What the Night Tells the Day (1995) by Hector Bianciotti (254pp) (Argentina)

Gringa Latina: A Woman of Two Worlds (1996) by Gabriella De Ferrari (176pp) (Peru)

Honorable Exiles: A Chilean Woman in the Twentieth Century (2000) by Lillian Lorca de Tagle (214pp) (Chile)

Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey (1998) (*Rumbo al sur, deseando el norte: un romance bilingüe*, 1998) by Ariel Dorfman (282pp)
(Chile)

Children's Story

Llama and the Great Flood: A Folktale from Peru (1989) by E. Alexander (39pp)

Carolina's Gift: A Story of Peru (2002) by Katacha Diaz (29pp)

Love and Roast Chicken: A Trickster Tale from the Andes Mountains (2004) by
Barbara Knutson (32pp)

*You Wouldn't Want to be an Inca Mummy: A One Way Journey You'd Rather
Not Make* (2007) by Colin Hynson (32pp)

Moon Rope (1994) (*Un lazo a la luna*, 1992) by Lois Ehlert, translated by Amy
Prince (32pp)

ANTHOLOGIES AND COLLECTIONS

Iguana Dreams: New Latino Fiction (1992) Delia Poey and Virgil Suarez, Editors
(376pp) (Represented in the 29 pieces offered here are Puerto Rican,
Dominican, Cuban, Chilean, and Chicano/a writers)

My Daughter's Eyes and Other Stories (2007) by Annecy Báez (176pp) – short
story collection, (Dominican American)

Woman Hollering Creek (1991) by Sandra Cisneros (165pp) – short story collection, (Mexican-American)

Cubana (1998) by Mirta Yañez (213pp) – short story collection, (Cuban American)

Drown (1996) (*Negocios, 1997*) by Junot Díaz (translated by Eduardo Lago) (208pp) – short story collection, (Dominican American)

Help Wanted: Stories by Gary Soto (2007) by Gary Soto (224pp) (Mexican-American) (YA)

The Truth About Alicia and Other Stories (2002) by Anan Consuelo Matiella (141pp) – short story collection (Mexican-American)

An Island like You: Stories of the Barrio (1995) by Judith Ortiz Cofer (165pp) – short story collection (Puerto Rican) (YA)

Crazy Loco (2001) by David Rice (135pp) – short story collection (Chicano) (YA)

Riding Low on the Streets of Gold (2003) Edited by Judith Ortiz Cofer (198pp) – short story collection (Latino) (YA)

Finding Our Way (2003) by Rene Saldaña (117pp) – short story collection (Mexican American) (YA)

Wachale! Poetry and Prose about Growing Up Latino in America (2001) Edited by Ilan Stavans (146pp) – poetry and short stories (Latino) (YA)

The Year of Our Revolution: New and Selected Stories and Poems (1998) by Judith Ortiz Cofer (128pp) (Puerto Rican) (YA)

The Latino Reader (1997) edited by Harold Augenbraum and Margarite
Fernandez Olmos – (320pp) poetry and short stories (Latino)

POETRY RESOURCES

Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Growing Up Latino in the United States

(1995)(Sandra M. Castillo, Oscar Hijuelos, Carolina Hospital, Pablo Medina,
Berta G. Montalvo, E.J. Vega, Judith Ortiz Cofer, Pedro Pietri, & Johanna
Vega, poets) edited by Lori M. Carlson (160pp)

Cubanísimo!: The Vintage Book of Contemporary Cuban Literature (2003) edited
by Cristina Garcia (400pp)

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APPENDIX 1: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF LATINO/A WRITERS

APPENDIX 1 (Continued)

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