

SEAL



Sobrato Early Academic Language





Adriana Diaz
Senior Program Coordinator



Jen McNeil, EdD
Associate Director

Testimonios: Transformative Counterstorytelling for Dual Language Learning Communities



It's almost like a personal statement from the heart, where you have the opportunity to speak your brave truth about yourself unapologetically.

Maestra M.

Goals

- 1 Explore the purpose, history and pedagogical context of *Testimonios*
- 2 Learn about how one group of bilingual Latina/o/x teachers use *Testimonios* in their school
- 3 Affirm and nurture our intersectional identities
- 4 Write and share our own *testimonio*



Shared Understanding

*Purpose, history, theory and
context of Testimonios as a
pedagogical practice*



Testimonio Defined

Testimonio, a Spanish term for “**witness account**,” is described as a first-person storytelling of acts of injustice and oppression, experienced or witnessed, that can be either oral or in writing. *Testimonios* are also narrative counterstories of **resistance, assets and accomplice**.

As Dr. Jose Medina shares, *testimonios* are “a form of narrative that **transcends awareness** and gravitates toward political intention, questions **institutional power**, the **need to speak for justice**, and the importance of coalition as **keys to building equitable social frameworks**.”

© 2019 Dr. José Medina: Educational Solutions

As a pedagogical practice, *testimonios* are an aid to develop a frame for unpacking structural marginalization and racism, and as such are **poignantly employed in dual language** immersion.

Testimonios as **Critically Conscious** Counterstorytelling

“...develop a frame for structural marginalization and racism if they can be used **to recast and challenge** pervasive theories, policies and explanations about **educational failure** as a problem **not of individuals, but of systemic institutionalized practices of oppression.**”

Blackmeyer Reyes p 527, 2012

The act of telling reminds us that **there is resistance, hope, strength and perseverance.**

Yosso, 2006

Transformational: Storyteller & Witness

There is a **mutually reinforcing process** between teller and listener, which both deepens well-being and validates identities...**an awakening.**

Testimonios **As a Pedagogical Practice**

A tool purposefully engaged in by bilingual teachers either with colleagues/each other, students, and/ or families.

Delgado Bernal, et al., 2012; El Ashmawi et al., 2018; Sosa-Provencio et al., 2019; Cuevas 2016; Passos DeNicolo et al., 2015; Blackmer Reyes & Curry Rodriguez, 2012

DL Programs: Promise of Equity

There is **great potential for advancing equity via dual language programs** for emergent bilinguals in terms of both educational access and outcomes.

DL program goals of social cultural competence and **critical consciousness call us to act.**

And yet, we navigate a K-12 educational context in which racism, linguicism, and many other oppressions and harms occur.

Cervantes-Soon, Dorner, Palmer, Heiman, Schwerdtfeger, & Choi, 2017; Palmer et al 2019; Palmer, 2007; Thomas & Collier, 2012;.

Loving our complex selves



How does that affect our work?

How is our job as dual language educators intertwined with our identities?



Their Voices

*Theoretical framework,
findings and implications
from the research study*



Background

DL TWBI Latina/o/x K-6 teachers in this study use *testimonios* in their learning community...
with each other during planned purposeful professional development,
with families during back-to-school night and gallery walks, and
with students in connection to Welcoming and Affirming thematic units

Data from qualitative interviews that occurred 3-4 months after a PD session; study asks about all uses of *testimonios* in the school setting.

Critically conscious counterstories

“A personal statement from the heart.”

Recasting educational failures not as individual but system failures—institutionalized practices of oppression.

1. Prop 227/ English Only hegemony
2. Raciolinguistic registry oppression
3. Racialized intersectional identity oppression

Testimonios as transformative

“The work I do is valued.”

Bravery

Reciprocal positive regard

Deep connections

Awakening, healing

Emotional processing

Testimonios influence relationships & interactions

“You’re able to not assume but wonder.”

Improvement in colleague relationships

Making less assumptions

More honesty, deeper connection

More trust, safety

Feelings of “closeness”

Mutual appreciation

Be a researcher!

Read the quotes and place them near the finding area.

Critically conscious counterstories

***Testimonios* as transformative**

***Testimonios* influence interactions with the school community**

Implications

Importance of making space for **raciolinguistic critically conscious reflection** in DL teacher preparation and for those in the field/current practitioners.

Importance of **communal** counter storytelling & listening for **individual well-being, effect on school climate and pedagogical practices, and interpersonal relationships.**



It's almost like a personal statement from the heart, where you have the opportunity to speak your brave truth about yourself unapologetically.

Maestra M.



Our Testimonios

Opportunity to write, to share, and to listen



As dual language leaders, we may find it difficult to **serve as guerreras/ guerreros**, if we are **not willing to bare our souls** and **share of ourselves fully**.

© 2019 Dr. José Medina: Educational Solutions



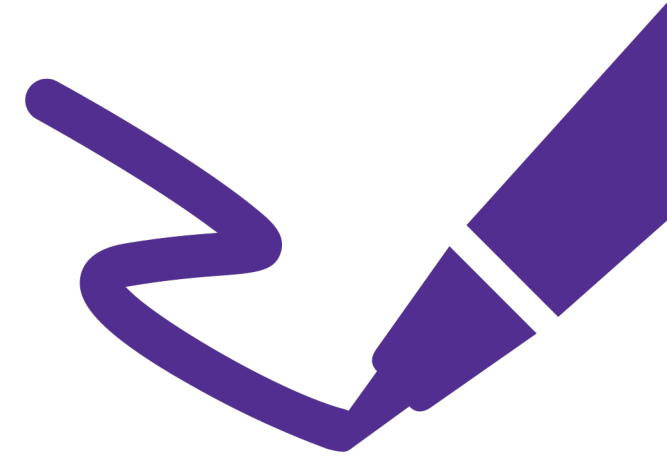
Think Time, 2 min



Think about an experience or instance that illustrates a time when you felt (or witnessed) oppression connected to (your) language, race, ethnicity or other identities.

What is an event/experience I want to share?

Writing Time, 10 min



Questions to consider:

- What made this event memorable for you?
- How did this event impact you?
- What did you learn about yourself, others, the "rules" of society?
- What personal or family strengths or assets did you lean into to make sense of the experience?

Share Your Testimonio

Four minutes each

In a dyad or (no more than a) triplet, take turns and share your testimonio.

When we come back to the whole group, we will make space for a few share again.





It's almost like a personal statement from the heart, where you have the opportunity to speak your brave truth about yourself unapologetically.

Maestra M.

Thank you for sharing



What was it like for you to share? How were you affected as a teller?

How were you affected as a listener?

What was the hardest or best part of sharing or listening?
How do you feel now?

Who do you want to hear your testimonio? Why?



Appreciations at our table

I appreciate...

Learned...

I'm thinking about...

Thank you for...







SEAL

Stay in Touch! Be Inspired.
www.SEAL.org | @SEALedEquity

