

## Contemporary National Cultural Identity in Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin American Educators Workshop  
Saturday June 17, 2018

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## Funds of Knowledge

(González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005)

- ▶ *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms* by Norma González, Luis C. Moll, & Cathy Amanti (2005)
- ▶ Refer to the experiences, histories, knowledge, languages/dialects, and worldviews of students and their families.
- ▶ Funds of knowledge include
  - ▶ The socio-political and economic histories and contexts of students' home countries and the relationships between those countries and the United States, and
  - ▶ The social and labor histories of households.

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## Transformative Potential of Funds of Knowledge

- ▶ Classroom practices sometimes underestimate or limit what children are able to display intellectually.
- ▶ Families have abundant knowledge that schools and teachers can learn from and use to
  - ▶ Make instruction relevant, and
  - ▶ Improve family-engagement efforts.
- ▶ Students bring funds of knowledge from their homes and communities that can be used for concept and skill development.

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## Funds of Knowledge in the Classroom

- ▶ In viewing households as repositories of funds of knowledge, teachers:
  - ▶ Begin to view culture as a dynamic process rather than a static end state,
  - ▶ Recognize that culturally and linguistically diverse and/or working-class minority households contain worthwhile knowledge and experiences, and
  - ▶ Are better able to tie the academic content to the formerly-hidden talents , experiences, and abilities they have discovered in their minority students.

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## Identifying Funds of Knowledge

(<http://www.tesol.org>)

- ▶ There are many practical ways to begin learning about students' cultures and funds of knowledge (in addition to web-based research):
  - ▶ Conduct home visits,
  - ▶ Give writing prompts that elicit student knowledge,
  - ▶ Have students create photo essays of life in their homes/families,
  - ▶ Have students create identity collages,
  - ▶ Interview students and families,
  - ▶ Invite guest speakers from various linguistic communities to share traditions, celebrations, or slices of daily life, or
  - ▶ Attend public events in your students' communities.

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## Example: Using Funds of Knowledge to Create a Literacy Lesson

- ▶ From Lavaland Elementary School of Albuquerque Public Schools
- ▶ 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Classroom
- ▶ Funds of knowledge identified: medicinal knowledge, gardening, ranching, urban skills, translating, culinary arts, and child care and child development
- ▶ Teacher began with a quick write about what students knew about medicinal folk remedies.
- ▶ Students shared "living knowledge" acquired from their families and communities:
  - ▶ "My grandma would put a cool rag. She would give us soup and we would take a hot bath and we would rest and then we would feel better."
- ▶ Class discussed shared information to expand learning.
- ▶ Teacher supplemented shared knowledge as needed and engaged class in more in-depth writing to promote developing literacy skills.
- ▶ Students ended by publishing their information in a class publication: "Book of Medicinal Folk Remedies."

Information from APS' Making Connections: Language, Literacy, Learning 2004 publication

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### Funds of Knowledge: Learning from Language Minority Households

- ▶ Read the bulletin titled *Funds of Knowledge: Learning from Language Minority Households* published through the Center for Applied Linguistics
- ▶ Discussion Questions:
  - ▶ What are the important take-aways of this article?
  - ▶ How could you go about identifying your students' and their families' existing funds of knowledge?
  - ▶ How could you build on this knowledge in your instruction or interactions with students?

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### Identifying and Discussing Our Own Funds of Knowledge

- ▶ Consider funds of knowledge in your own life.
- ▶ Fill in the funds of knowledge table based on your own experience. Skip categories that don't apply or add new categories based on your culture.
- ▶ In small groups, share aspects that you feel comfortable discussing. Consider:
  - ▶ What similarities are there among the FoK shared in the group?
  - ▶ How might you gather FoK of students and families in your classroom?
  - ▶ What are some ways you might use the FoK of students and families to inform teaching and/or programming (e.g., approaches to family engagement, curriculum development, instructional practices)?

Adapted from González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) and the NCCLR Education Development Center

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### Identifying Our Own Funds of Knowledge

Funds of Knowledge	Examples	Examples for Your Own Life
Home Language(s)	Spanish, Arabic, Italian	
Family Values/Traditions	Holiday celebrations, work ethic	
Caregiving	Swaddling a baby, giving a baby pacifier	
Friends & Family	Visiting grandma, sports outings	
Family Outings	Shopping, beach, library	
Household Chores	Sweeping, doing dishes	
Educational Activities	Going to the museum, taking a walk in the neighborhood	
Favorite TV Shows	Sesame Street, Bill Nye the Science Guy	
Family Occupations	Office, construction, police	
Scientific Knowledge/Practices	Recycling, exercising	
Additional FoK		

Adapted from González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) and the NCCLR Education Development Center

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### What does this mean for teaching?

- ▶ Aspects of students' and their families' cultural identities and values that we see are only a small part of their overall identities.
- ▶ Students' cultural, linguistic, and familial backgrounds affect who they are and what they bring to the classroom.
- ▶ Exploring and understanding students' histories and backgrounds can help us more effectively involve them in their own learning and in the classroom community.
- ▶ Learning about students' and families' funds of knowledge can help make instruction and learning more relevant.

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